Globethics Repository

Ethics in open and distance education

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository. More information on Globethics see https://www.globethics.net. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy.

Item Type	Journal volume
Publisher	Globethics Publications
Rights	Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International
Download date	2026-07-06 00:03:36
Item License	http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/4321217

journal of ethics
in higher education

This journal is the academic organ of Globethics in pursuit of its vision of ethical leadership for a just, inclusive and sustainable world.

05//2024

ETHICS IN OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

The journal of ethics in higher education is a biannual academic journal

Globethics

About JEHE

The Journal of Ethics in Higher Education (JEHE) is a diamond open-access journal on ethics in higher education (no fee for the author or reader). There are two issues each year with online and print versions available, it is available in the Globethics Library and hosted by our partner institution, the University of Fribourg, on their open-access publishing platform SOAP2.

Focus and Scope

The focus and scope of the Journal are to answer to the request made by many faculty members from Globethics Consortium of higher education institutions, Network, Partners, Regional Programmes and participants to Globethics International Conferences to have a new space on Globethics platform for the publication of their research results in a scientific Journal. The journal is aimed for academic experts in ethics and education, working at the forefront of ethical thinking in global and intercultural perspective, academic integrity and the philosophy and practice of higher education.

Archive

No. 1 (2022)// Transformative Ethics and Education
No. 2 (2023)// Values and Power Dynamics of Languages in Higher Education
No. 3 (2023)// Time for Education
No. 4 (2024)// Ethical, Regulative and Legislative Perspectives on Emerging Technologies and Education

Contact and Print Order

Globethics
Chemin du Pavillon 2
CH-1218 Le Grand-Saconnex, Geneva (Switzerland)
Email: publications@globethics.net
Website: https://jehe.globethics.net

Extrinsic and Intrinsic Personalization in the Digital Transformation of Education

Santiago Tomás Bellomo,

Universidad Austral

Dec. 2024

Keywords

AI Education, Personalization in Education, Digital transformation in Education, Innovation in Higher Education.

Abstract

AI arrival promises to solve the needs of personalization in education. The following paragraphs aim to shed light on the concept of personalization by providing a philosophical conceptualization that enables an analysis of its scope and applications within the framework of the digital transformation of higher education. The paper explains the reasons why the goal of personalization is so deeply rooted in the digital transformation. It also describes the five meanings attributable to the concept and details their philosophical underpinnings. This helps clarify the distinction between the extrinsic and intrinsic orientations of personalization, which, in turn, allows to apply this distinction within the framework of the digital transformation of education.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Santiago Bellomo, Escuela de Educación, Universidad Austral, Pilar, Argentina. Email: sbellomo@austral.edu.ar.
To quote this article: Bellomo, Santiago. 2024. "Extrinsic and Intrinsic Personalization in the Digital Transformation of Education". *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 5(2024): 1–34. DOI: 10.26034/fr.jehe.2024.6861 © the Author. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit https://jehe.globethics.net. Also included in "Aportes de la filosofía de la educación para resignificar la noción de personalización en el contexto de la transformación digital de la educación", in Aguilar, F. (2024). *Reimaginando la educación desde los fundamentos filosóficos, éticos y la ciudadanía en la era digital*, Universidad Politécnica Salesiana: Quito, 2024.

1. Introduction

Digital transformation of education fosters personalization by multiplying the thresholds of choice and promoting the adjustment to the student's own interests. Adaptive platforms can also accommodate learning activities according to the time and place available to students, adapting them to the pace at which they wish to undertake their own learning.

More than 10 years ago, in 2012, Bill Gates gave a speech at the *Annual Conference of the National Association of Independent Schools* (NAIS), the contents of which were later collected in the article *Technology's Promise to Education: Personalizing Learning* (Gates, 2016). There, he highlighted the personalizing scope of gamification of learning projects, and of certain educational platforms with large-scale impact.

Years later, in 2017, a group of Oxford professors founded Woolf University, considered "the world's first Blockchain University". Woolf's founding objective was to promote personalized teaching and learning by combining this technology with the traditional tutoring system that its founders practiced at their university of origin:

> "Our ambition is for Woolf to configure an unprecedented revolution in the history of the university. But in essence, Woolf makes possible the oldest and most venerable form of human education: direct, personal and individual learning. Woolf's goal is to make that transformative experience available to everyone (Woolf University, 2017: 4).

That same year, Harvard Business Review published an article titled *How IA and data could personalize higher education* (Rouhiainen, 2019). The article identified the potential of using artificial intelligence for the development of adaptive learning platforms, as well as its aspiration to achieve close and individual support.

The irruption of generative AI in 2022 deepened the expectation about the personalizing scope of AI. With the arrival of LLMs (Large Language Models), new alternatives for interaction between students and machines are created. The question arise about of the role of teachers and the possibility of personalizing learning by AI tutors engagement within adaptive platforms. As Salman Khan, creator of the Khan Academy platform and the AI chatbot Khanmigo, states:

> "The platform offers every person an opportunity to engage deeply in the education process in entirely new ways. Among other things, it provides a personalized and patient tutor that focuses on the learner's interests or struggles and empowers educators to better understand how they can fully support their students. (Khan, 2024: 34)

These few examples illustrate the recurrence with which promoters of educational innovation have trusted for years in technological progress to promote personalized learning. The association between digitization and personalization has not changed since then. On the contrary, it has become a kind of commonplace in Anglo-Saxon academic literature.

Evidently, it is essential to ask about the meaning of the concept of "educational personalization" in the context of the current digital transformation. It is also important to investigate whether this understanding is equivalent to that given by some Ibero-American pedagogical traditions in previous decades. This is not an easy task. On most occasions, the notion lacks clarity or precision. "Personalized learning has been conceptualized and put into practice in many different ways, which has resulted in a lack of consensus on the definitions and terms used in the field" (Vanbecelaere et al, 2020: 1794). As Bulger says:

> "It is not surprising that personalized learning has become fashionable, symbolizing the potential of using data in education. The scope of its definition is broad, and alludes to concepts such as "student-centered instruction" or "instruction adapted to the individual needs of students" that are traditionally used to reference a solid teaching practice, placing it under its

> constantly expanding umbrella. Technology-enabled personalized learning incorporates varying degrees of adaptation or personalization of the learning experience through applications and/or network platforms. And, however, there are no established standards for describing or evaluating to what extent a learning experience is personalized, and the difference between responsiveness and adaptability is often not considered in product descriptions. Independent evaluations of the level of personalization or its effectiveness in improving learning outcomes are scarce. This raises two important questions: 1) What categories of "personalization" are implemented in these technologies and 2) to what extent does "personalization" really contribute to the achievement of educational objectives? (Bulger, 2016: 3-4)

The following paragraphs aim to provide a philosophical conceptualization that enables an analysis of the notion of personalization, its scope and applications within the framework of the digital transformation of higher education. This paper builds upon recent work that outlines the general guidelines for this exploration (Bellomo, 2022: 7033; Bellomo, 2023: 183) and delves into the five meanings or levels of personalized education that will be examined in the following paragraphs. It also distinguishes between the two main orientations that educational personalization can take – extrinsic and intrinsic – and identifies their predominant influence on each of the five meanings or levels mentioned.

The chapter is structured as follows: a) It explains the reasons why the goal of personalization is so deeply rooted in the digital transformation; b) it describes the five meanings attributable to the concept of personalization and details their philosophical underpinnings; c) it distinguishes between the extrinsic and intrinsic orientations of personalization, and applies this distinction within the framework of the digital transformation of education; d) finally, it establishes the ways in which new innovation trends meet the expectation of delivering personalization in its extrinsic and intrinsic orientations and analyses the role of teachers in this context.

The main conclusion is that technological innovations in education primarily promote extrinsic personalization, which needs to be complemented by actions or initiatives that foster intrinsic personalization. Furthermore, that teaching function is, in some sense, replaceable by technology, but in another sense, it is irreplaceable. This becomes evident not only when considering the teacher's role as a “curator,” but also their disciplinary, motivational, and moral exemplarity.

2. The notion of *personalization* in the context of digital transformation of education

The concept of “personalized education” became popular in Latin America in the early 1980s thanks to the influence of Víctor García Hoz, a Spanish expert on Experimental Pedagogy. García Hoz was the founder of the Spanish Society of Pedagogy and a professor at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. He visited Latin America on many occasions, establishing regular bonds with educational authorities in several countries. As result of these exchanges, his thinking exerted a significant influence on public and private educational domains at the higher education system as well as school systems. His influence has drawn divergent opinions from various specialists given its explicit identification with Catholicism (Garatte and García Clúa, 2016; Rodríguez, 2016).

Strictly speaking, for García Hoz, “personalized education” is not synonymous with “personalization of education.” In his *Introducción General a la Pedagogía de la Persona*, he describes the relationship between the two concepts and points out that “personalization of education” refers to the educational process from which “personalized education” itself develops. The latter is the result of the former (García Hoz, 1993: 34; 1992: 194). From his perspective, *singularity*, *openness*, and *autonomy* represent essential elements for the definition of personalized education (Palacios et al., 1989; García Hoz, 1994, 1993, 1972). *Singularity* refers to “the possibility that schoolwork and

relationships promote the development of each student according to their own capacity, interest, and learning pace, and considering the family and social circumstances of their personal history" (García Hoz, 1972: 8). This operational meaning of singularity is based on a deeper understanding of the term. Singularity, in this deeper sense, is constitutive of the essence of the person, and implies a qualitative distinction "by which every human being is different from others" (1981: 34). This fact explains the relationship that various authors find between personalization and inclusion (Perochena and Coria, 2017, Gallego Jiménez and Otero Rodriguez, 2020; García, 2012) and the consequent rejection of exacerbated educational homogenization:

> "The 'average student' or the 'homogeneous group' are nothing more than educational superstitions. Education is carried out in each person according to their peculiar characteristics; and the reason for personalized education is precisely to attend to personal differences in development, within a common educational stimulation (Bernal Guerrero, 1999: 20).

As for the notion of *autonomy*, García Hoz (1972) defines it as "the possibility of participation of students not only in their realization but also in the organization and programming of activities, in such a way that students can exercise their freedom of acceptance, choice, and initiative" (1972: 8). Finally, the notion of *openness* brings together a series of features of great importance, also attributable to the very definition of the human person:

> "The concept of person adds to the idea of man, the meanings of dignity, biological and moral unity, ethical character, conscience and freedom, singularity and mastery of life itself. All these notes are synthesized in the "openness to reality" which, in turn, is consummated in joy, in a double origin: activity is both a relationship with things, and coexistence, a relationship with people". (...) "Precisely the person, a consequent principle of activity, is the factor capable of giving moral unity, that is, truly human unity, to all the acts of a man's life (García Hoz, 1994: 194).

Within this framework, personalization of education makes possible the main objective of human development: the flourishing of one's own life (García Hoz, 1994: 200). Human flourishing implies the satisfaction of needs and aspirations common to other people, as well as to individual expectations and desires (1994: 191).

Strictly speaking, García Hoz's defense of personalization does not arise *ex nihilo*, but within the framework of a broader and older tradition that dates back to classical Greek philosophy, assimilates components of medieval personhood metaphysics (inherited from Thomas Aquinas and Boethius), and also incorporates influences from French, Italian, and American personalism (1992: 194). However, personalized education has also been promoted by many other outstanding educators anchored in other philosophical worldviews, such as Rousseau, Maria Montessori, John Dewey, Helen Parkhurst, or Benjamin Bloom, just to mention a few prominent figures.

This Latin American pedagogical tradition offers an interpretation of the concept of personalized education that differs strongly from that prevailing in the Anglo-Saxon tradition (Pérez Guerrero and Ahedo Ruiz, 2020: 154). The latter is linked to concepts that emerged from the new marketing theories adopted in the early 20th century by public policies in countries such as England (Hartley, 2007; Peters, 2009). In this context, education that offers students opportunities for choice, or that adjusts times, places, and itineraries according to their needs and preferences, is considered personalized. The concept is also associated with the effort made by teachers to adapt teaching methods to the student's particularities, to develop detailed preventive reports on individual performance, and to generate individualized interventions that promote learning.

This circumstance is not accidental and explains itself in good part by the inertia that digital transformation processes have on human activities. As stated elsewhere (Bellomo, 2022: 7031), there are six pillars of digital transformation that stimulate the rejuvenation and rise of

personalization[1]. These pillars are: user orientation, the phenomenon of Big Data and artificial intelligence, ubiquity, the centrality of platforms, and the demand for digital design by default (Digital By Design).

The influence of these pillars in learning or teaching processes gives shape to a series of phenomena that are reconfiguring educational systems. The user orientation prerogative of digital transformation constitutes the cornerstone on which these processes are based and seduces many contemporary educators who have been fighting for student empowerment and the resignification of teaching practices for the development of active learning. However, the orientation and scope of this prerogative does not necessarily match with those raised within humanist pedagogical conceptions such as García Hoz´s or others.

The concept of Personalization 4.0 refers to the set of efforts developed within the framework of the digital transformation of education to achieve the individual development of students, that is to say, the personalizing ideal of education (Bellomo, 2023: 169). Personalization 4.0 fosters the use of certain technologies or resources and installs certain mandatory practices. Below, some of these are reviewed without any claim to exhaustiveness, solely for the purpose of understanding the scope of this personalizing claim:

- a) The gamification of education promotes the use of micro-incentives (badges, scores, rankings, etc.) to promote students' extrinsic motivation. In this way, it intends to avoid the distraction and boredom typical of digital overabundance (Rivas, 2019: 80, 165, 180).
- b) Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) use chatbots based on generative AI to promote different types of interaction more or

[1] The identification and characterization of these pillars is ours, although it resembles that of Barbara Ubaldi when applied to digital transformation of public administration (Ubaldi, B., 2020: 186-187)

less structured models. There are one-to-one response chatbots like Chat GPT or Gemini, and open collaborative learning systems like dialogue-based tutoring systems. Some of the most sophisticated, use a Socratic method and guide students to answer questions or challenges generated by AI with the intention to promote problem-solving on their own. Studies developed in 2021 indicated the commercial availability of more than 60 ITS developments (Miao et al., 2021: 19). The current development runs at a great speed, according to *Research and Markets* (2024). According to recent studies, the global EdTech Market raised up to 14,16% between 2019 and 2020 because of pandemic and it is expected to keep growing at a rate of 18% per year between 2024 and 2030.

— c) Assessment also promises to be transformed by the contribution of AI. During decades, open-source platforms have allowed teachers to design assessments that generate automated feedback. Nowadays, new AI developments automate the design of these tasks and adjust them to the level of progress of each student. They can also provide automated feedback to the students. The prerogative of these automation efforts, according to their promoters, is to free up teachers' time from routine tasks and help them to concentrate on personalized follow-up of the students (UNESCO, 2023:10).

— d) Platforms are digital spaces that bring together the contribution of several of the innovations mentioned above. Kerssens & Van Dijc (2021) refer to the phenomenon of "platformization of education" to characterize this concentration of resources and efforts in massive online formats. Their volume of users has been increasing in recent decades, generating a quantity of data whose mining excites data scientists. By appealing to them, it is possible to generate adapted and adaptive itineraries, multiplying the thresholds of choice, ensuring that content and activities are adjusted to individual

times, modalities, and interests, and facilitating the management of administrative processes.

— e) The large-scale availability of data on student performance challenges data scientists from another point of view: A crucial application of AI in education management is the development of early warning systems (EWS) to identify students at risk of dropping out. These systems analyze data on key indicators such as academic performance, attendance, and behavioral issues to flag students who may need additional support. Traditional EWS have shown promising results in reducing dropout rates, and the integration of AI techniques can further enhance their predictive accuracy and timeliness (Molina et al., 2024: 23). However, their extensive use is subject of ethical challenges and risks (Holmes, Bialik & Fadel, 2019; UNESCO, 2023).

There are many other available technologies aiming to promote personalized teaching: robots that stimulate learning for people with disabilities, language teaching tools, teachable agents that decode student explanations and give feedback, as well as immersive virtual or augmented reality environments. The scope of these tools is increasingly novel and attractive, even when experts warn for the need of exerting "cautious optimism" when considering the effectiveness of their implementation in the current state of the development (Molina et al., 2024: 9).

Besides this practical warning, it is essential to carry out an analysis of the philosophical assumptions that inspire these developments in order to recognize to what extent this personalization is legitimate or complete. To be able to carry out this analysis, it is necessary to make a prior discrimination of the different meanings attributable to the notion of personalization in order to identify –for each of them– what is the level of potential or real contribution of the digital transformation to personalized education.

3. Meanings of personalized learning

We can identify five meanings given to the term "personalization" by contemporary pedagogical literature. While arising this distinction, the effort to deliver a comprehensive synthesis will lead us to more clarity at the cost of sacrificing differences or nuances that we can find within each sense (which should allow us to identify new connotations and expand the number of meanings of the term).

Naturally, the different meanings relate to each other, although not in a linear way. This is because the concept of "personalization" is not univocal, but analogous, as is the case with the concept of "health". This is why the notion of personalization can be assigned to different activities or educational resources, with meanings that are partly the same and partly diverse. On many occasions, the understanding of one sense demands or supposes that of another.

Medieval tradition calls this type of analogy "analogy of intrinsic attribution"[2], insofar as one of the senses it the one to which the rest are ordered or refer to (as means to ends). Later, it will be indicated which is the "main analogue" to which the remaining "secondary analogues" refer.

The analogical nature of the concept of personalization explains that, sometimes, the understanding of one meaning demands or presupposes that of another. In fact, one deep and exhaustive apprehension of the concept of personalization integrates all these partial meanings.

Personalized learning in the sense of "opened-to-choice education"

Many of those who refer to the personalizing impact of technologies highlight precisely their potential to enable choice on the part of students:

[2] For the analysis of the different types of analogies, see Díaz Dorronsoro, R., *La analogía*, en Fernández Labastida, F. y Mercado, J.A. (editores), *Philosophica: Enciclopedia filosófica online*. Recovered from: http://www.philosophica.info/archivo/2010/voces/analogia/Analogia.html

they enhance the possibility of choosing learning modalities, promote the customization of curricular pathways and facilitate the autonomous management of time and supplies (schedules, bibliographic material, etc.).

This vulgar and general meaning of the concept of personalization is strongly widespread and echoes an equally established demand for the flexibility of traditional teaching structures and modes, generally conceived as too rigid or static. This first broad meaning of personalized learning demands specification when being operationalized, because human choice necessarily involves the need to clarify its aim or direction. This leads us to the second meaning of personalized learning.

Personalized learning in the sense of "tailored-education"

The second sense considers individualization or *singularity*, that is, the possibility that the educational activity and relationships allow the development of each student according to their abilities, interests and learning rhythms, also taking into account social and family circumstances, as well as to your individual story. The notion relates – not without certain limits – to García Hoz's singularity reviewed above. This sense of personalization also seeks to break with the homogenizing inertia of traditional educational systems and their normalizing effect.

The "customizing" aspiration of digital transformation is expressed in many ways, although one in particular has become very topical with the rise of *stackability* in higher education (Bayley & Belfield, 2017). This notion refers to the possibility of following a personalized training itinerary based on the choice of independent, complementary and sequential modules. Thanks to stackability, students can choose – to the extent permitted by institutional or local regulations – not only the topics that best fit their interests, needs and inclinations, but also the duration and scope of their partial studies. This type of curricular organization has proven to be relatively successful in vulnerable populations (Daugherty et al., 2023) and has spread due to the increasingly widespread use of the "credit" system.

Adaptive learning platforms also add their contribution to respond to the expectation of individualization that inspires this second meaning. Based on the use of AI applied to teaching-learning processes, they try to apply its adaptive capacity to adjust the teaching proposal to the particular learning style of each student. If a sufficient volume of data is collected, "adaptive systems help close achievement gaps, introducing variety in the classroom, providing real-time data related to student needs, and enabling spaces for instructors to develop individualized interventions." (Li et al, 2019: 45).

In the context of these platforms, as students progress through a lesson, they may see information presented in various ways, tailored to their learning needs. The systems *learn* from student interactions and then adjust the path and pace of learning (Moskal et al, 2017).

It is evident that ensuring personalization in the first of the aforementioned sense (possibility of choice) does not guarantee personalization in this new sense, although it constitutes a necessary condition. A student, for example, may opt for a training pathway that does not respond to his or her deepest interests or needs, for example, leaning towards approval facilities that a certain curricular space provides over others. In short, given the possibility of choice guaranteed by the first sense, it is necessary that the choice alternatives presented adjust as closely as possible to your needs or interests.

Personalized learning in the sense of "closed accompanied" education

The concept of "close accompaniment" admits an extended and vulgar meaning that refers to the efforts delivered by organizations and educators in order to make the student feel comfortable and assured by personal orientation, comprehension and support. The scope of these efforts is broad, and include communicational, administrative, logistical and academic dimensions. Tutorial action of teachers has a starring place among the academic dimension. It has been broadly reviewed and explained both in the school level (del Río Sadornil, D. and Codés

Martínez González, M. 2020) and at the higher education level (Wisker, G. Exley, K. and Antoniou, M., 2008).

The issue of close support in education is subject of debate since the emergence of AI-based tutoring systems. Can a machine ensure a satisfactory response to students' expectations and demands for support? A priori, the answer requires knowing what these expectations and demands are, which vary according to their level of maturation, the specificity and level of difficulty of the discipline in question, the personal and institutional context, among other factors. At the moment, there is no consensus regarding how much more effective or deficient digital tutoring is with respect to those developed in human intercourse (Bellomo, 2023: 138-140). There is an urgent need to better explain what is meant by personalized accompaniment, as well as verify to what extent a causal relationship can be established between the modalities of accompaniment and the learning results actually achieved. For now, and for the purposes of this reflection, it is important to raise the question about the replaceability or irreplaceability of the human person of the teacher in educational practice. This question will be analyzed in the last section.

Personalized learning in the sense of "active learning" or "self-regulated learning"

Different contemporary trends highlight the importance student leadership and engagement in their learning processes (Gattegno, 1987; Scott, 2014; Campos Arenas, 2017; Pleshcová, G. & McAlpine, L., 2015; Weimer, 2003; Newton, 2000). The prerogative of active learning is at the foundations of various pedagogical theories, such us *Teaching for Understanding* of Harvard School (Blythe, 1998; Perkins, 1985) or *Student Agency* theories (OECD, 2019).

Personalized education, thus conceived, highlights the transcendental importance of "the student taking ownership of his or her learning process through awareness and exploration of the internal, cognitive and affective processes that take part in the development of knowledge. It is hoped that they assimilate into their habitual behavior the values and motivations that inspire the desire and practice of lifelong learning" (Bellomo, 2023: 187).

By doing so, it intends to foster the values, motivations and practices that fulfill the desire to learn for life. From this perspective, an education that enhances the student's lifelong learning skills is more personalized since it makes him or her less dependent on external circumstances and more aware of his metacognition processes. Evidently, theories that emphasize the importance of self-regulation are do not restrict personalization to the mere exercise of choice on the part of the student (Pintrich, 2004: 387).

The development of self-regulation requires the acquisition of concurrent skills in two dimensions: *cognitive* and *affective-motivational* (Daura, 2021). At the first level, it demands the ability to select the most appropriate cognitive strategies to the task involved. Likewise, it is necessary to apply *metacognitive strategies* to ensure adequate planning, monitoring or change in the chosen strategy. The capacity for self-regulation also requires abilities to organize one's own time, control effort or manage resources to reduce distractions, ensure an environment suitable for study or seek external advice.

The *affective-motivational dimension* demands *components of expectations* (positive or negative self-perceptions that the student has about himself and his ability to perform a task), as well as the *components of value*. The latter reflect the importance that the student assigns to the assigned academic task. The progressive maturation of these two components is evident in the student's ability to set goals and achieve them, all of which is possible if there is intrinsic motivation. The existence of intrinsic motivation makes the person less dependent on extrinsic motivation, that is, on the application of rewards or punishments.

By understanding active learning or self-regulation as a concurrent deployment and exercise of these internal capacities at different levels, we can easily recognize the gap that exists between the first or second sense of personalization and this fourth sense. While the first two senses associate personalization with the creation of external contextual conditions for the exercise of individual choice, the fourth refers to the effective ability to exercise autonomy on the part of the student and to sustain learning throughout life. This deep and robust sense of autonomy

implies the development of stable capacities that allow students to design their own life project in accordance with their own way of being and expectations.

Personalized learning in the sense of "comprehensive flourishment"

The recognition of these different cognitive and affective-motivational levels introduces us to a new understanding of the notion of personalization, conceived in a broad sense as "comprehensive human flourishing". The association between comprehensive education and personalized education is evident when recognizing that educational activity is oriented towards the full development of all dimensions of the person; it aims personal fulfilment. Hence, education that integrates more aspects of development is more personalized.

Of course, this aspiration for integrality and comprehensiveness can be expressed in different ways depending on how "full human development" is understood, according to each person's own philosophical and existential commitments. From a Christian perspective, James Arthur (2021), for example, draws on the Aristotelian tradition to highlight the intrinsic relationship between the flourishing and development of virtues in *A Christian Education in the Virtues. Character Formation and Human Flourishing*.

In César Coll's framework, on the other hand, the demand for comprehensiveness is recognized in the need to integrate three types of content in the teaching-learning process: conceptual, attitudinal and procedural content (Coll, 1987), oriented towards expectations of social, labor and citizen insertion.

The Competency Framework is also nourished by this same demand for integration between knowledge, know-how and value judgement. Although it brings together a diverse set of formulations and meanings (Gimeno Sacristán, 2008: 37) there is an agreed understanding of what is meant to develop a competence: "Competencies include both content and process knowledge (knowing what and knowing how), but they also include skills, values, attitudes and motivation" (Mindt & Rieckmann,

2017: 132; Cf. also Kouwenhoven, 2009, Weinert, 2001, Weik et al., 2016).

In opposition to the encyclopedic inertia of nineteenth-century educational systems, all these approaches promote a more comprehensive and integrated conception of learning that converges in the expectation of providing a more harmonious and full display of the different dimensions of the person.

4. Extrinsic and intrinsic personalization

The analysis developed so far helps us identify two main orientations of personalized education: extrinsic and intrinsic. Understanding their differences will allow us to better discern the scope and nature of digital transformations and its contribution to personalization.

The extrinsic orientation of personalization (*extrinsic personalization*, for short) takes place when we create favourable contextual conditions for the experience of a personalized experience. Extrinsic personalization increases when, for example, we propose more options or alternatives to the student. This happens when a higher education institution offers blended environments, giving students the opportunity to choose between face-to-face or on-line learning. It also occurs when it distributes a large group of students into smaller groups to promote closer accompaniment by the teacher or it allows them to choose within different curricular pathways.

Being contextual in nature, the extrinsic orientation creates favourable conditions for the development of a personalized educational experience, but it does not ensure it. In the presence of a small group, a teacher may implement a non-personalized methodology or have a distant and unsympathetic bond with their students. Similarly, given the possibility to choose within face-to-face or on-line learning, a student may prefer the one that least collaborates with their learning process, for example, favouring social affinity.

For personalization to be complete, it is necessary to enter a dimension that is intrinsic to the teaching-learning process and not merely contextual. The intrinsic orientation of personalization (or *intrinsic personalization*) thus refers not so much to the conditions external to the process, but to the way in which the teaching-learning experience itself is developed. From the point of view of learning, intrinsic personalization is related to the student's degree of commitment to his or her own process, the depth with which he or she manages to engage with learning, and the breadth with which he or she deploys his or her intellectual and affective capacities in this process.

The intrinsic dimension and the extrinsic dimension of personalization need to develop simultaneously and in a complementary way. Just as the development of the extrinsic approach does not ensure personalization in the intrinsic sense, it is difficult to develop the latter without a series of enabling extrinsic conditions.

At this point, however both orientations intertwine in every learning experience, it becomes obvious that we can trace a certain predominance of one of these two orientations within each of the five meanings or levels of personalization. The first meaning of personalization tends to be merely extrinsic, given that it refers to the existence of alternatives of choice independently of the act of choosing itself and the aim of the choice itself.

The second meaning involves creating a learning environment or proposal that fits the preferences, expectations and capabilities of each individual person. The identification of these preferences, expectations or capabilities, as well as the creation of this environment and proposals not always depends on the student action or decision. Parents and teachers have a central role in the provision of external contextual framework of development in early stages of education. Therefore, the major orientation of the second meaning of personalization is still extrinsic, although a germinal degree of intrinsic personalization arises every time the given context actually meets individual needs, expectations or capabilities. This adequacy between external context and internal expectation or

capability often drives to motivation and desire to learn. Moreover, this motivation is one of many other ingredients that take place in deeper personalized learning development.

Evidently, there is a certain predominance of extrinsic orientation in the first two senses of personalization, while intrinsic orientation predominates in the last two senses. The third sense related to close accompaniment has such complexity that it deserves a deeper analysis due to its complexity. We will return to this issue later on.

The main contributions of digital transformation for the development of personalization clearly refer to extrinsic orientation. By multiplying the thresholds of choice, facilitating adaptation to one's own pace, and ensuring greater adjustment to one's own interests, technologies create favorable contexts to promote self-regulation and a leading role on the part of the student, which promises better possibilities for human comprehensive flourishing.

Thus, applying the Aristotelian categorization of the four causes (cf. González Álvarez, 1969: 139; Solis Sotomayor, 2014), it can be stated that personalization constitutes the final cause of educational activity when conceived as comprehensive development or human flourishing, that to which all the other senses of personalization are ordered. It can be considered, therefore, the "main analogue" to which the remaining secondary analogues refer. For its part, personalization understood as enhancing the active agency of the students addresses efficient causality, since he or she is the first and main architect of his perfective development.

Within this framework, we can conclude not only that the creation of extrinsic conditions does not necessarily and directly ensure the development of the capacity for autonomous learning. It is also worth highlighting another principle that generally goes more unnoticed: students who have sufficiently developed self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and certain cognitive or metacognitive abilities are better prepared to make decisions that contribute to their true development and learning. In simpler words, the more intrinsic the personalization, the

greater the ability to take advantage of extrinsic personalization, but not the other way around. Hence, since digital transformation fosters extrinsic personalization (creating favourable contextual conditions for learning), we need to assure intrinsic personalization in order to take full profit of digital innovation.

5. Teachers vs machines in the quest of personalization

Every time new technologies become massive, they threaten traditional teaching. What constitutes a novelty nowadays is the range, attractiveness and benefits of new digital resources. By enlarging the number of pedagogical mediations, digital transformation offers undeniable potential for accessing ever-widening thresholds of culture and broadening the horizon of human understanding.

> “New technologies are altering the roots of this educational distribution model. The digitization process is the first great force for the transformation of educational formats. The new educational market is a fundamental engine of this process. What is digitized eliminates the cost of its reproduction. Once the “product” is digitized (a book, a class, an exercise, a course), it becomes ubiquitous immediate, portable. The digital bits create an unlimited currency of information distribution in space and time. (Rivas, 2021: 8).

George Steiner (2016: 207) states: “The screen can teach, examine, demonstrate, interact with precision, clarity and patience greater than that of a human instructor.” In this context, is teaching an endangered species? Renowned specialists have already raised the alarm:

> “As AI develops, teachers may find themselves freed from so many tasks, to the point that the perceived need for teachers dwindles to almost nothing. Although this might have some advantages in contexts where teachers are scarce, the goal of eliminating the need for human teachers reveals a fundamental

> misunderstanding of their essential social role in the learning process (Miao et al., 2021: 22).

In the words of World Bank specialists:

> "It is essential to emphasize that AI should not be seen as a replacement for human expertise, but rather as a way to enhance and scale the impact of human judgment and skills. The role of educators remains critical, and AI tools should be viewed as powerful assistants that can help teachers personalize learning experiences, provide targeted support, and make data-driven decisions (Molina et Al., 2024: 7)

The answer is forceful and reflects a fairly widespread opinion in educational fields. However, it immediately raises a new question: what is the basis of teacher irreplaceability? For almost a decade, certain voices have invited us to conceive teaching as "digital curators" as digital transformation conquers more and more aspects of education (Yakel, 2007; Antonio & Tuffley, 2015). Being specialized curators, teachers must specialize in selecting the content and resources that best respond to the development needs of their students. They are required, in other words, to be able to provide the contextual conditions necessary for personalized learning.

This vision of teachers as facilitators of environments or contexts for learning constitutes a risky reductionism, since it turns the teacher or professor into a promoter of extrinsic personalization. It has already been stated that current digital technologies are those that best promise to solve this provision, that is, they have demonstrated a wonderful capacity to generate contextual conditions for adequate learning and thus promote extrinsic personalization. In some way, entertainment platforms already carry out digital curation through the application of algorithms that are regulated according to adaptive criteria. They offer users a "digital curation" service without the need for human mediation. The application of this same curatorship model is already being explored in a nascent way in certain adaptive platforms and there are many who imagine a future of

education in which numerous teaching tasks are replaced by AI technologies.

Obviously, this replacement of teaching functions by machines could be frustrated by factual and casual reasons (for example, technological delay, lack of human resources, trade union resistance, etc.). For the purposes of this conceptual analysis, it remains important to ask if the possibility of survival of the teaching function should be subject exclusively to such externalities or if there is some essential irreplaceable function in the teaching role we should preserve. For now, it is worth reiterating that the more we conceive teacher´s adding value by creating contextual conditions, the greater the possibility of effectively replacing its role with technology support.

The essential contribution of teaching must be sought in another direction, in its connection with the promotion of intrinsic personalization. Good teachers act not only as selectors of meaningful content and promoters of effective learning activities, but also as exemplar models.

Sometimes, what is taught is much more than a technique or specific set of facts. When the teacher is someone exemplary, the desire for imitation naturally awakens in the hearts and minds of the students. In these cases, the student learns a way of seeing the world and relating to others, recognizing and admiring the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they recognize in their teacher.

The exemplary role of the significant adult, and the propensity for imitation by boys and girls, was already recognized in 1965 by Albert Bandura. Neuroscientific studies on the functioning of mirror neurons (Rizzolati, 2005) have added empirical evidence in order to highlight the importance of imitation in learning pro-social behaviours throughout life and not exclusively during early childhood. Given the philosophical framing of the present work, it is not the intention of these paragraphs to provide empirical evidence on the relevance of imitation and, consequently, of the exemplary role of the teacher. The presumption of irreplaceability proposed here is based on theoretical principles that correspond to a certain anthropological worldview. Although they are

philosophically grounded, they do not lack persuasive force and support of evidence.

We can recognize three complementary levels of modelling/imitation in higher education (Cf. Bellomo, 2023: 217-223). In 2007, Ken Bein published the results of his research on the behaviour and characteristics of the best university professors. One of his first findings was decisive:

> "Without exception, extraordinary teachers know their subject very well. All of them are accomplished scholars, artists or working scientists. Some have an impressive list of publications that are most appreciated by academics. Others present more modest records; or, in some cases, virtually none at all. But whether they are published widely or not, extraordinary teachers stay abreast of important intellectual, scientific, or artistic developments in their fields, reason valuable and original about their topics, and study carefully and extensively what other people do. in their disciplines, they often read a lot from other fields (sometimes very different from their own) and are very interested in the general themes of their disciplines: the histories, the controversies, the epistemological discussions. In short, they can achieve intellectually, physically or emotionally what they expect from their students (Bein, 2007: 27).

The first level of exemplarity occurs when students acquire the "spirit" of that same discipline whose concepts and procedures they are learning. The "spirit" constitutes the disposition to understand and value the world that is implicit in all authentic disciplinary training. Thinking like an engineer, an architect, a paediatrician or a philosopher is not something that happens suddenly due to technical training alone. It occurs in the context of the assimilation of both the "lyrics" and the "music," so to speak, of the discipline. It is achieved through rigorous and deep conceptual learning, but it exceeds mere conceptualization. It demands a much more precious achievement: the incorporation of a *forma mentis* (Zubiri, 1983:153) by the student. *Disciplinary exemplarity* occurs when

the student develops in his intelligence the *forma mentis* of the discipline that he recognizes in his teacher.

A similar phenomenon occurs at the level of *motivational exemplarity*. Machines do not spread enthusiasm or create vocations. Only truly passionate people achieve this extraordinary legacy. Without this motivational ingredient, it is not possible to achieve self-regulation and the acquisition of lifelong learning skills, central components involved in the fourth meaning of personalization. This passion is a powerful "fuel" for intrinsic motivation. Good teaching is irreplaceable for the promotion of this intangible but essential aspect of educational activity, especially in stages in which the passion is germinal and somewhat tentative, as is the case of the initial levels of higher education.

Finally, *moral exemplarity* does not exclusively refer to the formative value of ethical teaching in the context of higher education. Teachers are ethical examples when they express in their daily behaviour a full and sincere commitment to the development of each of their students. This commitment reveals itself in concrete actions: in the preparation of classes, in the quality of feedback or in the effort of cross-examination when faced with inappropriate comments, among many other activities. At the same time, moral exemplarity is not limited to this effective commitment to the development of each student. It also requires, in higher education, fostering the deontology of professional practice. A good lawyer teaches his students while handling his own cases. He teaches by example the ethical practice of his specialty.

"Technology is an excellent amplifier of human exemplarities, but no technology is a carrier of exemplarity by itself" (Bellomo, 2023: 223). Thanks to technology, we can access a broad and very rich legacy of behavioral models at any of the three levels indicated. Watching a documentary about Ghandi can be inspiring. But the inspiration will come from the person of Ghandi, whose legacy is present in a digital mediation. In some way, the digital transformation of education increases the possibility to access to exemplary mediations, but also to non-exemplary

ones, which awakens the pressing need to develop critical thinking and value judging.

What is the philosophical ground of this exemplarity? How can it be explained? Recalling the foundations of Aristotelian theory of the four causes and its application to pedagogy, students are properly the *efficient cause* of education. Teachers can exercise, at most, *efficient dispositive causality* as they help create contextual conditions for active learning (Solís Sotomayor, 2014: 65), but they are not the first and main protagonists of the educational development that occurs in the student.

This efficient dispositive causality constitutes, as has been said, the most replaceable aspect of teacher´s function as the development of new generative digital technologies expands. However, when teachers become role models, when their behavior and way of being become a source of inspiration for students, then a different type of causality is verified. The external image of the teacher is internalized in the student; an expectation of emulation grows in him or her, and is installed as a source of motivation. So, in some way, some attribute of the teacher becomes a final cause for the student. The desire for emulation fuels motivation, triggers the student's executive abilities, guides the development of specific skills and enhances individual flourishing. In a way, the student develops aiming to be in a way like his *exemplary cause*, but preserving his own individuality.

In summary, personal accompaniment (which was identified as the third meaning of personalized education) can be exerted in a merely extrinsic orientation (if the teaching role is limited to curation or creation of learning environments or contexts). Therefore, the teaching function thus considered has a great chance to be replaced by the action of digital technologies. But the teaching function can also be configured as exemplary cause, fostering intrinsic orientation of personalization. When teacher´s practice becomes exemplary in any of the ways considered above and if the student internalizes this exemplarity through the development of internal capacities as a result of emulation, then something of the teaching function becomes irreplaceable by its own

virtue and nature. This not only happens regardless of the impact of digital revolution in education and its undeniable contributions to culture and learning, but also assures that students may take advantage fully of this revolution.

6. Conclusions

The main contributions of digital transformation to the development of personalized education have an extrinsic orientation and refer to the first and second meaning of personalization. Indeed, they encourage personalization through the multiplication of choice thresholds (first sense) and favor the contextual adaptation of teaching strategies to the interests, time, place and pace of the students (second sense).

Regarding the third sense of personalization (close accompaniment), certain pedagogical approaches limit teaching responsibility to the creation of contexts conducive to learning and conceive this accompaniment as an external support, instrumental in nature. Under these assumptions, the appearance of digital adaptive learning tools becomes a potential threat that heralds the replaceability of teaching action. The new digital platforms, despite their germinal state and their incipient degree of development, boast of their ability to select – without any teaching mediation – the best resources and activities for each student based on the information provided in their own learning process.

Given a deeper understanding of what educational personalization entails, the characterization of the teaching role also expands. While extrinsic accompaniment admits being replaced and even surpassed through the action of AI innovations, the exemplary dimension can only be replaced indirectly, as long as technology acts simply as a means to bring closer or enhance present or past, but real, human exemplarities.

In conclusion, the creation of contextual environments is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the development of intrinsic personalization. Teacher´s role not only needs to create an extrinsic context conducive to learning, providing knowledge, tools, activities and guidance (something

that can be solved with the use of technology). Teachers also needs to act as a role model. The exemplary role of teachers triggers a triple imitation by students: disciplinary, motivational and moral.

The exemplary condition of the teacher promotes the development of skills and abilities necessary to achieve personalization in a fourth sense: self-regulation or active learning. This is achieved when the student takes ownership of the process of his or her learning process, when he or she acquires cognitive and metacognitive abilities, and develop affective resources (mainly intrinsic motivation) for the development of intellectual and socio-emotional skills, achieving self-regulation necessary for life-long-learning. Once these intrinsic conditions have been deployed, the student will be able to choose a life project that contributes to his or her comprehensive development or full flourishing, however it is conceived. This integral flourishing constitutes the fifth and deepest aim of personalized education. Digital transformation can foster extrinsic personalization towards this aim, but intrinsic personalization remains a human enterprise that challenges both students and teachers.

7. Bibliography

Antonio, A. B., & Tuffley, D. 2015. "Promoting Information Literacy in Higher Education through Digital Curation". *M/C Journal*, *18* (4). https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.987.

Arthur, J. 2021. *A Christian Education in the Virtues. Character Formation and Human Flourishing*. London & New York: Routledge.

Bein, K. 2007. *Lo que hacen los mejores profesores en la Universidad*. Barcelona: Universitat de Valencia. 2ª. Ed.

Bandura, A. 1965, "Influence of models' reinforcement contingencies on the acquisition of imitative responses", *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 1(6), 589-595.

Bayley, T. & Belfield, C. R. 2017. *Stackable Credentials: Awards for the Future?* Columbia: Columbia Community College Research Center. Working Paper N°92. Recovered from

https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D82N57KM.

Bellomo, S. 2022. "The role of teachers in the context of new trends of digitized and personalized education". *Proceedings of ICERI2022 Conference. 7th- 9th November 2022*, 7031-7038.

Bellomo, S. 2023. *Educación aumentada: desafíos de la Educación en la era de la inteligencia artificial.* Geneva: Globethics Publications, 265p. DOI: 10.58863/20.500.12424/4293074.

Bernal Guerrero, A. 1999. Análisis del tratado de educación personalizada. Génesis y aportaciones. *Revista española de pedagogía*. año LVII, n.º 212, pp. 15-50.

Blythe, T. et al. 1998. *The Teaching for Understanding Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bulger, M. 2016, "Personalized learning: The conversations we're not having", *Data & Society*, Working Paper, 1–29. Recovered form https://datasociety.net/pubs/ecl/PersonalizedLearning_primer_2016.pdf.

Campos Arenas, A. 2017. *Enfoques de enseñanza basados en el aprendizaje*. Ediciones de la U: Bogotá.

Coll, C. 1987. *Psicología y curriculum*. Buenos Aires: Paidós.

Daugherty, L., Bahr, P. R., Nguyen, P., Trifiletti, J. M., Columbus, R., and Kushner, J. 2023. *Stackable Credential Pipelines and Equity for Low- Income Individuals: Evidence from Colorado and Ohio*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2023. Recovered from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA2484-1.html

Daura, F. 2021. "El aprendizaje auto-regulado y su orientación por parte del docente universitario". *Actas del Congreso Iberoamericano de Educación*. *Metas 2021*. Recovered from: https://www.adeepra.org.ar/congresos/Congreso%20IBEROAMERICANO/DOCENTES/RLE2992_Daura.pdf

Del Río Sadornil, D. y de Codés Martínez González, M. 2020. *Orientación educativa y tutoría*, Madrid: Sanz y Torres.

Díaz Dorronsoro, R. 2010, "La analogía", en Fernández Labastida, F. and Mercado, J.A. (eds.), *Philosophica: On-line philosophical encyclopedia*. Recovered from: http://www.philosophica.info/archivo/2010/voces/analogia/Analogia.html

García, A. 2012. "La Educación personalizada como herramienta imprescindible para atender la Diversidad en el Aula". *Revista latinoamericana de educación inclusiva.* Vol. 6, Nº 1, 177-189.

García Hoz, V. 1972. *Educación personalizada*. Buenos Aires: Kapeluz.

García Hoz, V. 1981. «La calidad de la educación: una interrogante a las ciencias de la educación, a la política docente y a la actividad escolar», en AAVV, *La calidad de la educación.* Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. Instituto Pedagógico San José de Calasanz, 9-23.

García Hoz, V. 1993. *Introducción general a una pedagogía de la persona*. Madrid: Rialp

García Hoz, V. 1994. "Sobre el concepto de educación personalizada y algunas derivaciones". *Anales.* Madrid: Academia Nacional de Ciencias Morales y Políticas. Tomo 19, 191-206.

Gallego Jimenez, G. y Otero Rodriguez, L.M. 2020. "Hacia una educación inclusiva y personalizada: opiniones e ideario educativo del profesorado". *Polyphōnia. Revista de Educación Inclusiva*. Vol. 4, Núm. 1, 47-70.

Garatte, L. y García Clúa, M. N. 2016. "La «Educación personalizada» en Argentina durante la última dictadura militar". *Ciencia, docencia y tecnología.* Vol. 27. Número 52.

Gates, B. 2016. *Technology's Promise to Education: Personalizing Learning*. Recovered from

https://www.gatesnotes.com/Education/Technologys- Promise-to-Education-Personalizing-Learning

Gattegno, C. 1987. *What We Owe Children. The Subordination of Teaching to Learning.* New York: Educational Solutions.

Gimeno Sacristán, J. (comp) 2008. *Educar por competencias. ¿Qué hay de nuevo?* Madrid: Morata.

González Álvarez. 1969. *Filosofía de la educación.* Buenos Aires: Troquel. 3ª. Ed.

Hartley, D. 2007. "Personalization: the emerging 'revised' code of education?" *Oxford Review of Education*, 33 (5), 629-642.

Holmes, W., Bialik, M. & Fadel, C. 2019. *Artificial Intelligence in Education, The Center for Curriculum Redesign*, Boston, 151-180. Recovered from DOI:10.58863/20.500.12424/4276068

Khan, S. (2024). *Brave New Words: how AI will revolutionize education (and why that's a good thing)* New York: Viking.

Kerssens, N. & Van Dijck, J. 2021. "The platformization of primary education in The Netherlands". *Learning, Media and Technology*, DOI: 10.1080/17439884.2021.1876725.

Kouwenhoven, W. 2009. "Competence-Based Curriculum Development in Higher Education: A Globalised Concept?". In Calafate, C (ed.), *Technology Education and Development*. Netherlands: Intech.

Li, H., Cui, W., Xu, Z., Zhu, Z. and Feng, M. 2019. "Yixue Adaptive Learning System and Its Promise on Improving Student Learning". *Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Computer Supported Education* (CSEDU 2018), 45-52. DOI: 10.5220/ 0006689800450052.

Miao, F., Holmes, W., Huang, R. y Zhang, H. 2021. *Al and Education, Guidance for Policymakers*. Paris: UNESCO.

Mindt, L. & Rieckmann, M. 2017. "Developing competencies for sustainability- driven entrepreneurship in higher education:

A literature review on teaching and learning methods". *Teoría de la educación*. Vol. 29, No. 1, 129-159. DOI: 10.14201/teoredu 291129159.

Molina, E., Cobo, C., Pineda, J. y Rovner, H. 2024. *La revolución de la IA en Educación: Lo que hay que saber. Innovaciones Digitales de Educación*. Banco Mundial.

Moskal, P., Carter, D., Johnson, D. 2017. "7 Things You Should Know About Adaptive Learning". *Educause Learning Inicitative*. Recovered from https://library.educause.edu/resources/2017/1/7-things-you-should- know- about-adaptive-learning.

Newton, D. 2000. *Teaching for Understanding. What it is and how to do it.* London & New York: Routledge/Falmer.

OECD 2019. "Student Agency 2010". *OECD Future of Education and Skills2030 Concept Note*. Recovered from https://www.oecd.org/ education/2030-project/teaching-and- learning/learning/student-agency/Student_Agency_for_2030_concept_note.pdf

Palacios, L. E., Medina, R., Forment, E., Román, M., Moreno, P., Marín, R. et al. 1989. *El concepto de persona*. Madrid: Rialp.

Pérez Guerrero, J. y Ahedo Ruiz, J. (2020). "La educación personalizada según García Hoz". *Revista complutense de educación*. 31(2) 2020, 153-161.

Perkins, D. 1985. *La escuela inteligente: del adiestramiento de la memoria a la educación de la mente.* Buenos Aires: Gedisa.

Perochena Gonzalez, P. y Coria, G.M. 2017. "La singularidad según la educación personalizada en la era digital". *Educación*, Vol. XXVI, N° 50, marzo 2017, 162-181. https://doi.org/1018800/ educacion.201701.009

Peters, M. A. 2009. "Personalization, Personalized Learning and the Reform of Social policy: the prospect of molecular governance in the digitized society". *Policy Futures in Education*, 7 (6), 615-627.

Pleschová, G. & McAlpine, L. 2016. "Helping teachers to focus on learning and reflect on their teaching: What role does teaching context play?" *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, [s. l.]. Vol. 48, 1–9. DOI 10.1016/j.stueduc.2015.10.002.

Research and Markets. 2024. *Global Smart Education & Learning Management Market by Learning Mode (Adaptive Learning, Blended Learning, Collaborative Learning), Component (Educational Content, Hardware, Services), End-User - Forecast 2024-2030.*
Recovered from: https://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/4904788/global-smart-education-and-learning-management#cat-pos-20

Pintrich, P. 2004. "A Conceptual Framework for Assessing Motivation and Self-Regulated Learning in College Students". *Educational Psychology Review*,16 (4), 385-407.

Rivas, A. 2019. *¿Quién controla el futuro de la educación?* Buenos Aires: SigloXXI.

Rivas, A. 2021. "The Platformization of Education: A framework to Map the NewDirections of Hybrid Education Systems". *Current and Critical Issues in Curriculum, Learning and Assessment*. IBE/Unesco, No. 46. Recovered from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377733

Rizzolatti, G. 2005. The mirror neuron system and its function in humans. *Anatomy and Embryology*, 210, 419-421.

Rodríguez, L.G. 2016. "La influencia de la pedagogía española en Argentina durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX: el caso de Víctor García Hoz". *Cuadernos del Instituto Antonio de Nebrija de Estudios sobre la Universidad*. Vol. 19, No. 2, 219-242. Recovered from http://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art_revistas/pr.9751/pr.9751.pdf

Rouhiainen, L. 2019. "How AI and Data Could Personalize Higher Education". *Harvard Business Review*. Recovered from: https://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/H056XO-PDF-ENG

Scott, C. 2014. *Learn to teach. Teach to learn*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Solís Sotomayor, Luis Xavier. 2014. Causas modales de la educación. *Sophia:* colección de Filosofía de la Educación, 17(2), 61-76.

Steiner, G. 2016. *Lecciones de los maestros*. Madrid: Siruela.

Ubaldi, B. 2020. "La transformación digital de los gobiernos. Lecciones desde distintas partes del mundo". In Bellomo S. y Oszlak, O. 2020. *Desafíos dela administración pública en el contexto de la revolución 4.0.* Buenos Aires:Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 179-209.

Unesco 2023. *Global Education Monitoring Report 2023: Technology in education – A tool on whose terms?* Paris, UNESCO. Recovered from https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385723

Vanbecelaere, S., Cornillie, F., Depaepe, F., Guerrero, R.G., Mavrikis, M., Vasalou, M. and Benton, L. 2021. "Technology-mediated personalised learning for younger learners: concepts, design, methods and practice", *Proceedings of the 2020 ACM Interaction Design and Children Conference: Extended Abstracts*, 126–134. Recovered from https://doi.org/10.1145/33976 17.3398059.

Weimer M. 2003. "Focus on Learning, Transform Teaching". *Change*. 35(5), 48-54. doi:10.1080/00091380309604119

Weinert, F. E. 2001. "Concept of competence: A conceptual clarification". In S. Rychen & L. H. Salganik (Eds.), *Defining and Selecting Key Competencies*, 45–65. Hogrefe & Huber Publishers.

Wiek, A., Bernstein, M.J., Foley, R.W., Cohen, M., Forrest, N., Kuzdas, C., Kay, B., Withycombe Keeler, L. 2016. "Operationalising Competencies in Higher Education for Sustainable Development". In Barth, M., Michelsen, G., Rieckmann, M., Thomas, I. (Eds.)

Routledge Handbook of Higher Education for Sustainable Development, 241-260. London and New York: Routledge.

Wisker, G., Exley, K. y Antoniou, M. 2008. *Working one-to-one with students: Supervising, Coaching, Mentoring and Personal Tutoring.* New York: Routledge.

Woolf University. 2018, *White Paper. Building the First Blockchain University*, Aug. 2018. Recovered from https://woolf.university/ in July 2018. Currently available https://kennison.name/files/ higher- ed/woolf-whitepaper.pdf

Yakel, E. 2007. "Digital curation". *OCLC Systems & Services*, 23(4), 335-340.

Zubiri, X. (1983). *Inteligencia y razón.* Madrid: Alianza.

8. Short biography

Santiago Bellomo is the Dean of the School of Education in Austral University, Buenos Aires, Argentina. He holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy, as well as a degree both in Philosophy and in Education Administration and Management. As an expert in education, he has made assessments to national and international organizations such IBD, World Bank, CONICET and Educ.Ar. He is also member of the *Pool of experts* of Globethics, in the field of *Ethics of digital and emerging technologies.*

He serves as a full-time lecturer in the Master's program in the Doctorate in Education and the Master in Law, Policy, and Environmental Management at Austral University. He is the author of 4 books and more than 20 papers in the field of philosophy of education and philosophy of innovation. His latest work, titled "Educación aumentada" (Globethics, 2023) delves into the challenges of education in the era of artificial intelligence.

Before joining this university, he has served as Undersecretary of the National Institute of Public Administration in his country, Director of Education at the Ministry of Energy and Mining of the Nation, Education Manager at the YPF Foundation, and Academic Secretary of Universidad Católica Argentina

Email: sbellomo@austral.edu.ar

Publish-or-Perish in Business Academia: Ethical Considerations

David S. Fowler, Louisiana State Univ.
Jon Musgrave, Morehead State Univ.
Jill Musgrave, Union College

December 2024

Keywords

Publish-or-perish, business academia, research ethics, predatory journals, accreditation requirements.

Abstract

This commentary critiques the publish-or-perish culture in business academia, driven by accreditation requirements, which pressures faculty to prioritize quantity over quality in research. It examines the impact of these pressures on research credibility and the rise of predatory journals. Ethical concerns regarding the necessity and impact of the resulting research are discussed. The article calls for reevaluating research priorities and advocating for high-quality, impactful studies that address significant business and societal challenges. By fostering ethical research practices and combating predatory journals, business academia can enhance the credibility and relevance of its contributions.

Corresponding Authors: Dr. David S. Fowler, Louisiana State University, Shreveport. Email: david.fowler@lsus.edu, Dr. Jon Musgrave, Morehead State University, Kentucky, Dr. Jill Musgrave, Union College, Kentucky.
To quote this article: Fowler, D.; Musgrave, Jon; Musgrave, Jill. 2024. "Publish-or-perish in Business Academia: Ethical Considerations". *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 5(2024): 35–50. DOI: 10.26034/fr.jehe.2024.6862 © the Author. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit https://jehe.globethics.net

1. Introduction

In the realm of business academia, the phrase "publish or perish" encapsulates a pervasive and intense pressure faced by faculty members (Bello et al., 2023). This culture mandates that academics must continuously publish their research to secure tenure, and promotions, and even to maintain their current positions. While the intent behind such a culture is to encourage ongoing research and the dissemination of new knowledge, it has also led to significant ethical dilemmas and challenges (Herndon, 2016).

The purpose of this article is to critique the ethical implications of this publish-or-perish paradigm, specifically focusing on the pressure to produce research that may not be necessary, valid, or impactful. This pressure is often driven by the need to meet stringent accreditation requirements, which prioritize the quantity of publications over their quality and relevance (Lee, 2014). As business schools strive to maintain or achieve accreditation, faculty members find themselves compelled to publish more frequently, sometimes at the expense of conducting meaningful and rigorous research.

This article will explore several key issues related to the publish-or-perish culture in business academia. Firstly, it will examine the impact of this culture on the credibility and validity of the research being produced. There will be a discussion on how the rush to publish can lead to questionable research practices, such as inadequate peer review and insufficient replication studies. Second, the article will analyze the necessity and impact of the research being conducted, questioning whether it truly addresses relevant business practices and societal needs. Finally, the rise of predatory journals, which exploit the pressure to publish by offering quick and easy publication opportunities, will be discussed. The ethical concerns and consequences of publishing in such journals will be highlighted.

By addressing these issues, this article aims to underscore the need for a more balanced and ethical approach to research in business academia.

It calls for a re-evaluation of research priorities that emphasizes quality over quantity, and the importance of producing research that is both valid and impactful. Through this critique, the article seeks to contribute to the ongoing conversation about how to foster a more ethical and meaningful research environment in business schools.

2. The Pressure to Publish for Accreditation

Historical Context and Current State

The publish-or-perish phenomenon has long been a cornerstone of academia, but its roots in business schools can be traced back to the mid-20th century (Doyle & Arthurs, 1995). As business education evolved, there was a growing emphasis on producing scholarly research to enhance the credibility and intellectual rigor of business programs. This drive was further amplified by the rise of accreditation bodies, which began to use publication records as a key metric for evaluating the quality of academic institutions (Wilson & Thomas, 2012).

Accreditation requirements for business schools generally place a strong emphasis on research productivity. Accrediting bodies, such as the AACSB and others, set standards that often prioritize the number of publications by faculty members as an indicator of academic excellence (Carraher, 2014). These standards aim to ensure that business schools contribute to the advancement of knowledge and maintain high educational standards. However, this has inadvertently created a high-pressure environment where faculty members are judged heavily on their publication records (Adams, 2003).

Across different business schools, the requirements for publication can vary significantly. Some institutions mandate a specific number of articles in top-tier journals for tenure and promotion (Valle & Schultz, 2011), while others may require a broader portfolio of research outputs, including books and conference presentations. Despite these variations, the underlying pressure to publish frequently and in prestigious outlets remains a common thread. This drive for continuous publication often

leads faculty to prioritize quantity over quality, resulting in a landscape where the sheer volume of research is celebrated, sometimes at the expense of its significance and rigor (Sandström & van den Besselaar, 2016).

Impacts on Business Faculty

The relentless pressure to publish can have profound impacts on business faculty members. One of the most significant consequences is the stress and burnout (Padilla & Thompson, 2016) associated with meeting publication demands. Faculty members often find themselves juggling multiple roles, including teaching, administrative duties, and research. The expectation to produce a steady stream of publications adds to this workload, leading to high levels of stress and, in many cases, burnout. This not only affects the well-being of the faculty but also their ability to engage in meaningful and innovative research (Li et al., 2019).

Moreover, the publish-or-perish culture creates a dilemma between quantity and quality in research publications. Faculty members may feel compelled to focus on producing a high number of publications to meet accreditation and institutional requirements. This can lead to a proliferation of research that may not be thoroughly vetted or significant (Martins et al., 2020). The pressure to publish quickly and frequently can result in cutting corners, such as insufficient peer review or inadequate replication studies, ultimately compromising the credibility and reliability of the research.

The emphasis on quantity over quality also influences the types of research topics that are pursued. Faculty members might opt for safer, more traditional research areas that are likely to yield publishable results, rather than exploring innovative or high-risk topics that could have a greater impact but carry a higher chance of failure (Chen et al., 2006). This conservative approach to research can stifle creativity and limit the advancement of knowledge in the field of business.

The pressure to publish for accreditation purposes has deep historical roots and continues to shape the landscape of business academia. While accreditation aims to uphold high standards, the resultant publish-or-

perish culture places significant stress on faculty members and often prioritizes the quantity of research over its quality and impact. This section highlights the need to reevaluate how research productivity is measured and encouraged within business schools, advocating for a more balanced and ethical approach to academic publishing.

3. Evaluating Research Quality and Necessity in Business Academia

Credibility of Research

The credibility of business research produced under the pressure of accreditation requirements is a critical issue. While the intent behind these requirements is to ensure a high standard of academic excellence, the resultant rush to publish often compromises the quality of the research (Bauchner, 2017). One of the primary concerns is the replication crisis, where many studies cannot be reproduced or validated by other researchers. This issue is particularly pronounced in business academia, where the pressure to produce novel findings can lead to a lack of thoroughness in research methodologies.

Validity and reliability are fundamental pillars of credible research, yet they are often undermined in the publish-or-perish culture. Validity refers to the extent to which a study accurately reflects the concept it aims to measure, while reliability pertains to the consistency of the research results (Heale & Twycross, 2015). Under the pressure to publish, researchers might cut corners, leading to studies that are poorly designed, inadequately controlled, or based on insufficient data. These practices not only diminish the credibility of individual studies but also erode trust in the field as a whole (Leek & Jager, 2017).

Examples of questionable research practices abound in business academia. These include p-hacking, where researchers manipulate data until they achieve statistically significant results (Elliott et al., 2022), and HARKing (Hypothesizing After the Results are Known), where

hypotheses are retroactively fitted to the results obtained (Baruch, 2023). Such practices can lead to the publication of misleading or incorrect findings, further contributing to the replication crisis and diminishing the overall quality of business research.

Necessity and Impact of Research

Beyond credibility, the necessity and impact of the research being published in business academia are also areas of concern. A critical analysis reveals that not all research being produced is essential or impactful (Reed et al., 2021). The pressure to publish can lead to an overemphasis on quantity, resulting in a proliferation of studies that may not significantly advance knowledge or address pressing business and societal issues.

The relevance of research topics is crucial in determining the necessity and impact of studies. Under the publish-or-perish paradigm, there is a tendency to focus on "safe" topics that are more likely to result in publishable findings rather than exploring innovative or high-risk areas that could have a greater societal impact. This conservative approach can limit the scope of research and prevent significant advancements in the field.

Examples of impactful vs. inconsequential business research highlight this disparity. Impactful research addresses critical issues such as ethical leadership, employee well-being, and sustainable business practices, offering insights that can lead to tangible improvements in business practices and societal outcomes (Wickert et al., 2021). In contrast, inconsequential research might involve niche topics with limited applicability or studies that reiterate well-established findings without adding new value (Koskela, 2017). The ethical considerations of publishing such research are significant, as it involves dedicating resources and intellectual effort to work that may not provide meaningful contributions to the field.

Publishing research that lacks practical significance or societal impact raises ethical questions about the responsible use of academic resources

and the role of business academia in addressing real-world problems. It is essential for business schools and researchers to critically evaluate the necessity and impact of their work, prioritizing studies that offer valuable insights and solutions to contemporary business challenges.

4. The Rise of Predatory Journals

Definition and Characteristics

Predatory journals are a relatively recent phenomenon in the academic publishing landscape, emerging as a direct consequence of the publish-or-perish culture. These journals are characterized by their exploitative practices, wherein they prioritize profit over scholarly integrity and rigor. Unlike legitimate academic journals, predatory journals often lack proper peer review processes, have dubious editorial standards, and charge exorbitant fees to authors for publication (Richtig et al., 2018).

The primary goal of predatory journals is to capitalize on the urgent need for faculty to publish their research, often by promising rapid and guaranteed publication. Common tactics used by these journals to exploit business faculty include aggressive and misleading email solicitations, promises of quick peer review and publication, and the absence of a genuine editorial board (Laine & Winker, 2017). They often mimic the appearance of reputable journals, making it difficult for researchers, especially those under significant pressure, to discern their true nature.

These journals also frequently list fraudulent impact factors and fake affiliations with established institutions to lure unsuspecting authors. Once a manuscript is submitted, authors may face unexpected fees and are often left with subpar publication quality, which can damage their academic reputation and the perceived value of their work.

Ethical Concerns and Consequences

Publishing in predatory journals raises significant ethical concerns. The most immediate issue is the compromise of academic integrity. When

researchers publish in these journals, the lack of rigorous peer review means that the quality and validity of the research are not properly vetted. This can lead to the dissemination of flawed or incorrect findings, which undermines the credibility of academic research as a whole (Xia et al., 2015).

The impact on the dissemination of business knowledge is profound. Research published in predatory journals is often not indexed in major academic databases, limiting its visibility and impact. This means that potentially valuable insights and findings may go unnoticed by the broader academic and professional communities. Moreover, the association with predatory journals can tarnish the reputation of the researchers involved and their institutions, leading to long-term consequences for their careers and the standing of their academic programs (Mathew et al., 2022).

Ethically, there is also a concern about the misuse of resources. Faculty members who invest time, effort, and sometimes personal funds (XIA, 2015) to publish in predatory journals are effectively diverting these resources away from more credible and impactful research endeavours. This not only affects the individual researchers but also the broader academic community and the stakeholders who rely on high-quality, reliable business research to inform practice and policy.

The proliferation of predatory journals also perpetuates the cycle of low-quality research (Beall, 2016). As these journals continue to profit from the desperation of faculty under publish-or-perish pressures, they encourage the production of substandard work. This creates a feedback loop where the focus shifts further away from meaningful, rigorous research towards mere publication volume.

5. A Call for Ethical Research Practices in Business Academia

Reevaluating Research Priorities

The publish-or-perish culture in business academia necessitates a re-evaluation of research priorities to ensure that quality and ethical considerations are at the forefront. Business schools must shift their focus from the sheer quantity of publications to the integrity and impact of the research produced. This involves fostering an environment where ethical research practices are encouraged and valued over meeting publication quotas.

One proposal for institutional change is to redefine the criteria for faculty evaluations and promotions (Schimanski & Alperin, 2018). Instead of heavily weighting the number of publications, institutions should emphasize the quality, rigor, and relevance of the research. This can be achieved by incorporating peer assessments, evaluating the practical impact of the research, and recognizing contributions to societal issues and business practices. Additionally, institutions should provide more robust support for faculty engaging in high-quality research (Niles et al., 2020), such as offering grants, reducing teaching loads, and providing access to resources for conducting thorough and meaningful studies.

Encouraging Meaningful Business Research

Encouraging high-quality, impactful research requires a cultural shift within business academia. Faculty should be incentivized to pursue studies that address significant business challenges and societal needs rather than focusing on topics that are simply publishable. This can be achieved by implementing stricter guidelines and support systems for ethical publishing.

Business schools should establish clear ethical standards for research, including guidelines for avoiding questionable practices like p-hacking

and HARKing (Banks et al., 2016). Institutions can also create support structures, such as research ethics committees, to provide guidance and oversight for faculty research projects. Mentorship programs can pair junior faculty with experienced researchers to promote best practices and foster a commitment to ethical research.

Moreover, institutions should celebrate and reward impactful research (Upton et al., 2014). Awards and recognition programs can highlight studies that have made significant contributions to the field, demonstrating that meaningful research is highly valued. By shifting the focus from quantity to quality, business schools can foster a more ethical and impactful research culture.

Combating Predatory Journals

To combat the influence of predatory journals, business schools must take proactive steps to educate faculty and implement institutional policies that discourage engagement with these exploitative entities. Education is a crucial first step. Institutions should provide training and resources to help faculty identify predatory journals, including clear criteria and examples of red flags to watch for. Workshops, seminars, and online resources can raise awareness and equip researchers with the knowledge they need to avoid (Masic, 2021) these journals.

Institutional and collective efforts to blacklist (Das & Chatterjee, 2018) predatory journals are also essential. Academic societies, accrediting bodies, and institutions can collaborate to create and maintain comprehensive lists of known predatory journals. By making these lists widely available and encouraging their use, the academic community can collectively diminish the influence of predatory publishers.

Additionally, business schools can implement policies that discourage publication (Kakamad et al., 2020) in predatory journals. These policies might include refusing to consider publications in known predatory journals for tenure and promotion decisions, thereby removing the incentive for faculty to engage with these entities. Institutions can also support faculty in submitting their work to reputable journals by

providing resources for journal selection and offering financial support for publication fees in legitimate open-access journals.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, addressing the publish-or-perish culture in business academia requires a shift towards prioritizing ethical research practices that emphasize quality and relevance over sheer quantity. The pressure to meet accreditation standards has led to significant challenges, including compromised research integrity and the rise of predatory journals. By reevaluating research priorities, encouraging impactful studies, and implementing strategies to combat unethical publishing practices, business schools can foster a more balanced and ethical approach to academic research. This shift will not only enhance the credibility and significance of business research but also ensure that it contributes meaningfully to both academia and society.

7. References

Adams, J. 2003. Assessing Faculty Performance for Merit: An Academic Accomplishment Index. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, *58*(3), 239–250. https://doi.org/10.1177/107769580305800303

Banks, G. C., O'Boyle, E. H., Pollack, J. M., White, C. D., Batchelor, J. H., Whelpley, C. E., Abston, K. A., Bennett, A. A., & Adkins, C. L. 2016. Questions About Questionable Research Practices in the Field of Management. *Journal of Management*, *42*(1), 5–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206315619011

Baruch, Y. 2023. HARKing can be good for science: Why, when, and how c/should we Hypothesizing After Results are Known or Proposing research questions After Results are Known. *Human Resource Management Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12534

Bauchner, H. 2017. The Rush to Publication: An Editorial and Scientific Mistake. *JAMA*, *318*(12), 1109. https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2017.11816

Beall, J. 2016. Best practices for scholarly authors in the age of predatory journals. *The Annals of The Royal College of Surgeons of England*, *98*(2), 77–79. https://doi.org/10.1308/rcsann.2016.0056

Bello, S. A., Azubuike, F. C., & Akande, O. A. 2023. Reputation disparity in teaching and research productivity and rewards in the context of consequences of institutionalization of Publish or Perish culture in academia. *Higher Education Quarterly*, *77*(3), 574–584. https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12417

Carraher, S. M. 2014. AACSB standards, Academy of Management and 3000 Citations. *Journal of Management History*, *20*(4). https://doi.org/10.1108/JMH-06-2014-0125

Chen, Y., Gupta, A., & Hoshower, L. 2006. Factors That Motivate Business Faculty to Conduct Research: An Expectancy Theory Analysis. *Journal of Education for Business*, *81*(4), 179–189. https://doi.org/10.3200/JOEB.81.4.179-189

Das, S., & Chatterjee, S. S. 2018. Cabell's Blacklist: A New Way to Tackle Predatory Journals. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, *40*(2), 197–198. https://doi.org/10.4103/IJPSYM.IJPSYM_290_17

Doyle, J. R., & Arthurs, A. J. 1995. Judging the quality of research in business schools: The UK as a case study. *Omega*, *23*(3), 257–270. https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-0483(95)00013-E

Elliott, G., Kudrin, N., & Wüthrich, K. 2022. Detecting p-Hacking. *Econometrica*, *90*(2), 887–906. https://doi.org/10.3982/ECTA18583

Heale, R., & Twycross, A. 2015. Validity and reliability in quantitative studies. *Evidence Based Nursing*, *18*(3), 66–67. https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2015-102129

Herndon, N. C. 2016. Research Fraud and the Publish or Perish World of Academia. *Journal of Marketing Channels*, *23*(3), 91–96. https://doi.org/10.1080/1046669X.2016.1186469

Kakamad, F. H., Mohammed, S. H., Najar, K. A., Qadr, G. A., Ahmed, J. O., Mohammed, K. K., Salih, R. Q., Hassan, M. N., Mikael, T. M., Kakamad, S. H., Baba, H. O., Aziz, M. S., Rahim, H. M., Ahmmad, D. R., Hussein, D. A., Ali, R. A., Hammood, Z. D., Essa, R. A., & Hassan, H. A. 2020. Kscien's list; a new strategy to discourage predatory journals and publishers. *International Journal of Surgery Open*, *23*, 54–56. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijso.2019.11.001

Koskela, L. 2017. Why is management research irrelevant? *Construction Management and Economics*, *35*(1–2), 4–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/01446193.2016.1272759

Laine, C., & Winker, M. A. 2017. Identifying predatory or pseudo-journals. *Biochemia Medica*, *27*(2), 285–291. https://doi.org/10.11613/BM.2017.031

Lee, I. 2014. Publish or perish: The myth and reality of academic publishing. *Language Teaching*, *47*(2), 250–261. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444811000504

Leek, J. T., & Jager, L. R. 2017. Is Most Published Research Really False? *Annual Review of Statistics and Its Application*, *4*(1), 109–122. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-statistics-060116-054104

Li, Y., Li, Y., & Castaño, G. 2019. The impact of teaching-research conflict on job burnout among university teachers. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, *31*(1), 76–90. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCMA-05-2019-0080

Martins, R. S., Cheema, D. A., & Sohail, M. R. 2020. The Pandemic of Publications: Are We Sacrificing Quality for Quantity? *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, *95*(10), 2288–2290. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mayocp.2020.07.026

Masic, I. 2021. Predatory Journals and Publishers - Dilemmas: How to Assess it and How to Avoid it? *Medical Archives*, *75*(5), 328. https://doi.org/10.5455/medarh.2021.75.328-334

Mathew, R. P., Patel, V., & Low, G. 2022. Predatory Journals- The Power of the Predator Versus the Integrity of the Honest. *Current Problems in Diagnostic Radiology*, *51*(5), 740–746. https://doi.org/10.1067/j.cpradiol.2021.07.005

Niles, M. T., Schimanski, L. A., McKiernan, E. C., & Alperin, J. P. 2020. Why we publish where we do: Faculty publishing values and their relationship to review, promotion and tenure expectations. *PLOS ONE*, *15*(3), e0228914. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0228914

Padilla, M. A., & Thompson, J. N. 2016. Burning Out Faculty at Doctoral Research Universities. *Stress and Health*, *32*(5), 551–558. https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.2661

Reed, M. S., Ferré, M., Martin-Ortega, J., Blanche, R., Lawford-Rolfe, R., Dallimer, M., & Holden, J. 2021. Evaluating impact from research: A methodological framework. *Research Policy*, *50*(4), 104147. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2020.104147

Richtig, G., Berger, M., Lange-Asschenfeldt, B., Aberer, W., & Richtig, E. 2018. Problems and challenges of predatory journals. *Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology*, *32*(9), 1441–1449. https://doi.org/10.1111/jdv.15039

Sandström, U., & van den Besselaar, P. 2016. Quantity and/or Quality? The Importance of Publishing Many Papers. *PLOS ONE*, *11*(11), e0166149. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0166149

Schimanski, L. A., & Alperin, J. P. 2018. The evaluation of scholarship in academic promotion and tenure processes: Past, present, and future. *F1000Research*, *7*, 1605. https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.16493.1

Upton, S., Vallance, P., & Goddard, J. 2014. From outcomes to process: evidence for a new approach to research impact assessment. *Research Evaluation*, *23*(4), 352–365. https://doi.org/10.1093/reseval/rvu021

Valle, M., & Schultz, K. 2011. The etiology of top-tier publications in management. *Career Development International*, *16*(3), 220–237. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620431111140138

Wickert, C., Post, C., Doh, J. P., Prescott, J. E., & Prencipe, A. 2021. Management Research that Makes a Difference: Broadening the Meaning of Impact. *Journal of Management Studies*, *58*(2), 297–320. https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12666

Wilson, D. C., & Thomas, H. 2012. The legitimacy of the business of business schools: what's the future? *Journal of Management Development*, *31*(4), 368–376. https://doi.org/10.1108/02621711211219040

Xia, J. 2015. Predatory journals and their article publishing charges. *Learned Publishing*, *28*(1), 69–74. https://doi.org/10.1087/20150111

Xia, J., Harmon, J. L., Connolly, K. G., Donnelly, R. M., Anderson, M. R., & Howard, H. A. 2015. Who publishes in "predatory" journals? *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, *66*(7), 1406–1417. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.23265

8. Short biography

Dr David Fowler is an Assistant Professor of Management for the Louisiana State University (LSU) System, at LSU-Shreveport's College of Business, in the United-States, where he is teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in management and organizational strategy. Previously he served as Chair of the Department of Business Administration at Newberry College.

Email: david.fowler@lsus.edu

Dr. Jon Musgrave is an Assistant Professor of Management at Morehead State University, Elmer R. Smith College of Business. He teaches graduate and undergraduate management courses on organizational behavior and human resource management. Dr. Jon Musgrave received a Ph.D. in Human Resource Development with a specialization in Organizational Development and Change from The University of Texas at Tyler. His research focuses on leadership, strategic human resource management, and organizational behavior.

Email: j.musgrave@moreheadstate.edu

Dr. Jill Musgrave is an Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice and the program director of the Criminal Justice Department at Union College Kentucky. She teaches undergraduate courses on criminal justice. Dr. Jill Musgrave received a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Indiana State University.

The Footsteps on the Sands of AI for Higher Education: Moving Beyond Ad-Hoc

Julie Lindsay, Lisa Jacka,
University of Southern Queensland,
Australia

December 2024.

Keywords

Artificial intelligence, higher education, integration, framework, academic efficiency, learning design, assessment

Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers an array of challenges and opportunities for higher education (HE). What once seemed like science fiction has become ubiquitous with AI now used to support the intellectual and creative work of faculty and students. The authors have been experimenting with AI, trialling and testing ways to meaningfully utilise the tools for teaching and learning. The University of Southern Queensland, a successful distance education regional university in Australia, has over 70% of its enrollment learning online. This paper shares a timely contextual perspective on AI support of Academic Efficiency, Learning Design, and Assessment. It discusses moving beyond an ad-hoc approach to a seamless integration of AI.

Corresponding Authors: Julie Lindsay, Lisa Jacka, University of Southern Queensland, Australia. Email: julie.lindsay@unisq.edu.au

To quote this article: Lindsay, J., Jacka, L. 2024. "The Footsteps on the Sands of AI for Higher Education: Moving Beyond Ad-Hoc". *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 5(2024): 51–77. DOI: 10.26034/fr.jehe.2024.6863 © the Author. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit https://jehe.globethics.net

1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is taking higher education by storm in both disruptive and positive ways. On one hand the ubiquitous nature of AI is effortlessly supporting intellectual and creative work of faculty and students. On the other hand, it is an ethical menace, imposing bias, with a lack of diversity. Wang et al. (2024) identifies four technological affordances: accessibility, personalization, automation, and interactivity; and five challenges: academic integrity risk, response errors and bias, over-dependence risk, the widening digital divide, and privacy and security and these neatly define areas of research and focus. However, AI is not merely a new set of technologies or associated pedagogies. Through a more complex system supported by technologies it integrates pedagogical, social and cultural dimensions (Xu & Ouyang, 2021).

This discussion paper shares the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) perspective on AI and its impact in our context, a regional university in Australia known for success with distant and online learning in the past 30 years. Working with teams within the university has proven insightful in relation to how AI can support Academic Efficiency, Learning Design, and Assessment. We share the shifting focus from 'adhoc' to seamless integration via establishing a framework and activities inclusive of all stakeholders.

2. Literature Review

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become big business with the AI market worth $140b in 2022 and expected to grow to over $200b by 2025 with the exponential growth of AI tools supporting increased productivity (Ganesan & Mosier, 2024). Business and education do not always work well together and as such the uptake of technologies, like AI, is often out of step with the uptake in the wider community (Kong & Yang, 2024).

AI has been discussed since the 1950s and it is widely accepted that the term was first coined at the Dartmouth Conference in 1956. The fundamental premise at that time was that the computer could replicate the skills that a human had when solving mathematical theorems (Cordeschi, 2007). By the

1960s there was progress made in natural language processing, computer vision, and expert systems. All of this supported the development to what we are now able to access via our home computer systems due to an increase in processing speed and hardware capabilities. One definition of AI is "computing systems that are able to engage in human-like processes such as learning, adapting, synthesizing, self-correction and use of data for complex processing tasks" (Popenici & Kerr, 2017, p.2).

While generative AI (GenAI) has been around since the 1960s it wasn't until ChatGPT was launched into the wider community and the ease with which it could be manipulated that AI became knowingly ubiquitous and people outside of the scientific community started to take note. This was particularly acute in certain industries, including education. Unfortunately, one of the main reasons that education became interested in AI en masse was the revelation that AI could generate answers to assessment tasks without being detected by universities. Generative AI supported these processes as the combination of the large language models (LLM) and the development of an interface that allowed natural language prompts to 'converse' with the AI tools came into being. In November 2022 ChatGPT was released, providing a chat-based interface to the GPT3.5 LLM. By doing so, the world of GenAI was opened to millions of users and the floodgates opened to a mass response to what this will mean to education.

Using AI in education has been referred to as AIEd. Hwang et al. (2020) defines AIEd as the use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) technologies or application programs in educational settings to facilitate teaching, learning, or decision-making. Crompton and Burke (2023) evaluated AIEd research literature to reveal an emphasis on student learning and AI. They stated, "Of the 138 articles, the a priori coding shows that 72% of the studies focused on Students, followed by a focus on Instructors at 17%, and Managers at 11%" (Crompton & Burke, 2023, p. 12). The study revealed that faculty affiliated with schools of education are taking an increasing role in researching the use of AIEd in HE. As this body of knowledge grows, faculty in Schools of Education should share their research regarding the pedagogical affordances of AI so that this knowledge can be applied across disciplines. Investigating how AI is used in HE, Crompton and Burke (2023) found five

key areas: (1) Assessment/Evaluation, (2) Predicting, (3) AI Assistant, (4) Intelligent Tutoring System (ITS), and (5) Managing Student Learning.

The 2020 Horizon Report for Teaching and Learning (Brown et al., 2020) presented Artificial Intelligence as one of the six emerging technologies and practices. At that time, they cited the use of AI as starting to emerge in Learning Management Systems (LMS's), student services and other productivity applications. A small number of projects were starting to use chatbots to support students' learning. However, in the 2023 Horizon Report (Pelletier et al., 2023) AI becomes much more prominent, reflecting the impact of the emergence of Generative AI applications into mainstream consciousness as of November 2022 with the introduction of ChatGPT3.5. The 2023 Horizon Report discusses AI-enabled applications for predictive, personal learning as well as generative AI as two distinctive areas worthy of their own exploration. The 2024 edition of the Horizon Report (Pelletier et al., 2024) continues to flag AI as an important part of the technological landscape of higher education. What is now being focussed on is finding the right uses and being "cautiously optimistic, [while] staying aware of risks and pitfalls" (p. 22). The report does highlight the significance of AI by placing it as an honorary trend that has an impact in all six trends - social, technological, economics, environmental and political.

AI literacy has been flagged as fundamental to the effective and ethical use of AI in education (Ng et al., 2024). A multifaceted approach is required to cover the needs of being AI literate, including comprehending the ethical implications, critically evaluating AI technologies, integrating the tools into teaching and learning, and having an overall understanding and appreciation for what AI can do for us and with us. AI literacy development should be focused on equipping faculty and students with the knowledge and skills to leverage AI ethically and responsibly (Chen & Lin, 2023; Otero et al., 2023). Despite the importance of AI literacy for all citizens Figaredo and Stoyanovich (2023) found that most of the literacy education work to date was being done in K-12.

Southworth et al. (2023) discuss the importance of AI literacy and how the inclusion of it in higher education has been within the discipline areas of

computing and engineering. They rightly claim that AI literacy needs to infiltrate across disciplines so that students can interact with the AI-infused world. They also claim a distinction between AI literacy and AI pedagogy, noting that pedagogy includes the methods and strategies for teaching about AI which may include students having opportunities to learn experientially. While "AI literacy is the ability to understand, use, evaluate, and ethically navigate AI" (p. 5). Southworth et al. (2023) describe a project that they undertook across the whole university to design and embed an AI pedagogy to support AI literacy called AI Across the Curriculum.

There is no doubt that AI is impacting on learning and teaching in higher education and has been doing so prior to the proliferation of AI apps and Generative AI tools. Popenici and Kerr (2017) flagged the need for a response from Higher Ed to fully integrate AI in a meaningful way. Designing and implementing an AI framework for education is one way forward to shift the current practice from ad-hoc to planned and implemented with intention and meaning. Chiu et al. (2023) claim to have designed the first pre-tertiary AI curriculum - AI4Future. The framework was co-created with the teachers and the evaluation revealed that the teachers felt empowered and enabled to implement AI in their classrooms. Another example of developing an AI curriculum for K-12 comes out of Macquarie University in NSW, Australia, one in which a collaboration with IBM resulted in the IBM Artificial Intelligence (AI) Curriculum.

While most higher education institutions are rapidly developing professional development approaches to support and drive capabilities in the use of AI with faculty, there is limited evidence of specific frameworks for AI in higher education. The literature to date appears to demonstrate that the development of frameworks for improving AI literacy is limited to curriculums or courses as distinct from a framework that might include an overarching approach that includes several teaching and learning opportunities relevant for higher education. Kong and Yang (2024) illustrate this point as they discuss progress in the K-12 context citing a "lag in integration is especially evident when compared with its rapid adoption in fields, such as healthcare, business operations, and software engineering" (p. 1588). They do recognise the work being done by organisations such as the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Australian government but see these as foundational guides rather than practical applications.

One well-established framework for the integration of technology in education is TPCK (technological, pedagogical, content, knowledge). Interestingly, Mishra et al. (2023), have revisited TPCK in the context of AI generating a discussion focussed on what teachers need to know to effectively integrate these tools in their teaching. They analyse the knowledge domains that are most affected by GenAI and highlight its unique properties, such as being generative and social. Ultimately, they conclude that educators will only understand the technology by understanding its strengths and weaknesses and the broader systemic and cultural contexts in which it operates.

If we take Alan Turing's imitation game (now known as the Turing Test) as one of the ways that we recognise Artificial Intelligence as successful; that the machine can exhibit intelligent behaviour. Then we might apply this test to our interactions with GenAI. If we feel that the interactions are that of a human, then the AI tool has passed the test. However, this alignment between machine and human is one that has raised uncomfortable questions about human worth and the role of machines. Previously left to the domain of philosophy, ethics and philosophical debates have appeared in the mainstream consciousness. However, we are still in the very early stages of adopting ethical guidelines as Hagendorff (2020, p. 100) observes “efforts to create a truly binding legal framework are continuously discouraged” thus resulting in guidelines that are not adhered to. Hagendorff (2020) analysed and compared 22 guidelines in a project supported by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation). The European Union has been a major player in attempting to implement AI ethics with the world's first AI Act coming into place in March 2024. From the 22 guidelines, they identified a range of issues, many of which did not occur in multiple guidelines. The top 6 were 1) privacy protection, 2) fairness, non-discrimination, justice, 3) accountability, 4) transparency, openness, 5) safety, cybersecurity, 6) common good, sustainability, wellbeing. Similarly, Morley et al. (2021) discuss the difficulties faced when

trying to operationalise ethics guidelines and pro-ethical design. In large part due to the abstract nature of the ethical considerations. One way forward they suggest is "AI ethics researchers, in collaboration with journalists and public engagement specialists, should focus on making AI ethics relatable—both to AI practitioners and to the public" (p. 418).

As AI becomes a central focus for higher education worldwide and the hype around AI being the death of learning dies down, faculty are seeking better ways to understand how AI can be utilised in their work lives. In this paper we will discuss ways that we in the Learning and Teaching Futures portfolio are working with faculty to unpack, explore and innovate with AI. We have identified three key areas - 1) Academic Efficiency, 2) Learning Design and 3) Assessment.

3. Academic Efficiency

Academic efficiencies relate to how AI can help reduce the time taken to undertake course design, teaching preparation, teaching, feedback and assessment. What equates to time efficiency is the increase in capacity of what the faculty can achieve. Shorter time frames on mundane tasks allow the faculty to dig deeper into content and/or pedagogy. The imperative is to be moving from discussion about ethics, problems, and possibilities towards clearer planning, piloting, and evaluating of AI tools. We are beginning to see this with faculty using AI to support their processes of research, writing and content development (Barros et al., 2023; Chubb et al., 2021). Barros et al. (2023) illustrate this with examples of ways that AI is becoming integral to academics work in the areas of teaching, research and service. They suggest that AI should enhance, not diminish, human aspects of education, research, and service with a critical, human-centric approach being essential. As such AI has the capacity to do some of the drudgery work, leaving more time for faculty to engage in the work that inspires them and their students.

Access to GenAI is a game changer, requiring very little orientation to produce effective responses. Al-Mughairi and Bhaskar (2024) found timesaving as one of the top four themes motivating teachers to adopt ChatGPT for their educational purpose. One of the main tools that UniSQ has

invested in is Copilot. Chosen by many higher education institutions who are already utilising Microsoft products, Copilot provides a seemingly 'safe' environment, one in which the user logs in via their institution's credentials. Examples of output include question generation, lesson plan templates and rubric generation. Once the user starts to interact with Copilot, they find that they can learn how best to ask questions. This skill translates to how one might be asking questions or giving instructions to colleagues and students.

To take the usefulness of the GenAI to a level beyond simply doing tasks the user needs to develop skills in what is called 'prompt engineering' (or prompt design). The art of designing, writing, and fine-tuning prompts supports enhanced conversations and more efficient output from AI tools. Prompt engineering and design strategies are becoming a crucial competency to augment teaching and learning (Eager & Brunton, 2023). If the faculty learns how to design prompts that can be reused through a process of simple substitution of key parts of the prompt, they further increase efficiency. As with all technology there is an initial learning curve that can feel time-consuming. However, one of the future payoffs is in the time saved.

Asking any AI tool to undertake the drudgery tasks of faculty may be similar to hiring a research assistant. However, do the same ethical approaches apply when asking AI to do a literature search as they might with a person? In creating the final product, such as a manuscript, to what extent should the use of an AI tool be credited? Stokel-Walker (2023, para. 4) suggests that an AI does not "fulfil the criteria for a study author, because they cannot take responsibility for the content and integrity of scientific papers". Currently "Generative AI tools are nonlegal entities and are incapable of accepting responsibility and accountability for the content within the manuscript" (Tang et al., 2024, p. 315) but will laws be made to counter this situation? One in which some entity will be seen somewhere as a legal entity behind the AI tool?

Consider that we have been using spell and grammar check tools for at least twenty years. These use AI to suggest alternatives to what we have written; however, do we credit MS Word or Grammarly when we submit a manuscript? Equally, how many faculty acknowledge the input of a research

assistant or critical friend who may have read their work and made suggestions? The issue has become authorship and the attribution of AI-generated content. Many faculty are wondering this as they are imposing similar rules upon their students to stop them 'cheating'. How much of the work can be done by AI before it is no longer a representation of our own work and why is this important?

At UniSQ one of our researchers has developed a GenAI literacy framework for research - Principles of ETHICAL Generative AI use (Eacersall, 2024).

- E - Examine existing policy/guidelines
- T - Think about the social impacts
- H - Have knowledge of the technology
- I - Indicate use
- C - Critically engage with and revise outputs
- A - Access secure and protected versions
- L - Look at user agreements

Furthermore, the library skills team has produced information about Academic Integrity and the current policy on the use of AI (Hargreaves et al., 2024). The Digital Experience Manager states:

> "Copyright of content generated by AI is complex. It is a rapidly evolving space with many legal uncertainties. Some people argue that there is no copyright since the output was not produced by a human, whereas others acknowledge that generative AI is illegally using copyright material for training itself, which might make anything it produces a breach of copyright. There will be no clear answer until this is resolved via the courts. (Nikki Andersen in Hargreaves et al., 2024)

The focus of AI use under the banner or Academic Integrity has been prominent in Higher Education. However, the important work of learning design and thus AI integration across the student experience is paramount to achieving sustainable success in this area.

4. Learning Design

Studies have shown that AI can enhance learning experiences by providing personalised, including automated feedback, and targeted content delivery (Chu et al., 2022). To integrate AI and achieve these successes good learning design must be undertaken. Learning design requires a complex mix of skills that may come from utilising a team of designers or may reside within the scope of one faculty member or designer. Whatever the strategy, learning design in a digital AI world involves a mix of knowing what to build and knowing how to build it using the tools available and a knowledge of learners' needs and good digital pedagogy/andragogy/heutagogy.

One of the many affordances that AI tools are providing faculty and learning designers is an increase in the ease in which learning objects can be created. Research has shown that learning needs to be active and in a digital context, this is even more important. However, including interactive multimedia in learning environments often requires a high level of skills in building these objects. What has become clear with the widespread development of AI tools is that many of these tools are focused on supporting the user to create with greater ease and speed than they previously were able to do. While this may seem to be a fantastic development for those working in learning design this raises ethical considerations in relation to whether the learning designer may become redundant as the ‘less skilled’ faculty become more able to create objects for their courses.

An example of use at UniSQ is the exploration of the AI tool Nolej.ai. Nolej uses AI to generate engaging, interactive content from existing materials such as textbooks, articles, videos, audio and other online media resources. It does this by scanning the material and creating a range of interactive artefacts including multiple choice quizzes, interactive video, flipcards, summaries and transcripts that can be exported as Scorm or H5P files and uploaded to the LMS. The tool generates H5Ps which previously would take faculty a considerable amount of time to make once they have learnt how to make them or alternatively, the faculty would require an experienced learning designer to make them for them in consultation, another time-consuming activity. What we have found when faculty make H5Ps using Nolej is that the faculty

is actively making judgments and refinements to their own learning design and practice of teaching as they decide what they tell the AI (the prompts) and how they evaluate what is received in return from the AI.

Another example is the use of Synthesia.io. Using Synthesia has facilitated the development of videos that look highly professional and do not require the faculty to be the 'face' of the course or module. The user can choose from a range of avatars and different audio voices to personalise the product. The ease in which videos can be regenerated when the content changes or if the content is not presented well in the first draft means that a considerable amount of time and money is saved. The user can input text-based scripts for the AI avatar to speak to and in the process the user can draft and redraft the product while critically analysing whether the avatar (that is not them) has presented the ideas in a cohesive and engaging manner. At UniSQ Synthesia is used for explanation videos, concepts, 'how-to', and course introductions. Using a text translation tool a script in a different language can transform communication quickly and simply.

Future uses of AI in the learning design of the courses at UniSQ are likely to include tools like Cogniti.ai. This tool has been designed by educators at the University of Sydney and built by educators to empower educators build custom chatbot agents. The design allows the faculty to embed GenAI into the learning management system (LMS) to act as a smart tutor. The intent is that the faculty can set a Cogniti agent to respond to specific course-based content or questions in a manner similar to if the student had contacted the faculty and asked them directly. Thus, removing a considerable amount of workload spent answering and responding to student questions. It is entirely possible for universities to utilise and manipulate the architecture of GenAI (such as ChatGPT) to fuel their own bespoke AI tools and we believe we will see this emerging more in the future. However, we are at a point in time where many universities are unclear of the use cases or lack the funding required to develop these resources.

Learning design is influenced by the relationship between the teacher and the learner and with the inclusion of technology the learner and the technology. Laurillard (2002) suggested a conversational framework between teacher,

learner, technology and content. The inclusion of AI in the learning design starts to change the relationship between these parts. The student can be more autonomous and the resources be personalised. Thus, the power of the students to control their learning journey is heightened and the teacher has a role in which they are mediating an environment for this to flourish. Xu and Ouyang (2022, p. 15) apply this to STEM education and AI, stating that "When AI is applied in STEM education, the role of instructor is expected to shift from a leader to a collaborator or a facilitator under the AI-empowered, learner-as-leader paradigm". It is inevitable that as students use AI more often to access content, practice will continue to shift from 'lecturing' to 'facilitating' learning as a teacher. This shift must include developing efficiencies in workflow around low-order thinking in order to focus on higher-order thinking in the physical and virtual classroom, such as critical thinking and learning how to learn (Barros et al., 2023).

5. Learner-Centric Assessment

AI systems support reduced teacher workload by automating assessment, detecting plagiarism, administration and feedback. Although found to be the most common use of AI in HEd (Crompton & Burke, 2023), assessment and evaluation are both a challenge and an opportunity. Most common is automatic assessment use including activities that support academic efficiency such as grading and scoring. Tan (2023) suggests that automatic essay scoring (AES) is comparable to that of humans. Feedback is another use, both individualised and formative, with AI used especially for formative assessment such as creation/generation of quizzes, multiple choice questions and short answer questions, although the caveat is to always check and confirm accuracy and context given by the AI tool. Automatic feedback is generally reliable and supports teachers in developing an effective and innovative learning environment however Tan (2023) cautions not to let AI dominate student engagement or replace the role of the teacher.

Despite potential advantages, assessment in the emerging scenario of freely available AI tools has engendered 'fear factor' responses within HEd academic integrity and ethics. Acknowledging the reality of integrity issues,

the reality is far more exciting - the opportunity to reimagine what we are assessing and how we are assessing, and essentially why we assess students at all. Apart from the discipline specific accreditation requirements linked to job-ready competency, e.g., nursing, it is possible that much assessment be rethought in terms of the opportunity to leverage AI as a support tool, not as a way to cheat the system. At UniSQ we have observed diverse approaches to AI and assessment to date. Some schools and disciplines that had banned AI for use in any forms of assessment are now starting to realise this approach will not work - as we have known for 40+ years of technology integration in education. Others, but not many, are preferring exam-based assessment (although as an institution we do not offer on-campus exams anymore), sometimes using ProctorU to monitor student online working. While others are starting to integrate some form of AI into assessment, whether it be generating questions for essays, or teaching students how to better prompt engineer using a GenAI tool.

When considering the use of AI for or with assessment one issue may be the lack of understanding about the implications of using AI by both staff and students. Another may be the lack of clear policies and/or student-facing guidelines for each assessment task detailing appropriate use of AI. In the latter, the academic is initially responsible; however, if the institution does not have accessible student guidelines then clarity may not be possible. This leads to the fear that original student work is not presented, which, according to Luo (2024) encourages us to consider "... what it means by originality in a time when knowledge production becomes increasingly distributed, collaborative and mediated by technology" (p. 1).

One solution is to ensure assessments are redesigned to be learner-centric and avoid substitution of material that could easily be created by AI. UniSQ is undergoing a full review of all assessments with the intention of reducing the overall number for a program and reimagining what is expected of students in the evolving AI world. Simplicity is the key here, and one influence is the common-sense approach of Lye and Lim (2024) who propose that assessment using GenAI be rethought and redesigned according to the principle of Against, Avoid, and Adopt (AAA). 'Against' refers to when no GenAI is to be used and applies to assessment design demonstrating individual human

knowledge, e.g., development of clinical skills in nursing for accreditation purposes. 'Avoid' is when AI is less relevant and may not be an advantage where assessment is designed for contextualised and personal responses focusing on the human experience, e.g., live presentations, performances, portfolios (to an extent). 'Adopt' refers to AI integration where assessments are designed to require and encourage appropriate AI use, e.g., students share the process of using GenAI for brainstorming and idea generation such as prompts used and discussions. This fit-for-purpose approach acknowledges the limitations of AI detection tools such as TurnitIn, rationalises design approaches devoid of terms such as 'banning' and focuses on the affordances of AI tools (Wang et al., 2024).

Another solution to approaching assessment is to find appropriate edtech tools that specifically target learning in an AI world. One of these currently piloted at UniSQ is Cadmus.io. Cadmus, a platform integrated into the Learning Management System (LMS), provides real-time academic integrity assurance analytics, which detect students at risk of academic misconduct at both a whole cohort and individual student level. If used correctly this leads to academic intervention prior to submission. Provision is made within the system to provide students with clear guidelines around the use of Cadmus for the assessment before work can start. Cadmus provides barriers to misconduct, scaffolding for educator design and guidance for students as they work through an assessment. Misconduct at varying levels is detected when the tool is not used as advised. For example, if different IP addresses are used during a time-sensitive assessment response. More than trying to avoid lapses in academic integrity, Cadmus provides an integrated platform for students to 'learn how to learn' as a process requiring editing, reorganisation and numerous drafts.

GenAI and Assessment

Another current example at UniSQ involves a research project where assessment is integrated with ChatGPT for first year nursing students. Leading up to this many students used AI language models for assessment and received no marks as a penalty. In a positive effort to rethink assessment approaches Dr Stratton-Maher (2024) is actively including ChatGPT into the

essay assessment. Her design is to start by teaching students about ChatGPT and utilises interactive learning to practise the skills emphasising purposeful and practical as well as responsible and respectful use of the tool. Aligned with TEQSA guiding principles of authentic learning and seamless integration one goal is to create a scenario where AI is part of everyday working life in the future. The process Stratton-Maher is using includes teaching students how to use ChatGPT (using the AI video tool, Synthesia), encouraging utilisation of ChatGPT as a study companion to ask questions of, facilitating ideas for the writing process and to generate ideas to enrich personal writing. Students are warned not to submit GenAI responses as their own work but instead to provide an evaluation of the process and a copy of the Chat as an appendix with their assessment. Initial results from the research when marking assessments include a decrease in academic integrity incidences, and improved writing quality.

6. Moving Beyond Ad-Hoc: A Framework for Seamless AI Integration

It could be said the adhoc mode in which higher education has approached AI for learning and teaching has resulted in temporary or improvised methods to deal with issues and a lack of collaborative planning for embracing possibilities. Similar to the 1990's when the Internet surged into existence for education, business, and domestic use, our observations have shown the rise of AI in higher education engendering typical fear factors and technophobic reactions. According to Eager and Brunton (2023) engagement with AI typically follows the process of initial awareness to curiosity, to experimentation, implementation and evaluation. However, as with any educational technology resistance to new tools, pedagogies and ways to shift practice can occur at any stage of that process.

Another digital transformation phase is in progress right now, and the speed with which AI is growing and impacting learning and teaching suggests we should be marshalling our goals, strategies and ideas into organised, systematic solutions. UniSQ has not been immune to the confusion or delayed

realisation that this is going to change ways of working. Directives from the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), the regulating body for higher education in Australia, detail what institutions should be offering to the Federal government in terms of individual approaches to AI. Whether this is the right way to approach this is not the point of this paper, what is important is we know from experience that digital transformation does not take place without consultation, communication and collaboration. Working in adhoc silos or being overly negative about a future with AI does not advantage an institution in the growing competitive climate. Moving forward we must understand that every day AI is offered as a new way to support the intellectual and creative work of faculty and students, with 13,000+ AI apps already available to us. Implemented and managed appropriately it is a positive influence literally forcing a new way of working on all stakeholders.

Moving to Seamless Integration

At UniSQ mixed, including reactionary, responses are becoming consolidated into more systematic whole-institution planning that goes beyond the initial adhoc approach. Our view is that the area in most need of digital transformation is teachers and teaching. Adoption of AI is influencing a change across the university such that more flexibility, inclusivity, and affordance of diversity is taking place to accommodate an AI embedded culture of learning and teaching. In order to achieve seamless integration of AI into learning, teaching and research we explored existing frameworks for inspiration. Ivanov (2023) discusses an operations framework for HEd addressing AI through the lens of operations management including all stakeholders and focuses on the application and impact of AI in all areas. Carvalho et al. (2022) stated, "... to cope with dynamisms and complexities of AI developments, we need to adopt humanistic participatory design approaches, whilst drawing on future-oriented methods and frameworks that support complex educational design conversations, and in so doing, we may contribute to empowering educators and learners to co-create the best possible future" (p. 8).

The AI Pedagogy Project

As a strategic response and to provide systematic support to move beyond the adhoc, the Learning and Teaching Futures Portfolio, the central unit supporting and advising on innovation and digital transformation at UniSQ, is implementing the AI Pedagogy Project. This university-wide, multimodal project seeks to leverage AI to reimagine traditional approaches to education, improve student outcomes, and foster innovation in teaching and assessment methods. Currently five key activities exist under the AI Pedagogy Project umbrella: the Artificial Intelligence for Learning and Teaching Collective (AILTC), learning design and assessment, academic development, AI tools, and research into the impact of AI. Each of these activities is described in Table 1 below.

How the AIPP functions is informed by new learning paradigms that have emerged through access to socially based technologies and networked facilitated online communities. The power of the AIPP is through participants connecting, communicating, collaborating and creating or co-constructing new knowledge. Theoretical models informed by the Community of Inquiry (CoI) theoretical framework (Garrison, 2017); Community of Practice (CoP) (Wenger-Trayner, 2015); social constructivism involving social interaction as the theoretical basis of collaboration (Laurillard, 2009); and putting pedagogical emphasis on the role of collaboration (Harasim, 2017) for authentic communication, reflection and discourse (Garrison, 2015).

Table 1: The AI Pedagogy Project

Website - https://create.usq.edu.au/edtech/ailtc/ai-pedagogy-project/

Activity	Description and Participation	Meeting schedule	Goals and outcomes	Resources
AI for L&T Collective (AILTC)	University-wide, academic and professional stakeholders. Works as a CoP for generating	Symposiums feature updates, research and progress with AI in all areas with external	The Collective aims to foster collaboration and potentially catalysing new projects or research endeavours.	AILTC website https://create.usq.edu.au/edtech/ailtc/ Each Symposium is documented via

	positive awareness and excitement around AI for education, professional activity and research.	and internal speakers. 3-4 sessions per year of 1.5 hours length	One goal is to break down silos and encourage visibility and transparency in AI explorations and implementations	an online platform (Smore). November 2023 https://secure.smore.com/n/ufda2-ai-for-l-t-symposium April 2024 https://secure.smore.com/n/wszknj-ai-for-l-t-symposium
Learning Design and Assessment	A focus on the integration of AI into the design and delivery of courses using appropriate tools and pedagogies. Encouragement for cross-discipline and other collaborations in a goal-setting environment.	Monthly chaired meetings of 1 hour. Discussions, sharing updates, table breakouts. Asynchronous discussions continue in the internal AIPP MS Team.	Participants are asked to set individual or group goals and seek support to achieve them. These goals are being tracked and will contribute to typical academic requirements such as promotion.	Goal setting Padlet https://universityofsouthernq.padlet.org/LTF/ai-pedagogy-project-sharing-goals-8khbcqmrjna704vd
Academic Development	A variety of flexible and agile approaches to raising awareness, upskilling, and building capacity for academic and teaching purposes.	Regular optional drop-in sessions. Regular seminars focusing on AI topics.	Mandatory online modules for staff to introduce AI. Additional online resources to support just-in-time learning.	AILT Padlet https://universityofsouthernq.padlet.org/techdemcop/artificial-intelligence-for-learning-and-teaching-fx04bkzzke0vxbk1

AI Tools	Exploration, development, piloting, evaluating and implementation of AI tools. Off the shelf apps and bespoke creations are encouraged.	Integrated into other synchronous sessions above. Cemented through asynchronous use of Teams to share.	One goal is to find suitable AI tools applicable to the UniSQ context. Another is to pilot selected tools more widely for possible whole university adoption.	Tools website https://create.usq.edu.au/edtech/ailtc/ailtc-potential-tools/ Teams channel
Research into the impact of AI	A multi-pronged approach encouraging academics and teachers to take a scholarly approach and integrate AI use (tools, pedagogies etc) into their research. Also to develop case studies around experimental or pilot applications.	Integrated into other synchronous sessions above. Cemented through asynchronous use of Teams to share.	Research is a goal in itself, however personal and group goals should align with learning and assessment approaches as well as case study documentation.	Teams channel

7. Conclusion

Adoption of AI is influencing a change across the university such that more flexibility, inclusivity, and affordance of diversity is taking place to accommodate an AI embedded culture of learning and teaching. In these early days we continue to approach AI as a new subject and something about which we can create new 'learning modules' to upskill staff and students. Coupled with the need for guidelines for use, penalties for misuse, confusion about benefits of use, student and staff uncertainty, lack of policy clarity, and unclear delineation of responsibility within the university, UniSQ has

typically struggled to get a grip on the new AI frontier. There is an apparent lack of systematic, institution-wide approach that is needed to effectively adopt and integrate AI.

While many institutions are experimenting with AI this appears to be in an ad-hoc manner, without a clear framework or strategy for integrating AI across different aspects of online learning. There is a lack of systematic, institution-wide approaches. We have presented some of the ways that we have started to implement AI across the university using a systematic, institution-wide approach. More importantly, we have an evolving framework, the AI Pedagogy Project, to support the ongoing sustainable process of integration to improve Academic Efficiency, Learning Design, and Assessment.

8. References

AI Act. 2024. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai

Al-Mughairi, H., & Bhaskar, P. 2024. Exploring the factors affecting the adoption of AI techniques in higher education: insights from teachers' perspectives on ChatGPT. *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning.* https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIT-09-2023-0129

Barros, A., Prasad, A., & Śliwa, M. 2023. Generative artificial intelligence and academia: Implication for research, teaching and service. *Management Learning*, *54*(5), 597-604. https://doi.org/10.1177/13505076231201445

Brown, M., McCormack, M., Reeves, J., Brook, D. C., Grajek, S., Alexander, B., Bali, M., Bulger, S., Dark, S., Engelbert, N., Gannon, K., Gauthier, A., Gibson, D., Gibson, R., Lundin, B., Veletsianos, G. & Weber, N. 2020. 2020 Educause Horizon Report Teaching and Learning Edition. Louisville, CO: EDUCAUSE.

Carvalho, L., Martinez-Maldonado, R., Tsai, Y. S., Markauskaite, L., & De Laat, M. 2022. How can we design for learning in an AI world? *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence, 3*, 100053. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2022.100053

Chen, J. J., & Lin, J. C. 2023. artificial intelligence as a double-edged sword: Wielding the power principles to maximize its positive effects and minimize its negative effects. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 25(1), 146-153. https://doi.org/10.1177/14639491231169813

Chiu, T. K. F., Xia, Q., Zhou, X., Chai, C. S., & Cheng, M. 2023. Systematic literature review on opportunities, challenges, and future research recommendations of artificial intelligence in education. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 4. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2022.100118

Chu, H.-C., Hwang, G.-H., Tu, Y.-F., & Yang, K.-H. 2022. Roles and research trends of artificial intelligence in higher education: A systematic review of the top 50 most-cited articles. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 38(3), 22-42. https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.7526

Chubb, J., Cowling, P. I., & Reed, D. 2021. Speeding Up to Keep Up: Exploring the Use of AI in the Research Process. *Ai & Society*, *37*(4), 1439-1457. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-021-01259-0

Cordeschi, R. 2007. AI turns fifty: Revisiting its origins. *Applied Artificial Intelligence*, *21*(4–5), 259–279. https://doi.org/10.1080/08839510701252304

Crompton, H., & Burke, D. 2023. Artificial intelligence in higher education: the state of the field. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, *20*(1), 22. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-023-00392-8

Eacersall, D. 2024. AI literacy: Principles for ethical generative artificial intelligence. human-ai collaborative knowledgebase for education and research (HACKER).

Eager, B., & Brunton, R. 2023. Prompting higher education towards AI-augmented teaching and learning practice. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, *20*(5), 02. https://doi.org/10.53761/1.20.5.02

Figaredo, D., & Stoyanovich, J. 2023. Responsible AI literacy: A stakeholder-first approach. *Big Data & Society, 10*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517231219958

Ganesan, R., & Mosier, J. April 2024. AI's growth is exponential. But how can it also be sustainable? https://www.infosys.com/iki/perspectives/ais-growth-exponential.html

Garrison, D. 2015. *Thinking collaboratively: Learning in a community of inquiry.* Routledge.

Garrison, D. 2017. *E-learning in the 21st century: A community of inquiry framework for research and practice.* Taylor & Francis.

Hagendorff, T. 2020. The ethics of AI ethics: An evaluation of guidelines. *Minds and Machines, 30*(1), 99-120. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11023-020-09517-8

Harasim, L. 2017. *Learning theory and online technologies* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Hargreaves, W., Bartlett, C., & Derrington, K. 2024. Academic success. UniSQ pressbooks. https://usq.pressbooks.pub/academicsuccess/chapter/academic-integrity/

Hwang, G. J., Xie, H., Wah, B. W., & Gašević, D. 2020. Vision, challenges, roles and research issues of Artificial Intelligence in

Education. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, *1*, 100001. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2020.100001

Ivanov, S. 2023. The dark side of artificial intelligence in higher education. *The Service Industries Journal, 43*(15-16), 1055-1082. https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2023.2258799

Kong, S. C., & Yang, Y. 2024. A human-centered learning and teaching framework using generative artificial intelligence for self-regulated learning development through domain knowledge learning in k–12 settings. *IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies, 17*, 1588-1599. https://doi.org/10.1109/TLT.2024.3392830

Laurillard, D. 2002. *Rethinking university teaching: A conversational framework for the effective use of learning technologies.* Routledge.

Laurillard, D. 2009. The pedagogical challenges to collaborative technologies. *International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning, 4*(1), 5-20. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11412-008-9056-2

Luo, J. 2024. A critical review of GenAI policies in higher education assessment: a call to reconsider the "originality" of students' work. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2024.2309963

Lye, C. Y., & Lim, L. 2024. Generative artificial intelligence in tertiary education: Assessment redesign principles and considerations. *Education Sciences. 14*(6):569. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14060569

Mishra, P., Warr, M., & Islam, R. 2023. TPACK in the age of ChatGPT and Generative AI. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education, 39*(4), 235–251. https://doi.org/10.1080/21532974.2023.2247480

Morley, J., Kinsey, L., Elhalal, A., Garcia, F., Ziosi, M., & Floridi, L. 2021. Operationalising AI ethics: barriers, enablers and next steps. *AI & Society, 38*(1), 411-423. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-021-01308-8

Ng, D. T. K., Wu, W., Leung, J. K. L., Chiu, T. K. F., & Chu, S. K. W. 2024. Design and validation of the AI literacy questionnaire: The affective, behavioural, cognitive and ethical approach. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *55*(3), 1082-1104. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13411

Otero, L. C., Catala, A., Morante, M. C. F., Taboada, M., López, B. C., & Barro, S. 2023. AI literacy in k-12: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Stem Education, 10*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-023-00418-7

Pelletier, K., Robert, J., Muscanell, N., McCormack, M., Reeves, J., Reeves, J., Arbino, N., Grajek, S., Birdwell, W. T., Liu, D., Mandernach, J., Moore, A., Porcaro, A., Rutledge, R. & Zimmern, J. 2023. 2023 EDUCAUSE Horizon Report Teaching and Learning Edition. Boulder, CO: EDUCAUSE23. https://library.educause.edu/resources/2023/5/2023-educause-horizon-report-teaching-and-learning-edition

Pelletier, K., McCormack, M., Muscanell, N., Reeves, J., Robert, J., & Arbino, N. 2024. 2024 EDUCAUSE Horizon Report Teaching and Learning Edition. Boulder, CO: EDUCAUSE24. https://library.educause.edu/resources/2024/5/2024-educause-horizon-report-teaching-and-learning-edition

Popenici, S., & Kerr, S. 2017. Exploring the impact of artificial intelligence on teaching and learning in higher education. *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning, 12*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s41039-017-0062-8

Southworth, J., Migliaccio, K., Glover, J., Glover, J. N., Reed, D., McCarty, C., Brendemuhl, J., & Thomas, A. 2023. Developing a model for AI Across the curriculum: Transforming the higher

education landscape via innovation in AI literacy. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence, 4*, 100127. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2023.100127

Stokel-Walker, C. 2023. ChatGPT listed as author on research papers: Many scientists disapprove. *Nature, 613*(7945)*,* 620-621. https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-023-00107-z

Stratton-Maher. D. 2024. The future of learning: AI as a personal tutor in nursing. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxWZJDTtNeg

Tan, S. 2023. Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for innovation in education. *Learning intelligence: Innovative and digital transformative learning strategies: Cultural and social engineering perspectives* (pp. 335-363). Springer Nature Singapore. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-19-9201-8_8

Tang, A., Li, K. K., Kwok, K. O., Cao, L., Luong, S., & Tam, W. 2024. The importance of transparency: Declaring the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in academic writing. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 56*(2), 314-318. https://doi.org/10.1111/jnu.12938

Wang, N., Wang, X., & Su, Y. S. 2024. Critical analysis of the technological affordances, challenges and future directions of Generative AI in education: a systematic review. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, *44*(1), 139–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2024.2305156

Wenger-Trayner. 2015. *Introduction to communities of practice.* https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/

Xu, W., & Ouyang, F. 2021. A systematic review of AI role in the educational system based on a proposed conceptual framework. *Education and Information Technologies 27*, 4195–4223. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10774-y

Xu, W., & Ouyang, F. 2022. The application of AI technologies in STEM education: a systematic review from 2011 to 2021. *International Journal of STEM Education, 9*(1), 59. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-022-00377-5

9. Short biography

Julie Lindsay

Dr Julie Lindsay is the Senior Education Technology Advisor in the Learning and Teaching Futures Portfolio at the University of Southern Queensland. In this role she is a thought leader and change agent advocating for digital transformation through embedded educational technologies, artificial intelligence integration, and relevant pedagogies. She leads the "Technology and Innovation Network (TIN)" in partnership with the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE), further demonstrating her dedication to fostering innovation in education on a global scale. Her PhD investigated embedded online global collaborative learning and research provided valuable insights into the beliefs, competencies, and conceptual shifts necessary for educators to adopt a "Global Collaborator Mindset."

Email: Julie.lindsay@unisq.edu.au

Lisa Jacka

Lisa Jacka is an Associate Professor at the University of Southern Queensland in the Learning and Teaching Futures portfolio. She has over 20 years of experience in Higher Education across a number of institutions. She has been an innovator in online education for most of her career with her focus on engaging learners through the integration of emerging technologies. She was awarded a Vice-Chancellor's Citation for Excellence in Student Engagement for innovative design and delivery of online learning experiences that facilitate education students' readiness to teach in learning environments of the future in 2015. Her PhD research investigated Virtual Worlds in teacher education to promote innovative pedagogy. The study provided the basis for

her sole-authored book Using Virtual Worlds in Educational Settings: Making Learning Real.

Email: lisa.jacka@unisq.edu.au

Human-centered Approach to the Governance of AI in Higher Education

Principles of International Practice

Ratna Selvaratnam, Edith Cowan Univ. Australia
Lynnae Venaruzzo, Western Sidney Univ. Australia

Keywords

Artificial intelligence, higher education, human-centered approach, consciousness, governance, ethical principles, wellbeing.

Abstract

A recent study in Australasia (Selvaratnam & Venaruzzo, 2023) revealed some challenges and gaps in the governance of AI and data in higher education, mainly from the human-centeredness perspectives of accessibility, inclusivity and wellbeing. This paper is a narrative review to discern principles of a human-centered approach to the governance of artificial intelligence (AI), benchmarking literature, policies and practice across diverse geopolitical contexts for higher education, synthesizing the review results to provide guiding principles that can support this.

Corresponding Authors: Dr. Ratna Selvaratnam, Edith Cowan University, Lynnae Venaruzzo, Western Sidney University, Email: r.selvaratnam@ecu.edu.au
To quote this article: Selvaratnam, R., Venaruzzo, L. 2024. "Human-centered Approach to the Governance of AI in Higher Education: Principles of International Practice". *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 5(2024): 79–102. DOI: 10.26034/fr.jehe.2024.6864 © the Author. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit https://jehe.globethics.net

> “Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. – Paulo Freire, “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”

1. Introduction

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly becoming ubiquitous in our daily lives, be it professional or personal. The systems are also as good as the data that feed them. However, AI and its access are developing at an unequal rate across the world, and the speed of which is causing both excitement at its potential and concern with its prevalence. The literature is still emerging. The rate of evolution of the systems in many instances is too fast for the study of its impact across multiple facets of human lives and the ecology of our existence. Hence, governance becomes more important than ever.

A recent study in Australasia (Selvaratnam & Venaruzzo, 2023) revealed some challenges and gaps in the governance of AI and data in higher education, mainly from the human-centeredness perspectives of accessibility, inclusivity and wellbeing. They report that a significant proportion of higher education institutions are using artificial intelligence (AI) in the absence of robust governance frameworks to ensure responsible and ethical use of AI in teaching, learning and research. Since then, Australia’s Department of Education (2024) has released the Australian Framework for Generative Artificial Intelligence, clearly calling out these tools to be used in alignment with human and social wellbeing, diversity of perspectives and human rights.

There are other efforts globally to define and understand the impact of these systems on humanity. One such initiative is that by Stanford University. The mission of its Human-Centered AI institute (2024) is to advance AI research, education, policy and practice to improve the human condition. Their detailed AI Index Report highlights global governments’ increasing concern as AI

faces what they call two interrelated futures. In the first, technology continues to improve and is increasingly used, having major consequences for productivity and employment, and this is usually positive. In the second scenario, the adoption of AI is constrained by the limitations of the technology itself and how usable it is broadly. The concern of governments here can be seen on the policy front. Global mentions of AI in legislative proceedings are reflected in the report as the highest of all time. It calls out that robust and standardised evaluations for the responsible governance of Large Language Models (LLM) are seriously lacking while investment in generative AI continues to grow.

While there is this background of global concern, discussions on what ethics should be given to future super-intelligent machines is unclear and without consensus, especially when we do not know what the best ethics are today or for the future (Søvik, 2022) across a multiplicity of environments. Additionally, there is argument that scholars ought to design for systems and not just for users (Campos et al, 2023). This includes the complex body of organizational routines, cultural practices and interactions among multiple stakeholders where distributed leadership occur if designed correctly. Further hampering the situation is that there is no robust precedent to build on as there are only a few confusing definitions and little overt reference to AI as a research object in the literature (Bearman et al., 2022).

2. Methodology

Due to the lack of a robust precedent, a narrative review approach is selected to piece together the evidence in this emerging space (Pae et al., 2015; Redman et al., 2015; Baethge et al., 2019). This paper critically examines the literature on ethical AI and data governance from a human centric approach, to be able to develop universal principles for AI governance which give rise to wellbeing in global higher education. This paper seeks to identify, and select based on eligibility, the inclusion of criteria for the proposed principles from a dearth of research in this space. Hence the approach has been to use relevant search terms on the governance of data and AI internationally and also the purpose of higher education that can be augmented by ethical AI, in

academic publication databases, public searches and policy aggregation sites. The literature in this paper includes peer review articles, thought leadership pieces and policies in the areas of artificial intelligence, data governance and human wellbeing in education. This approach is chosen not only to identify knowledge gaps but to scope a body of literature to clarify concepts.

3. Literature Review

Pockets of work are emerging to synthesise general principles in frameworks for ethical AI including benchmarking literature, policies and practice across diverse geopolitical contexts for higher education (Pente et al., 2021; Jobin et al., 2019). However, this is a moving feast in trying to keep pace with rapid developments in technology. Hagendorff (2020) opines that in general, ethical guidelines postulate very broad, overarching principles which are then supposed to be implemented in a widely diversified set of scientific, technical and economic practices, and in sometimes geographically dispersed groups of researchers and developers with different priorities, tasks and fragmental responsibilities. Ethics thus operates at a maximum distance from the practices it actually seeks to govern.

Work such as Jobin et al.'s (2019) considers a global synthesis emerging around the five ethical principles of transparency, justice and fairness, non-maleficence, responsibility and privacy. It is however subjective in application, differing across contexts in how these principles are interpreted, why they are deemed important, what their relevance is to context and stakeholders, and which implementation approach is to be used. Floridi & Cowls (2019) also identify an overarching framework consisting of similar core principles but also include beneficence and autonomy. These draw from the approach in bioethics. They argue that a new principle is needed to demystify the engagement of AI. This would be explicability, which incorporates both the epistemological sense of intelligibility to understand how something works, and in the ethical sense of accountability to understand who is responsible for the way something works.

This perspective is important when one considers what has been influencing the ethics of AI. This causes deliberations on what roles are needed in

organisations now to surmount this need such as the rise of Chief Privacy and Chief Ethics Officers (Timofte, 2022). Large organisations are beginning to take the governance of data seriously and are rapidly maturing in this space. There is intentional development in approaches towards increased collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders within an institution and across a complex data ecology (Prinsloo et al, 2023) to remove silos with domains traditionally associated with Chief Data Officers and the like. One example is the Model Spec from OpenAI (2024) which defines the objectives of their AI assistant or agent are to assist the developer and end user, to benefit humanity, and to reflect well on OpenAI, including how they use data. Data governance is the foundation of trustworthy AI (Janssen et al., 2020). Tasioulas (2022) argues that an optimising mindset prevalent among main stakeholders such as computer scientists and economists, has led to an approach focused on maximizing the fulfilment of human preferences, potentially compromising right governance of data. Human preferences are not necessarily what is best for human needs.

Global Policy Perspectives

At a governmental scale, OECD (2023)'s recommendation for the Council on Artificial Intelligence underscores inclusive growth, sustainable development and wellbeing as macro principles which can guide the governance and ethics of AI. Human centricity is an important focus with recommendations to focus on human-centered values and fairness. Updated OECD advice (2024) consider the uses of AI systems and implications for human rights, including risks that human-centred values might be deliberately or accidently infringed. Values-alignment in AI systems then become more important and there will be the need to revisit the values implicit in their design and also to include appropriate safeguards. This could be designing in the capacity for human intervention and oversight, as appropriate to the context and can address the safeguard issue. Further, OECD (2024b) is now postulating the need to account for the emergence of general-purpose and generative AI. Their earlier AI guidelines have now been sharpened in the approach to privacy, intellectual property rights, safety and information integrity. It is the first intergovernmental standard on AI with forty-seven

adherents. They have identified more than a hundred policy related AI initiatives in over seventy countries and jurisdictions. Key elements of the OECD revisions, which ensure that the principles remain relevant, include underscoring the need for jurisdictions to work together to promote interoperable governance and policy environments for AI, as the number of AI policy initiatives worldwide grows exponentially, reflecting governments' concerns.

While not exhaustive, there are several noteworthy efforts of national governments attempting to address the governance of AI, both acting alone and in regional collaboration. The European Union's (2024) landmark AI Act is a proposed European regulation on AI and is the first comprehensive regulation on AI by a major regulator anywhere. It was eagerly anticipated globally to set the benchmark for early, comprehensive regulation. Another example is the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (2024) draft Plan for Global Engagement on AI Standards (NIST AI 100-5) which calls for a coordinated effort to work with key international allies and partners to guide organisations to drive development and implementation of AI-related standards, including cooperation, coordination and information sharing. It is noted that these are predominantly Western sources, and even within that there can be differences in ethical approaches, as can be seen in the United States which is arguably more utilitarian compared to the European Union's rather "strict deontological approach" (Parsons, 2021).

Inclusive Perspectives

Casting the net wider, there are strong rights-based approaches to principles for AI from a wider global context. For example, Fjeld et al. (2020) analyse sources from Latin America, East and South Asia, the Middle East, North America, and Europe. They observe cultural differences doubtless impact their contents. They consider too that they are authored by different stakeholders including governments and intergovernmental organisations, companies, professional associations, advocacy groups and multi-stakeholder initiatives. The principles they identify include principles on the human control of technology and promotion of human values. The Global South is an important region in this discourse, though some countries do still have

strong Western influences such as Australia, which has developed its AI Ethics principles by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (2023).

Ethical consequences of AI further hamper decolonisation (van Norren, 2023) through epistemic injustices (Eke et al, 2023) favouring Western knowledge systems including capitalist socioeconomic paradigms. An alternative lens the authors posit are the ethics of Ubuntu in Africa which can be used for the development of relational AI rather than the focus on individual gain, while embodying true inclusiveness. Brokensha et al (2023) argue discussion of artificial intelligence in and for Africa cannot be divorced from power asymmetries and inequities that have their roots in the practice of colonialism and that these are still ongoing. In the Asian region, ASEAN (2024) goes further to emphasise human-centricity, where AI systems should respect human-centred values and pursue benefits for human society, including human beings' wellbeing, even calling out nutrition. The solution to alignment issues in AI can potentially be solved by aligning them with human values through a democratic approach (Greenfield, 2024). There are opportunities to pull together these diverse voices. Globethics (2024) acknowledges global multistakeholder collaboration on ethical guidelines are necessary but needs to be dynamic to accommodate emerging questions, innovative ideas and concerns in an inclusive way. Higher education is one of the backdrops against which this can happen.

Higher Education

The World Economic Forum (2024) emphasises the significance of the human in teaching and learning within the context of increasing accessibility to generative AI. They are not alone in arguing that by freeing educators from routine tasks, AI empowers them to focus on building relationships, understanding individual student needs and fostering motivation. This synergy not only improves teaching effectiveness but also underscores the indispensable human element in education. Tawil & Miao (2024) provide a comprehensive overview of UNESCO's human-centered approach to steering digital education that counter-balances "dominant techno-solutionist thinking", which includes AI. This ensures that the use of digital technology

enhances human capacity, rather than undermining it. The approach is proposed to also adequately address digital divides and digital gender inequality, and should furthermore adequately assure effective regulation to minimise the negative impact both on human wellbeing and on the environment.

To this end, AI governance and ethics in higher education is not far removed from the larger discourse when examining the body of literature on ethical principles, for example in the established discipline of Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED) (Nguyen et al, 2022). There is also AI supported work in education as to what wellbeing might look like, such as Tang et al's (2023) Wellbeing Model. It can collect wellbeing data at low cognitive cost, while also tracking wellbeing in real time at multiple levels such as individual, class and school levels. The model can give immediate feedback allowing for iterative improvements within short continuous cycles, evidencing how AI can be used for wellbeing in education, in addition to teaching and learning activities.

Higher order thinking in education is elucidated in UNESCO's (2024) draft AI competency framework for teachers and students, which has creativity as the end goal. The shift to higher order thinking enabled by AI is also reflected in JISC's AI in Education Maturity Model (Webb, 2024). It describes that at its most mature, the right tasks are automated, freeing time for creativity and human interaction. This supports employability outcomes, even almost esoteric ones, where jobs of the future may well be about the heart (Raman & Flynn, 2024) as routine tasks and early level resolution can be increasingly automated as the technology continues to mature.

Higher education has an important part to play in how humans perceive reality and interact with our environments, especially when there is freed up time to design and participate in higher order thinking. Neurotechnology is an area of great potential but requires strong oversight, potentially redefining how education happens and what its purpose is. UNESCO (2024b) recognises neurotechnology's potential ethical issues and problems particularly with its use of non-invasive interventions. Combined with AI, its resulting potential can easily become a "threat to notions of human identity, human dignity,

freedom of thought, autonomy, (mental) privacy and wellbeing". UNESCO continues to convene and deliberate options going forward with an expert group to formulate recommendations for this emerging field.

Consciousness in Higher Education

The study of consciousness in higher education has been around for a while now. It may be a way forward as a counterpoint to this current context of AI as seen in the preceding literature. Terrace & Metcalfe (2005) argue that educators can alter students' consciousness by introducing alternate perspectives and exposing and critiquing embedded assumptions. This human-centric perspective is a form of higher order thinking which will become a skill of increasing value. Through metacognitive processes, students can become more fully conscious. One way to do this is by introducing them to cognitive distortions that challenge their conceptions of reality and encouraging them to reflect on what they are learning. It is worth revisiting Paulo Freire's (1970) purpose of "problem-posing" education in The Pedagogy of the Oppressed. He argues people can develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world "with which and in which" they find themselves. Importantly, they will begin to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, where they can discern transformation occurring:

> "It is to the reality which mediates men, and to the perception of that reality held by educators and people, that we must go to find the program content of education. The investigation of what I have termed the people's "thematic universe" – the complex of their "generative themes" – inaugurates the dialogue of education as the practice of freedom.

Ethics can then be conceived as relational with particular realities.

Some schools of thought consider that deeper learning areas are congruent with different levels of consciousness, expanding and transforming the learning experience. To teach and learn effectively requires participants in the experience to profoundly uncover connections, interdependencies, and

truthful relations of what is being studied. Di (2020) argues a key focus of consciousness in education and life is not only ethical but also spiritual. This understanding provides a very different orientation, criteria, and application for human ethics. The focus then moves towards more inclusive and collective gains, while developing a connected consciousness. Jack (2020) further clarifies that by providing an environment that acknowledges the inner self, which one may refer to as spiritual, students can start developing insight into the higher purpose of their lives. They can intentionally activate deeper levels of consciousness by collaborating to create learning experiences together with educators. This collaboration gives rise to an adaptable life curriculum with the flexibility to accommodate student needs, within the context of larger cultures and external realities, akin to Freire's approach to authentic content in education.

When we consider human centricity in higher education as a possibility enabled by the freeing of time through ethical AI, we can also begin to consider how this facilitates wellbeing. Sharp (2012) defines the primary goal of humanistic education as human wellbeing, drawing from the principles of humanism which are mostly attributed to the work of Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) and Carl Rogers (1902–1987). There is recognition in research that scholar-practitioners and students are looking for meaning, a theme that may be contrasted with Freire's concept of transactional or banking education. With the right causes and conditions, both parties' interest in spiritual issues can be encouraged, when they are supported with the environment to explore these within their academic pursuits (Gunnlaugson et al., 2014) and in a context of a philosophy of integrative education (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). The next step from this, the crux of human being-ness, can be argued as the highest rung of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which is self-actualisation.

In the pinnacle of education, one can argue that self-actualisation is wisdom. There is a strong body of literature to support this perspective. As it is not always in the forefront, Diamond (2021) argues for working to re-establish the development of wisdom as a credible field of scholarship within the modern university, including across and through various ways of knowing. There can be resistance to this because the work is being conducted in a

university environment that has focused on pursuing ways of knowing that has been strongly influenced by, and a result of, industrialisation, colonisation and dogma of the time. The approach here is to articulate problems which are then to be solved by employing science. However, despite this, Rampal et al. (2022) provide insight as to how wisdom is, or might be, perceived and enacted in higher education contexts. The educator will need key pedagogical skills in order to know how to develop balance for themselves and their teaching environment, to create the causes and conditions for wisdom to emerge in their students (Rhea, 2018). Further, Bruya & Ardelt (2018) in their study prove that wisdom can indeed be taught in the classroom, where they published research on how a wisdom curriculum has shown measurable increase in wisdom within a traditional higher education setting.

Human-centered AI (HAI)

This then brings us to human-centred AI in higher education. Tawil & Hoven (2024) discuss the significance of what they term "re-humanising education" and educational research within an AI-dominated era. This is to encourage deep and critical thinking within a constantly changing dynamic, which then allows for revisiting ready assumptions, allowing for authentic meaning to occur and to be assimilated. Emerging proponents of Human-Centered AI (HAI) such as Yang et al. (2021) support approaches ranging from highly centralized models to more distributed and participatory frameworks. Further, Gattupalli & Sai (2024) suggest that human-centered AI may actually propel an educational renaissance that uplifts not only the learning endeavour but also the human spirit. They caution, however, that this must be built on moral foundations which serve all students. This can be achieved with the elevation of human emotional intelligence alongside AI.

One might argue that the time of emotional intelligence is now. When basic needs are met, abundance and solidarity lead people from the most developed regions to want to climb Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Julien, 2023). This manifests in them seeking an environment that supports their emotional needs, expresses their individuality, and assists their search for meaning. The quest devolves capitalistic tendencies of consumption but evolves more consideration of the collective. In Bozkurt's (2023) systematic review of

generative AI in education, they found emotional intelligence emerges as a fundamental attribute, as AI systems' ability to discern and respond to nuanced emotional cues is still not mature. This in turn plays a substantial role in the desired outcome of educational interactions. Bearman et al's (2024) study shows the relationship between evaluative judgement and generative AI is more than just the application of human judgement to machine outputs. They suggest people have a collective responsibility, as educators and learners, to ensure that humans do not relinquish their roles as arbiters of quality (Bearman et al, 2024) and the overall learning experience.

There are concrete examples of how the pursuit of higher order thinking can be achieved in higher education impacted by AI. For example, one of the findings of the Monash Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Science along with other university partners is that AI chatbots can effect behaviour change, with potential for applications in groups that are diverse and where representation is suboptimal (van Baal et al, 2024). Additionally, Rebecchi & Hagege (2022) discuss the value of harnessing attentional states of consciousness for educational purposes. They suggest we should seek to develop digital educational programs capable of fostering flow, mind wandering and mindfulness. Harnessing attention as a cognitive tool can be designed to foster all attentional states of consciousness and responsible creativity. It is then of emerging importance to ask critical questions about AI design and implementation and what the implications may be for humans in educational systems and the unique challenges it poses (Southgate, 2020).

4. Discussion

In the not so recent past, a discussion on evolving human consciousness through higher education in the context of ethical governance of AI could have seemed disparate. Since the end of 2022, with mass public access to generative AI, this does not seem to be the case anymore. The discussion of intelligence need not be divorced from that of consciousness, as AI has fundamentally changed the way we view the world and interact with it. Human centricity is not the surface level interaction with our world but the deep sense-making that we can develop through the right causes and

conditions within a robust education which affords wisdom. The preceding literature shows a range of measures being taken to govern AI both at a macro geopolitical level and also translating governance to institutional levels including in higher education. Governance in the higher education setting needs to be contextualised within the core purpose of education. In considering the human-centered approach to the governance of AI, it is also relevant to consider human-centered approaches in education and its role in supporting wellbeing and maturing human consciousness.

A model for a human-centered approach to the governance of AI in higher education:

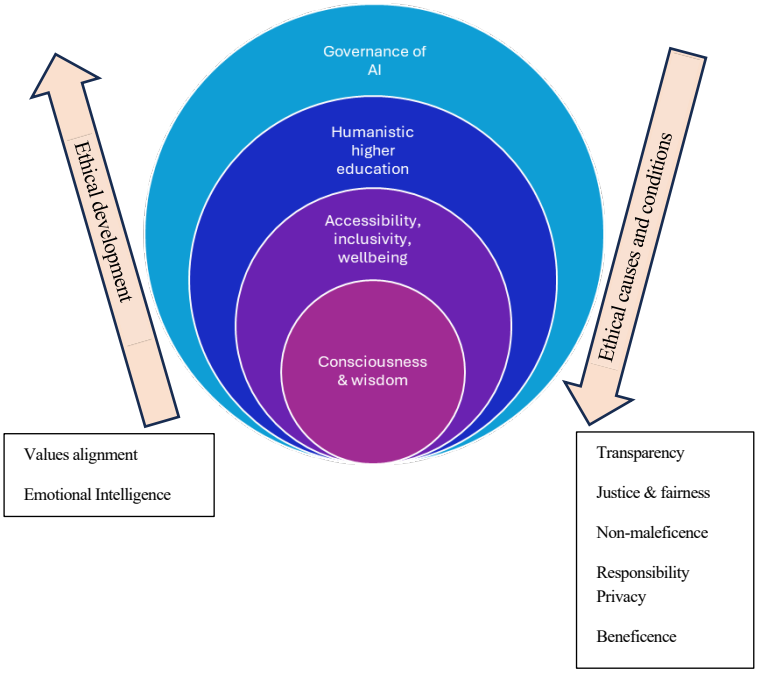

Figure 1 The relationship between human consciousness and governance of AI in higher education

Figure 1 is a proposed framework which shows the relationship between human consciousness and the governance of artificial intelligence within

the higher education context. There are challenges and gaps in the governance of AI and data in higher education, mainly from the human-centeredness perspectives of accessibility, inclusivity and wellbeing. To discern principles of a human-centered approach to the governance of artificial intelligence, there needs to be an accounting of diverse global perspectives to make it truly relevant. Ethics of AI guides the right application of the technology in various facets of human life through interdisciplinary collaboration. There are two principles which emerge from this model:

— Principle 1: Designing governance of AI from wisdom consciousness is dynamic, promoting wellbeing and humanistic higher education that is supported through ethical development based on values alignment and emotional intelligence.

— Principle 2: Governance of AI in higher education supports wellbeing and the evolution of human consciousness through ethical causes and conditions which consist of transparency, justice & fairness, non-maleficence, responsibility, privacy, beneficence, autonomy, explicability, inclusivity and relationality.

The flourishing of wisdom as the pinnacle of education provides the opportunity for meaningful transformation of the reality we live in, which will increasingly be mediated with AI. Supporting the evolution of human consciousness promotes wellbeing as both a result of, and a condition for, this flourishing by ensuring equal access and inclusion for all in education. Higher education then has an important role to play to evolve the human condition through continuous learning and adaptation, and iterative feedback loops, to meet the societal and economic demands of the time through critical study and creative application of that learning. The right design of the overarching governance of AI ensures geopolitical considerations of prevailing values which account for universal societal wellbeing within the education space.

There are significant implications for practice that result from this framework. In a time when the desire for, and the fear of, the increasing reach of artificial intelligence in all facets of our life is showing no signs of abating, a bold approach is needed to both make sense and guide the rapid proliferation of this technology. Education can play an important role to serve this function

including developing the emotional intelligence of learners. More work needs to be done at the government level to ensure higher education supports learners to participate in the AI economy. Learners are guided to shape the direction and adoption of AI meaningfully through responsible use. An employable graduate is also one who can bring this learning and ethos to the industries they partake in. The development of a holistic individual, not shy to call out the wisdom learning in the process, is a condition we can create in the institutions of higher learning that already exist, and maybe even to develop new types of institutions from the ground up with the principles in this model. There are immense possibilities in the unknown future for the human condition to flourish if the right values and conditions are available through our institutions of higher learning.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

The paper reiterates the need for coherent frameworks for AI to foster accessible and inclusive environments while focusing on wellbeing within higher education. These approaches range from highly centralized models to more distributed and participatory frameworks across various facets of meaningful participation in the governance of AI. This paper synthesises the narrative review of the literature to provide two guiding principles that can support human flourishing through governance, ethics, higher education, wellbeing and consciousness. The bi-directional relationship between these elements mutually supports human centricity in the rapid development and proliferation of AI. This is where the practice of freedom happens, where learning is critical and creative, empowering learners to transform their worlds.

The authors recommend more research is undertaken to further develop this model to ensure its adaptability across different geopolitical landscapes, while it already affords the possibilities of various cultural perspectives and inclusions. It is also recommended to operationalise the model through applied case studies, with reviews undertaken to consider implications for practice and where the model may be refined. This is a call to action to decision-makers and leaders to take bold steps to look after the human

condition through developing policies and procedures in relation to AI in higher education which will enshrine the development of human consciousness as its primary outcome.

6. Bibliography

Adams, C., Pente, P., Lemermeyer, G., & Rockwell, G. 2021. Artificial Intelligence Ethics Guidelines for K-12 Education: A Review of the Global Landscape. In: Roll, I., McNamara, D., Sosnovsky, S., Luckin, R., Dimitrova, V. (eds) *Artificial Intelligence in Education. AIED 2021. Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, vol 12749. Springer, Cham. https://doi-org.ezproxy.ecu.edu.au/10.1007/978-3-030-78270-2_4

Al-Tawil, R., & Hoven, D. 2024. "Threading Humanity Back into Education and Educational Research". *Open Praxis*, 16(2), 269–279. https://doi.org/10.55982/openpraxis.16.2.644

ASEAN. 2024. ASEAN Guide on AI governance and ethics. https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/ASEAN-Guide-on-AI-Governance-and-Ethics_beautified_201223_v2.pdf

Baethge, C., Goldbeck-Wood, S. & Mertens, S. 2019. "SANRA—a scale for the quality assessment of narrative review articles". *Res Integr Peer Rev*. 4(5). https://doi.org/10.1186/s41073-019-0064-8

Bearman, M., Ryan, J., & Ajjawi, R. 2023. "Discourses of artificial intelligence in higher education: a critical literature review". *Higher Education*, 86(2), 369–385. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00937-2

Bearman, M., Tai, J., Dawson, P., Boud, D., & Ajjawi, R. 2024. "Developing evaluative judgement for a time of generative artificial intelligence". *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2024.2335321

Bozkurt, A. (2023). "Unleashing the potential of generative AI, conversational agents and chatbots in educational praxis:

A systematic review and bibliometric analysis of GenAI in education". *Open Praxis*, 15(4), 261–270. https://doi.org/10.55982/openpraxis.15.4.609

Brokensha, S., Kotzé, E., & Senekal, B. A. 2023. *AI in and for Africa: a humanistic perspective (First edition)*. CRC Press. https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003276135

Bruya, B., & Ardelt, M. 2018. "Wisdom can be taught: A proof-of-concept study for fostering wisdom in the classroom". *Learning and Instruction*, 58, 106–114. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2018.05.001

Campos, F., Nguyen, H., Ahn, J., & Jackson, K. 2023. "Leveraging cultural forms in human-centred learning analytics design". *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 55(3), 769–784. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13384

Department of Education. 2024. "Australian Framework for Generative Artificial Intelligence". https://www.education.gov.au/schooling/resources/australian-framework-generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-schools

Department of Industry, Science and Resources. 2023. "Australia's AI ethics principles. Australia's artificial intelligence ethics framework". https://www.industry.gov.au/publications/australias-artificial-intelligence-ethics-framework/australias-ai-ethics-principles

Di, X. 2020. "Understanding consciousness for optimal human wellbeing & growth holistically". *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 52(14), 1503–1513. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1737016

Diamond, Z. 2021. "Old Pedagogies for Wise Education: A Janussian Reflection on Universities". *Philosophies*, 6(3), 64. https://doi.org/10.3390/philosophies6030064

Eke, D., Wakunuma, K., & Akintoye, S. 2023. "Introducing Responsible AI in Africa". In: Eke, D.O., Wakunuma, K., Akintoye, S. (eds)

Responsible AI in Africa. Social and Cultural Studies of Robots and AI. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08215-3_1

European Union. 2024. "The EU Artificial Intelligence Act". https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/

Fjeld, J., Achten, N., Hilligoss, H., Nagy, A. & Srikumar, M. 2020. "Principled Artificial Intelligence: Mapping Consensus in Ethical and Rights-Based Approaches to Principles for AI." *Berkman Klein Center Research Publication* No. 2020-1. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3518482

Floridi, L. & Cowls, J. 2019. *A Unified Framework of Five Principles for AI in Society*. SSRN. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3831321

Freire, P. 1970. "Pedagogy of the oppressed. Continuum." https://envs.ucsc.edu/internships/internship-readings/freire-pedagogy-of-the-oppressed.pdf

Gattupalli, S. & Maloy, R. 2024. "On Human-Centered AI in Education". *College of Education Working Papers and Reports Series*. 12. https://doi.org/10.7275/KXAP-FN13

Globethics. 2024. *Inclusive AI for a better future: Policy dialogue report*. Geneva: Globethics Publications. https://doi.org/10.58863/20.500.12424/4303017

Greenfield, N. 2024. Aligning AI with human values. University World News. https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20240420082707500&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=GLNL0783

Gunnlaugson, O., Sarath, E. W., Scott, C., & Bai, H. (Eds.). 2014. "Contemplative learning and inquiry across disciplines." State University of New York Press.

Hagendorff, T. 2020. "The Ethics of AI Ethics: An Evaluation of Guidelines". *Minds and Machines: Journal for Artificial*

Intelligence, Philosophy and Cognitive Science, 30(1), 99–120. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11023-020-09517-8

HAI. 2024. "Stanford University Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence." https://hai.stanford.edu/about

Jack, N. 2020. *The pedagogy of consciousness: pathways to education reform for urban youth culture*. Brill | Sense. http://public.eblib.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=6175847

Janssen, M., Brous, P., Estevez, E., Barbosa, L. S., & Janowski, T. 2020. "Data governance: Organizing data for trustworthy Artificial Intelligence". *Government Information Quarterly*, 37(3). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2020.101493

Jobin, A., Ienca, M., & Vayena, E. 2019. "The global landscape of AI ethics guidelines". *Nature Machine Intelligence*, 1(9), 389–399. https://doi.org/10.1038/s42256-019-0088-2

Julien, D. 2023. "We'll need to put Humanism at the Center of Generative AI to Reap its rewards." *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/sponsored/2023/06/well-need-to-put-humanism-at-the-center-of-generative-ai-to-reap-its-rewards

Ma Rhea, Z. 2018. "Buddhist pedagogy in teacher education: cultivating wisdom by skilful means". *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 46(2), 199–216. https://doi-org.ezproxy.ecu.edu.au/10.1080/1359866X.2017.1399984

National Institute of Standards and Technology. 2024. "A plan for global engagement on AI standards." *U.S. Department of Commerce*. https://airc.nist.gov/docs/NIST.AI.100-5.Global-Plan.ipd.pdf

Nguyen, A., Ngo, H.N., & Hong, Y. 2023. "Ethical principles for artificial intelligence in education". *Educ Inf Technol*, 28, 4221–4241. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11316-w

OECD. 2023. "Recommendations of the Council on Artificial Intelligence. OECD Legal Instruments." https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/oecd-legal-0449

OECD. 2024. "OECD AI Principles. OECD.AI." https://oecd.ai/en/dashboards/ai-principles/P6

OECD. 2024b. "OECD updates AI Principles to stay abreast of rapid technological developments". *Newsroom.* https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/oecd-updates-ai-principles-to-stay-abreast-of-rapid-technological-developments.htm

OpenAI. 2024, May 8. "Model Spec." https://cdn.openai.com/spec/model-spec-2024-05-08.html

Pae, C. 2015. "Why Systematic Review rather than Narrative Review?". *Psychiatry investigation*, 12(3), 417–419. https://doi.org/10.4306/pi.2015.12.3.417

Palmer, P. & Zajonc, A. 2010. *The heart of higher education*. Jossey-Bass.

Parsons, T. 2020. "Ethics and educational technologies". *Educational Technology Research and Development: A Bi-Monthly Publication of the Association for Educational Communications & Technology*, 69(1), 335–338. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-020-09846-6

Prinsloo, P., Khalil, M., & Slade, S. 2023. "A Critical Consideration of the Ethical Implications in Learning Analytics as Data Ecology". In: Viberg, O., Jivet, I., Muñoz-Merino, P., Perifanou, M., Papathoma, T. (eds) Responsive and Sustainable Educational Futures. EC-TEL 2023. *Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol 14200*. Springer, Cham. https://doi-org.ezproxy.ecu.edu.au/10.1007/978-3-031-42682-7_25

Raman, A., & Flynn, M. 2024. "When your technical skills are eclipsed, your humanity will matter more than ever." *The New York Times*, (February 15, 2024).

Rampal, S., Smith, S. E., & Soter, A. 2022. "Wisdom in higher education: discussions with education academics utilising the Bhagavad Gita." *Qualitative Research Journal*, 22(3), 325-339. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-12-2021-0133

Rebecchi, K. & Hagege, H. 2022. "Educating through attentional states of consciousness, and effective way to develop creative potential?". *Frontiers in Education*. Vol.7. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.774685

Redman, S., Bauman, A., & Milat, A. 2015. "A narrative review of research impact assessment models and methods". *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 13(1), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-015-0003-1

Selvaratnam, R., & Venaruzzo, L. 2023. "Governance of artificial intelligence and data in Australasian higher education: A snapshot of policy and practice. An ACODE Whitepaper." *Australasian Council on Open and Digital Education (ACODE).* Canberra. Australia. https://doi.org/10.14742/apubs.2023.717

Sharp, A. 2012. "Humanistic Approaches to Learning". In: Seel, N.M. (eds) *Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning*. Springer, Boston, MA. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1428-6_530

Southgate, E. 2020. "Artificial intelligence, ethics, equity and higher education: A 'beginning-of-the-discussion' paper". *Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success*. https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/publications/artificial-intelligence-ethics-equity-higher-education/

Søvik, A. O. 2022. "What overarching ethical principle should a superintelligent AI follow?" *AI & Society*, 37(4), 1505–1518. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-021-01229-6

Tang, X., Upadyaya, K., Toyama, H., Kasanen, M., & Salmela-Aro, K. 2023. "Assessing and Tracking Students' Wellbeing Through an Automated Scoring System: School Day Wellbeing Model". In: Niemi, H., Pea, R.D., Lu, Y. (eds) *AI in Learning: Designing the*

Future. Springer, Cham. https://doi-org.ezproxy.ecu.edu.au/10.1007/978-3-031-09687-7_4

Tasioulas, J. 2022. "Artificial Intelligence, Humanistic Ethics." *Daedalus*. 151(2), 232-243. https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01912

Tawil, S. & Miao, F. 2024. "Steering the Digital Transformation of Education: UNESCO's Human-Centered Approach". *Frontiers of Digital Education*, 1(1), 51–58. https://doi.org/10.3868/s110-009-024-0005-6

Terrace, H. & Metcalfe, J. 2005. *The missing link in cognition: origins of self-reflective consciousness*. Oxford University Press.

Timofte, R. 2022. "Ethics and Privacy in Learning Analytics: The Rise of Chief Privacy and Chief Ethics Officers". In: Mâță, L. (eds) *Ethical Use of Information Technology in Higher Education*. EAI/Springer Innovations in Communication and Computing. Springer, Singapore. https://doi-org.ezproxy.ecu.edu.au/10.1007/978-981-16-1951-9_8

UNESCO. 2024. "Draft AI competency frameworks for teachers and for students." UNESCO. https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2024/04/UNESCO-Draft-AI-competency-frameworks-for-teachers-and-school-students.pdf

UNESCO. 2024. "Towards an international instrument." *Ethics of Neurotechnology*. https://www.unesco.org/en/ethics-neurotech

Van Baal, S., Le, S., Fatehi, F., Verdejo-Garcia, A., & Hohwy, J. 2022. "Effecting behaviour change using an artificial intelligence chatbot: A pilot randomised controlled study". *PsyArXiv*. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/2xuat

Van Norren, D. E. 2023. "The ethics of artificial intelligence, UNESCO and the African Ubuntu perspective". *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society*, 21(1), 112–128. https://doi.org/10.1108/JICES-04-2022-0037

Webb, M. 2024. "AI Maturity Model for Education". JISC National Centre for AI. https://nationalcentreforai.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2024/03/08/our-ai-in-education-maturity-model-an-update-for-2024/

World Economic Forum. 2024. "Shaping the future of learning: The role of AI in Education 4.0. Publications". https://www.weforum.org/publications/shaping-the-future-of-learning-the-role-of-ai-in-education-4-0/

Yang, S., Ogata, H., Matsui, T., & Chen, N. 2021. "Human-centered artificial intelligence in education: Seeing the invisible through the visible". *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 2. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2021.100008

7. Short biography

Dr Ratna Selvaratnam is currently the Manager for Learning Technologies and Innovation at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Australia. She is also the Treasurer on the Executive Board of the Australasian Council for Open and Digital Education (ACODE). She has published in the field of AI and ethics, gender and sustainability, microcredentials, and was a member of the working group that produced Australia's National Microcredentials Framework (NMF). Ratna is currently a member of the Pool of Experts on Ethics of Digital & Emerging Technologies, for the international organisation, Globethics. Ratna has extensive international higher education experience both as a professional and as a student across Australia, Malaysia, U.K. and the U.S. She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Advanced HE.

Email: r.selvaratnam@ecu.edu.au

Lynnae Venaruzzo is the Director, Postgraduate Transformation at Western Sydney University, Australia. Lynnae is leading the design and development of differentiated learning experiences using novel digital Diaz pedagogical frameworks and innovative technologies including extended reality (XR), rich media and artificial intelligence to reshape how digital learning is delivered and experienced. Lynnae is curious about how technology enables

deep engagement and how we can create learning experiences that intrinsically motivate learners. Her curiosity is being extended through her research and doctoral work on motivation and self-regulated learning. Lynnae is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, and an Executive member of ACODE, the peak Australasian council for technology-enabled learning.

Email: l.venaruzzo@westernsydney.edu.au

journal of ethics in higher education

Equifinality in Career Pathways

A Journey from Classroom to Academia

Joyce Exusper Nemes,
University of Dodoma, Tanzania

December 2024.

Keywords

Equifinality, autobiographic self-understanding, work ethics, career transition, primary teaching vs. higher education teaching experiences

Abstract

There are diverse pathways to becoming an academic, yet personal histories of successful academics who have taken non-traditional routes often remain undocumented. This qualitative and autobiographical study is guided by the theories of equifinality and career construction (von Bertalanffy, 1968; Toya, 2020; Savickas, 2005), aiming at filling this gap by documenting a personal journey from classroom teaching to academia. The study findings reveal that career pathways are marked by significant milestones, challenges and strategic decision-making processes that shape the career trajectory. The results underscore the validity of equifinality in academic career development and active role individuals play in constructing their career narratives. It is recommended that institutions and policymakers in higher learning institutions should recognize and value non-traditional career paths as valuable assets within individuals' career development.

Corresponding Authors: Joyce Exusper Nemes, University of Dodoma, Tanzania, Email: joyce.nemes@udom.ac.tz

To quote this article: Exusper Nemes, J. 2024. "Equifinality in Career Pathways: A Journey from Classroom to Academia". *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 5(2024): 103–120. DOI: 10.26034/fr.jehe.2024.6865 © the Author. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit https://jehe.globethics.net

1. Introduction

The transition from primary school teaching to academia represents a significant and complex shift in the educational landscape, highlighting the diverse pathways that can lead to successful academic careers. This phenomenon underscores the importance of understanding and recognizing non-traditional routes in academic career development. The concept of equifinality, which posits that multiple routes can lead to similar outcomes (Toya, 2020; Carozza, Akarca & Astle, 2023; Schneider & Iverson, 2023), provides a valuable theoretical framework for examining these varied experiences and qualifications.

While there is a growing body of literature recognizing diverse career trajectories within education (e.g., Garrett, 2024; White & Smith, 2022; Duta, Wielgoszewska & Iannelli, 2021 in the UK; Ramnund-Mansingh & Seedat-Khan, 2020 in South Africa; Ampaire, Kagoda & Namugenyi, 2024 and Nabawanuka, 2023 in Uganda; Nduta, 2020 in Kenya; Dachi, 2018 and Tarimo & Swai, 2024 in Tanzania), the field remains divided. Some scholars argue for the superiority of traditional academic pathways (Johnson & Lee, 2022), while others advocate for the value of diverse experiences in enriching academic perspectives (Martinez & Brown, 2023). This debate highlights a significant gap in the literature regarding the specific pathways educators follow to enter higher education roles, particularly those transitioning from primary education.

Most studies tend to focus on traditional routes, often neglecting the rich variety of experiences that shape individual journeys. Even recent research, such as Tarimo & Swai's (2024) study in Tanzania, primarily highlights factors facilitating female academicians' career development in public universities, overlooking the issue of equifinality. This research aims to address this gap by exploring a personal career path, emphasizing how unique experiences inform transitions to academia.

The objectives of this study are:

— To narrate a personal journey from primary school teaching to academia

— To recount the lessons learned while navigating this career transition

By examining this pathway through a personal narrative, framed by the theories of equifinality (von Bertalanffy, 1968; Toya, 2020) and Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005), the research seeks to provide insights that can inform professional development programs and institutional policies. This study contributes to the field of education by offering a comprehensive, lived understanding of career transitions in education, underscoring the importance of recognizing and supporting diverse pathways.

The novelty of this research lies in its unique combination of personal narrative with theoretical frameworks, providing a rich, in-depth account of a non-traditional pathway to academia. It addresses the scarcity of documented personal histories from successful academics who have taken non-traditional routes, offering inspiration and practical insights for aspiring scholars from diverse backgrounds.

Through this lens of personal narrative, this study offers a unique perspective on the complexities of navigating educational career paths, potentially reshaping how we conceptualize and support career transitions in education. It challenges existing paradigms and contributes to a more inclusive understanding of academic career development, with implications for policy, practice, and future research in higher education.

2. Literature Review

Theoretical framework

This study is underpinned by two interconnected theories that provide a robust foundation for understanding the complex transition from primary school teaching to academia: equifinality and Career Construction Theory.

Equifinality, originating from systems theory, posits that similar outcomes can be achieved through diverse pathways (von Bertalanffy, 1968; Toya, 2020). This concept is central to our research as it acknowledges the value of varied experiences in shaping academic careers, challenging the notion of a

single, predetermined path to academia. In the context of this study, equifinality supports the exploration of diverse routes educators take from primary school teaching to academic roles, recognizing that multiple pathways can lead to successful careers in higher education.

Career Construction Theory, developed by Savickas (2005), views career development as a process of personal meaning-making rather than a series of predefined stages (Tokar, Savickas & Kaut, 2020; Munley, 2021; Akün, Işık & Savickas, 2023; McCullough & Hedelin, 2024). It emphasizes the role of adaptability, identity, and life themes in shaping career choices and transitions. This theory helps explain how educators construct meaning from their varied experiences and how these constructions influence their transition to academia. Career Construction Theory provides a framework for understanding the personal and professional adaptations required in this career shift, highlighting how individuals actively construct their career narratives and make decisions based on their evolving self-concept and changing circumstances.

The integration of these two theories allows for a nuanced exploration of the diverse pathways educators take to transition into academia. Equifinality provides the broad conceptual framework for acknowledging multiple valid career paths, while Career Construction Theory offers insight into the individual's process of navigating and making meaning of these paths. Together, they create a comprehensive lens through which to examine the personal journey from classroom teaching to academia, considering both the variety of possible routes and the individual's active role in constructing their career narrative.

Pathways from teaching to academia

The transition from teaching to academia is a complex journey characterized by diverse pathways and experiences. This literature review focuses on two key aspects: the pathways from teaching to academia and the lessons learned during career transitions. The journey from teaching to academia is influenced by various factors, both personal and institutional. Tarimo & Swai (2024) explored the career development of female academics in Tanzania's

public universities, highlighting commitment and motivation as key influences on women's academic growth. This study underscores the importance of personal drive in navigating academic careers, particularly for underrepresented groups. Heffernan (2021) emphasized the crucial role of academic networks in career progression, asserting that successful careers in academia are deeply intertwined with networking abilities. This finding suggests that the path to academia is not solely based on individual merit but also on social capital and connections. Bojica et al. (2023) examined the effects of international academic mobility on career progression in EU countries. Their findings indicate that mobility can significantly impact academic career trajectories, although the effects vary across different contexts. This study highlights the potential benefits of diverse experiences in shaping academic careers, but also points to the complexities of navigating international academic landscapes. However, these pathways are not without challenges. Arday (2021) shed light on the additional barriers and complexities experienced by Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Doctoral Students pursuing academic careers. This research underscores the importance of considering diversity and inclusion in understanding and facilitating pathways to academia, suggesting that the journey may be more arduous for certain groups.

Lessons learned during career transitions

The transition to academia is often accompanied by significant challenges and learning experiences. Hollywood et al. (2020) revealed that many early career academics feel overwhelmed initially, highlighting the importance of support systems and mentorship in navigating the early stages of an academic career. This finding suggests that the transition is not just about acquiring new skills, but also about adapting to a new professional culture and expectations. Various systemic issues can impact career transitions. In South Africa, inadequate career guidance has been identified as a significant challenge (Erasmus, 2020). Other obstacles include the consideration of impact factors during promotion (Ibegbulam, Uzoagba, & Igbo, 2017), lack of clear promotion procedures (Mwashila, 2018), and insufficient resources for research coupled with heavy workloads (Khan & Siriwardhane, 2021).

These studies highlight the institutional and structural challenges that can impede smooth career transitions. Yaqub et al. (2020) pointed out the lack of systematic and comprehensive training needs analysis and weak interaction between institutions seeking training and those providing it. This gap in professional development support suggests that many academics may be underprepared for their new roles, potentially impacting their career progression. The concept of work-life balance in academia was critically examined by Rosa (2022), highlighting the complexities and pressures faced by academics in managing their professional and personal lives. This research underscores the importance of considering broader institutional and societal factors in understanding career transitions and development in academia. Cardel et al. (2020) focused on the specific challenges faced by women in faculty, proposing strategies to promote equity in academia. Their work emphasizes the need for systemic changes to support career development for underrepresented groups in higher education, suggesting that the lessons learned during career transitions may differ significantly based on gender and other demographic factors. Based on literature reviewed, while existing research provides valuable insights into the pathways to academia and the lessons learned during career transitions, there remains a significant gap in the literature. There is a lack of in-depth personal narratives that provide a holistic view of the transition from teaching to academia, particularly in diverse global contexts. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies and comprehensive individual accounts that capture the nuances of this complex career transition, considering factors such as gender, ethnicity, institutional support, and personal motivations.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, autoethnographic approach to explore the personal journey from primary school teaching to academia. Autoethnography, as defined by Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011), is a research method that uses personal experience to describe and analyze cultural experiences. This method is particularly suitable for this study as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the researcher's own career transition,

providing rich, contextual data that illuminates the complexities of navigating educational career paths.

Data collection will primarily involve introspective techniques, including personal narrative writing, reflective journaling, and the examination of personal artifacts such as career documents, correspondence, and professional development records. These methods have been used to construct a detailed account of the researcher's career trajectory, highlighting key decision points, challenges, and influential factors. To enhance the validity and reliability of the autoethnographic data, the study also incorporates elements of triangulation. These include reviewing relevant institutional documents, policies, and literature related to career transitions in education to contextualize the personal narrative within broader educational and social frameworks.

The data analysis will follow a thematic approach, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process involves multiple readings of the collected data, coding for recurring themes and patterns, and synthesizing these codes into broader themes that address the research objectives. Particular attention paid to identifying critical incidents that shaped the career transition, personal and professional growth experiences, and the interplay between individual agency and institutional structures. Throughout the analysis, the researcher maintained a reflexive stance, acknowledging and examining personal biases and assumptions that may influence the interpretation of experiences. This reflexivity will be explicitly addressed in the final narrative to ensure transparency and enhance the credibility of the findings.

4. Data Presentation and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study, focusing on the personal journey from primary school teaching to academia and the lessons learned during this transition. The data is analyzed through the lenses of equifinality (von Bertalanffy, 1968; Toya, 2020) and Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005), providing a theoretical framework for understanding the complex nature of this career transition. The discussion is

structured around two main objectives, each supported by themes derived from the narrative analysis

Narration of my personal journey from primary school teaching to academia

The journey from primary school teaching to academia is a complex and multifaceted process, characterized by several key themes and experiences. This section explores the personal narrative of this transition, highlighting the interplay between individual choices, educational pursuits, and career development. The narrative is analysed through the lenses of equifinality and Career Construction Theory, revealing insights into the non-traditional pathways to academic success. The following subthemes and codes emerged from this personal journey, providing a framework for understanding the transition:

- *Educational progression:* My journey from primary school teaching to academia began with seven years of primary education, followed by secondary education and teacher training. This initial foundation laid the groundwork for future academic pursuits. The progression continued with the pursuit of a diploma in education, followed by undergraduate and master's degrees. Each educational step represented a strategic move towards academic career development, culminating in the pursuit of a PhD. This educational trajectory aligns with the concept of equifinality (von Bertalanffy, 1968; Toya, 2020), demonstrating that similar outcomes can be reached through diverse pathways.

- *Career transitions:* The transition from primary school teaching to academia marked a significant milestone in my career journey. This shift was achieved through successfully passing an interview for a position in higher education, representing not just a change in job role but a transformation of professional identity. The subsequent promotion to Senior Lecturer further illustrates the evolution of my academic career. These transitions support research on the evolution of professional identity through career changes (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2022) and exemplify Career Construction Theory's emphasis on adaptability and

ongoing identity formation in response to changing professional circumstances (Savickas, 2005).

- *Challenges and resilience:* Despite initial academic challenges, I persevered, working as a primary school teacher while simultaneously pursuing further education through evening classes. This persistence not only reflects equifinality but also aligns with the findings of Hollywood et al. (2020), who highlighted the overwhelming nature of early academic careers and the importance of resilience. The ability to overcome obstacles and balance professional responsibilities with educational pursuits demonstrates the resilience required in navigating non-traditional pathways to academia.

- *Strategic career development:* The strategic pursuit of higher education while maintaining professional responsibilities demonstrates the adaptability and personal meaning-making emphasized by Career Construction Theory (Tokar, Savickas & Kaut, 2020; Munley, 2021; Akün, Işık & Savickas, 2023; McCullough & Hedelin, 2024). Each educational and career decision represents an intentional choice in shaping my career, aligning with the theory's view of individuals as active agents in their career development. This strategic approach to career development underscores the importance of continuous learning and professional growth in academic careers.

- *Professional identity transformation:* The journey from primary school teacher to academic involved a significant transformation of professional identity. This evolution supports research on the dynamic nature of professional identity in education (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2022). The transition to higher education and subsequent advancement to Senior Lecturer illustrates the continuous professional development central to academic careers, as noted by (Smith & Gillespie, 2023). This transformation exemplifies the adaptability and ongoing identity formation emphasized in Career Construction Theory.

- *Theoretical alignment:* The overall journey exemplifies the concept of equifinality, demonstrating that successful academic careers can be

achieved through non-traditional routes. It also aligns with Career Construction Theory's emphasis on individuals as active agents in constructing meaningful career narratives. The strategic pursuit of education, career transitions, and professional identity evolution all reflect the core principles of these theories, providing a theoretical framework for understanding non-traditional pathways to academic success. My journey from primary school teaching to academia exemplifies the concept of equifinality (von Bertalanffy, 1968; Toya, 2020), demonstrating that successful academic careers can be achieved through non-traditional routes. This aligns with equifinality's core principle that similar outcomes can be reached through diverse pathways. The path began with seven years of primary education, followed by secondary education and teacher training. Despite initial academic challenges, I persevered, working as a primary school teacher while simultaneously pursuing further education through evening classes. This persistence not only reflects equifinality but also aligns with the findings of Hollywood et al. (2020), who highlighted the overwhelming nature of early academic careers and the importance of resilience. The journey continued with the pursuit of a diploma in education, followed by undergraduate and master's degrees. This progression reflects the active engagement in constructing a meaningful career narrative, as described in Savickas's (2005) Career Construction Theory. The strategic pursuit of higher education while maintaining professional responsibilities demonstrates the adaptability and personal meaning-making emphasized by this theory (Tokar, Savickas & Kaut, 2020; Munley, 2021; Akün, Işık & Savickas, 2023; McCullough & Hedelin, 2024). Each educational step represents an intentional choice in shaping my career, aligning with Career Construction Theory's view of individuals as active agents in their career development. The transition from primary school teaching to academia marked a significant milestone, achieved through successfully passing an interview for a position in higher education. This shift not only represents a change in job role but also a transformation of professional identity, supporting research on the evolution of professional identity through career

transitions (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). The subsequent pursuit of a PhD and promotion to Senior Lecturer further illustrate the continuous professional development central to academic careers, as noted by Day & Sachs (2004). These transitions exemplify Career Construction Theory's emphasis on adaptability and ongoing identity formation in response to changing professional circumstances.

The lessons learned while navigating career transition

The career transition from primary school teaching to academia offered several valuable lessons, each reflecting aspects of equifinality and Career Construction Theory.

- *Persistence and resilience:* The transition from primary school teaching to academia underscored the critical importance of persistence and resilience. Overcoming initial academic setbacks and balancing full-time employment with further studies demanded exceptional time management skills and dedication. This experience aligns with recent research on teacher resilience (Beltman, 2021; Mullen et al., 2021), which identifies resilience as a combination of individual characteristics and a supportive working environment, particularly crucial in early career stages. Wang et al. (2024) recently emphasized the importance of teacher well-being in fostering professional growth in China, further supporting this finding. The non-linear nature of this journey, with its challenges and detours, exemplifies equifinality's assertion that multiple paths can lead to the same outcome.

- *Diversification of knowledge and skills:* A crucial lesson was the importance of diversifying knowledge and skills. The pursuit of additional qualifications in leadership, law, and corporate governance after becoming a Senior Lecturer demonstrated a commitment to broadening expertise beyond the primary field. This aligns with Yaqub et al.'s (2020) findings on the need for comprehensive training and development in academia, as well as the evolving nature of academic roles highlighted by Cardel et al. (2020). From the perspective of Career Construction Theory, this diversification represents an adaptive response

to the changing demands of an academic career, illustrating the theory's emphasis on continuous personal and professional development.

- *Strategic career planning:* strategic career planning emerged as a vital lesson, reflecting Career Construction Theory's concept of individuals as active agents in their career development. The ability to identify and seize opportunities for advancement, such as applying for university while pursuing a diploma and seeking out scholarship opportunities, proved crucial. This strategic approach to career development exemplifies the intentional career construction emphasized by Savickas (2005).

- *Adaptability and flexibility*: Adaptability and flexibility were key lessons learned throughout the journey, aligning with both equifinality and Career Construction Theory. Navigating different educational contexts – from public to private schools, evening classes, and higher education institutions – enhanced adaptability to various learning and teaching environments. This experience supports Bojica et al.'s (2023) research on the effects of diverse experiences in shaping academic careers and demonstrates the flexibility required in constructing a personalized career path.

- *Value of formal qualifications*: The journey underscored the value of formal qualifications as career catalysts. Each educational pursuit, from the initial teaching qualification to the PhD, facilitated entry and advancement in academia. This aligns with the emphasis on continuous professional development in education careers (Smith & Gillespie, 2023) and highlights the ongoing importance of formal learning in career growth. From the perspective of Career Construction Theory, these qualifications represent tools used to actively shape professional identity and career trajectory.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the personal journey from primary school teaching to academia, examining the career pathway through the lens of

equifinality and career construction theory. The main result reveals that successful transitions to academic careers can be achieved through non-traditional routes, highlighting the importance of persistence, continuous learning, and adaptive strategies in navigating complex career paths.

This study contributes to the limited body of personal narratives in academic career development literature, offering a unique perspective on the transition from classroom teaching to higher education. It is among the few articles that explicitly apply the theory of equifinality to academic career pathways, providing a rich, in-depth account of a non-linear career progression.

The practical implications of this study suggest that aspiring academics, particularly those transitioning from primary education, should embrace diverse educational and professional experiences as valuable stepping stones. The results emphasize the importance of strategic career planning, resilience in face of challenges, and the pursuit of continuous professional development. Furthermore, the findings suggest that institutions and policymakers should recognize and value non-traditional career paths in academia, potentially broadening their recruitment and promotion criteria.

These results build on the theory of equifinality, demonstrating that there are indeed different ways to reach the same destination in academic careers. The study showcases how diverse experiences, from primary school teaching to various educational pursuits, can converge into a successful academic career, reinforcing the validity of equifinality in career development contexts.

One of the limitations of this study is its reliance on personal narration, which may introduce subjectivity and potential bias. However, the availability of credentials to cross-check the narration adds a layer of validity to the account. Additionally, while the study provides deep insights into one individual's journey, its generalizability to broader populations may be limited.

For future research, it would be valuable to conduct comparative studies of multiple non-traditional pathways to academia, potentially across different disciplines and geographical contexts. Longitudinal studies tracking career transitions over extended periods could provide further insights into the long-term impacts of non-linear career paths. Additionally, research exploring

the institutional perspectives on hiring and promoting academics with non-traditional backgrounds could offer valuable insights for policy development in higher education. In conclusion, this study underscores the complexity and diversity of academic career pathways, challenging traditional notions of linear career progression. It highlights the potential for individuals from diverse professional backgrounds to successfully transition into academia, given the right combination of persistence, adaptability, and strategic career development. As the landscape of higher education continues to evolve, recognizing and valuing these non-traditional pathways may become increasingly important in fostering a diverse and dynamic academic workforce.

6. Bibliography

Arday, J. 2021. Fighting the tide: Understanding the difficulties facing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Doctoral Students' pursuing a career in Academia. *Educational philosophy and theory*, *53*(10), 972-979. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857. 2020.1777640

Ampaire, A., Kagoda, A., & Namugenyi, M. 2024. Indigenization of Career Choice Trajectory in Uganda: Drawing from the Curriculum Dilemmas at Education Transitional Levels. In: Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development, Tom Kwanya, Peter Matu (eds.), Nairobi: Technical University of Kenya, 131-141.

Akün, Ç., Işık, E., & Savickas, M. 2023. Examining differentiation of self within career construction model of adaptation. *Journal of Career Development*, *50*(1), 135-149.

Beltman, S. 2021. Understanding and examining teacher resilience from multiple perspectives. In: Mansfield, C.F. (eds) *Cultivating Teacher Resilience*. Springer: Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-5963-1_2

Bertalanffy, L. V. 1968. General systems theory as integrating factor in contemporary science. *Akten des XIV. Internationalen Kongresses für Philosophie*, *2*, 335-340.

Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. 2022. Identity learning in teacher education. In *Encyclopedia of teacher education*. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 786-790.

Bojica, A. M., Olmos-Peñuela, J., & Alegre, J. 2023. A cross-country configurational approach to international academic mobility: exploring mobility effects on academics' career progression in EU countries. *Higher Education*, *86*(5), 1081-1105.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Carozza, S., Akarca, D., & Astle, D. 2023. The adaptive stochasticity hypothesis: Modeling equifinality, multifinality, and adaptation to adversity. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *120*(42), e2307508120.

Cardel, M. I., Dhurandhar, E., Yarar-Fisher, C., Foster, M., Hidalgo, B., McClure, L. A., ... & Angelini, C. 2020. Turning chutes into ladders for women faculty: A review and roadmap for equity in academia. *Journal of Women's Health*, *29*(5), 721-733. https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2019.8027

Dachi, H. 2018. Reflecting on five decades of teacher professional development in Tanzania: The missing dimensions. *Papers in Education and Development*, *36*.

de Novaes, R. E., & de Oliveira, M. C. S. L. 2023. The impact of non-normative academic trajectories of higher education students over their self-development. *Human Arenas*, *6*(2), 292-308.

Duta, A., Wielgoszewska, B., & Iannelli, C. 2021. Different degrees of career success: Social origin and graduates' education and labour market trajectories. *Advances in Life Course Research*, *47*, 100376.

Erasmus, B. J. 2020. Perceptions of administrative staff on career advancement realities at a South African university. *Management-Journal of Contemporary Management Issues*, *25*(1), 69-88.

Garrett, R. 2024. Racism shapes careers: career trajectories and imagined futures of racialised minority PhDs in UK higher education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2024.2307886

Heffernan, T. 2021. Academic networks and career trajectory:'There's no career in academia without networks'. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *40*(5), 981-994. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1799948.

Hollywood, A., McCarthy, D., Spencely, C., & Winstone, N. 2020. 'Overwhelmed at first': the experience of career development in early career academics. *Journal of further and higher education*, *44*(7), 998-1012. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2019.1636213.

Ibegbulam, I. J., Uzoagba, N., & Igbo, U. 2017. Academic staff views on the use and challenges of impact factor for assessment for promotion and career progression. *J. Appl. Inf. Sci. Technol*, *10*, 126-134.

Khan, T., & Siriwardhane, P. 2021. Barriers to career progression in the higher education sector: Perceptions of Australian academics. *Sustainability*, *13*(11), https://doi.org/10.3390/su13116255.

McCullough Hedelin, M. J. 2024. *From Classroom to Career Change: Understanding Teachers' Transition Experiences.: An Exploration of Identity, Reflection, and Agency in Navigating New Professional Pathways*. Master of Arts Diss. Malmö University.

Mullen, C. A., Shields, L. B., & Tienken, C. H. 2021. Developing teacher resilience and resilient school cultures. *Journal of Scholarship & Practice*, *18*(1), 8-24.

Munley, K. 2021. *Effectiveness of an Online Career Development Course versus Its Face to Face Counterpart on Career Decision-Self-Efficacy*, Doct. Diss., Northeastern University.

Mwashila, H. M. 2018. *The Influence of career development on academic staff performance in Kenyan public universities in coast region*, Doct. diss. Technical University of Mombasa, Mombasa.

Nabawanuka, P. 2023. Institutional Support Strategies for Academic Career Progression among Female Lecturers: A Case of Kyambogo University of Uganda. *East African Journal of Education Studies*, *6*(2), 104-120. DOI: https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.6.2.1253.

Nduta, M. M. 2020. Gender differences in career aspiration among public secondary schools' students in Nairobi County, Kenya. *American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Development (AJMRD)*, *2*(9), 16-25.

Ramnund-Mansingh, A., & Seedat-Khan, M. 2020. Understanding the career trajectories of black female academics in South Africa: A case study of the University of Kwazulu-Natal. *Perspectives in Education*, *38*(2), 56-69.

Schneider, J. L., & Iverson, J. M. 2023. Equifinality in infancy: The many paths to walking. *Developmental psychobiology*, *65*(2), https://doi.org/10.1002/dev.22370.

Smith, C., & Gillespie, M. 2023. Research on professional development and teacher change: Implications for adult basic education. In *Review of Adult Learning and Literacy*, Vol. 7, Routledge, 205-244.

Tarimo, E. A., & Swai, I. L. 2024. Female Academics Career Development-Stories from Senior Female Academics in Tanzania's Public Universities. *African Journal of Governance and Development*, Vol. 13(1), 23. https://doi.org/10.36369/2616-9045/2024/v13i1a2

Tokar, D. M., Savickas, M. L., & Kaut, K. P. 2020. A test of the career construction theory model of adaptation in adult workers with Chiari malformation. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *28*(3), 381-401. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072719867733

Toya, M. 2020. Exploring the process of teacher development toward teaching English by using the trajectory equifinality modelling approach: elementary, middle and high school comparison. *Impact*, 2020(9), 35-37. https://doi.org/10.21820/23987073.2020.9.35

Yaqub, E. N., Owusu-Cole, C., & Ofosua, C. F. 2020. Challenges Facing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Academic Staff of the Colleges of Education in Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 12(2), 112-120. https://doi.org/10.5897/IJEAPS2020.0653.

Wang, X., Gao, Y., Wang, Q., & Zhang, P. 2024. Relationships between self-efficacy and teachers' well-being in middle school English teachers: The mediating role of teaching satisfaction and resilience. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(8), 629, 1-16, https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14080629.

White, P., & Smith, E. 2022. From subject choice to career path: Female STEM graduates in the UK labour market. *Oxford Review of Education*, 48(6), 693-709. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2021.2011713.

7. Short Biography

Dr Joyce Nemes holds a Certificate & Diploma in Education (Tabora Teachers College), BED Arts & MEMA (UDSM), PhD (UDOM), PGD in Leadership (Uongozi Institute & Aalto University Finland), PGD in Law (OUT), Certificate of Competence in Corporate Governance (ESAMI), Certificate of Completion Female Feature Tanzania Programme (ATE), and is a Certified Director (IoDT). She works as a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Educational Management and Policy Studies, College of Education, at the University of Dodoma, Tanzania.

Email: joyce.nemes@udom.ac.tz

journal of ethics in higher education

The Learner's Role as an Acting Person and Emerging Technologies

Grounding Educational Policy on the Use of AI

Irene Ludji,

Satya Wacana Christian Univ. Indonesia

Keywords

Artificial intelligence, educational policy, learner's role as an acting person, Karol Wojtyla, the personalist foundation in ethics

Abstract

The approach to empower learners as the subject in the use of AI is in line with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s AI and Education Guidance for Policy-Makers and is pursued in recognition of the three paradigmatic shifts in the use of AI in educational setting. To strengthen the role of learners as leaders in the use of AI, this article uses the idea of the *acting person* from Karol Wojtyla. The concept of the *acting person* focuses on moral responsibility founded in human consciousness and conducted through human actions. The moral act of an *acting person* leads to responsible use that requires the commitment to the common good. In the first part, I will describe the history and development of AI technologies. In the second part, I will discuss the idea of the *acting person* and the AI as an acting machine. In the last part, I will present an analysis of the importance of grounding educational policy on the use of AI in learners' ethical role as the *acting person*.

Corresponding Authors: Irene Ludji, Satya Wacana Christian University, Salatiga, Indonesia. Email: irene.ludji@uksw.edu

To quote this article: Ludji, I. 2024. "The Learner's Role as an Acting Person and Emerging Technologies: Grounding Educational Policy on the Use of AI". *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 5(2024): 121–144. DOI: 10.26034/fr.jehe.2024.6866

© the Author. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit https://jehe.globethics.net

1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies have become a part of our daily lives in the twenty-first century. From self-driving cars to instant machine translation, from Google maps that can predict shorter routes to rideshare apps that compare prices, the spam filter on email, grammar-checking, plagiarism checking, bank deposit of checks through a smartphone, quick fraud prevention on online banking, social networking that highlights face recognition, easy online shopping that provides suggestions on what you should buy, voice-to-text technology, a smartwatch that reminds when to take a break, exercise, and calories intake tracking, a smart personal assistant – Alexa, Siri, echo, dot, and even chat Generative Pre-trained Transformers (GPT) that response to questions and able to produce written content using human-like language.

In a century that has already been shaped by AI, rapid advancements in AI are allowing it to act increasingly like humans. On the one hand, this vision and developing reality can be a boon in advancing the quality of teaching and learning in an educational setting because AI provides many benefits, including data processing, pattern discovery, and statistical reasoning. The use of AI in education can improve classroom management, enhance teaching, and advance the learning process. On the other hand, an unguided use and total dependence on AI in teaching and learning can destroy learners' ability to develop critical-creative thinking, independent thought, awareness of social relations, and moral consciousness to become an ethical person. The use of AI in educational settings must be grounded in acknowledging human beings as a person in their wholeness to support and not threaten the goal of education itself.

In order to make sure that the use of AI in educational settings can fully support the formation of a whole person (intellectually, spiritually, and ethically), many strategies have been developed, including promoting AI literacy and supporting AI research and development. Educational policy on the use of AI has been directed to focus on fostering the use of AI that is aligned with educational goals, promoting the ethical use of AI, building

learners' capacity in using AI, and supporting the development of AI in education pedagogy. The focus on the person as the main subject in education when it comes to the use of AI in educational settings has also been advocated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) through their AI and Education Guidance for Policy-Makers with five main recommendations: First, assure comprehensive approach through interdisciplinary collaboration. Second, ethical use and unbiased access to AI should be ensured. Third, a strategy for using AI in educational management must be developed. Fourth, continued evaluation of the effectiveness of AI in the educational field. Fifth, local AI inventions suitable for the educational field should be cultivated. A thorough examination of these five ethical guiding points from UNESCO exceeds the scope of this article. Therefore, I will focus only on grounding educational policy on the use of AI in learners' ethical ability to make moral decisions as a person in order to strengthen UNESCO's second and third recommendations.

The use of AI in educational settings has been through three paradigmatic shifts: first, AI-directed and the learner as the recipient; second, AI-supported and the learner as a collaborator; and third, AI-empowered and the learner as a leader. In the first paradigm, learners play the passive role of accepting general information provided through AI in the process of gaining knowledge. The main problem with this approach is the need for learners to play an active role as the source of knowledge, which will lead to the possibility of the dominance of AI as the only source of knowledge. In the second paradigm, learners are starting to play a more active role as collaborators in using AI. However, the main problem with this approach is that the complex and dynamic human learning process receives limited attention because of the need to 'adjust' to AI-supported learning instruction. In the third paradigm, the learner is acknowledged as the main subject in the use of AI and, therefore, can personalize the use of AI to gain information in an educational setting. The power of this paradigm is the role of learners as agencies with a specific ethical role as the basis for the use of AI. In support of this paradigm, this article discussed learners' ethical role as the acting person as the foundation in all educational policies on the use of AI. The model of an AI-empowered learner as a leader may not be achieved if

the agency of a person as a whole does not receive enough attention in the discussion of educational policy on the use of AI. The need to empower AI must not be conducted without empowering humans as the subjects who use it. The use of AI in the educational setting is ethical when it puts humans at the center of learning and continued learning.

This article does not aim to provide practical guidance for policymakers in educational settings. Instead, it focuses on a person's moral foundation as the basis for developing educational policy for learners. Research on the moral grounds for using AI in educational settings does not receive adequate attention in the current literature because of the massive focus on practical guidance for using AI in the educational setting. Examining educational policy on the use of AI must include a discussion of a person's ability to act ethically. In agreement with this need, this article is systematized into three parts. In the first part, I describe the history and development of AI technologies. In the second part, I discuss the idea of the acting person and the learners' ethical role as the acting person. In the last part, I present an analysis of the importance of grounding educational policy on the use of AI in learners' ethical role as the acting person.

2. An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The term "artificial intelligence" (AI) originated in the 1950s. AI includes a vast array of scientific fields, such as mathematics, cognitive science, computer science, philosophy, and many other branches of knowledge. Hence, it is not easy to define AI because diverse scientific fields define AI variously. The American Association for Artificial Intelligence (AAAI) defines AI as "the scientific understanding of the mechanisms underlying thought and intelligent behavior and their embodiment in machine."[1] The Webster's Dictionary defines AI as "the capacity of computers or programs to operate in ways to mimic human thought processes, such as

[1] Raymond S. T. Lee. 2020. *Artificial Intelligence in Daily Life*, Berlin, Switzerland: Springer, 20.

reasoning and learning."[2] In addition, The Cambridge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence defines AI as "a cross-disciplinary approach to understanding, modeling, and replicating intelligence and cognitive processes by invoking various computational, mathematical, logical, mechanical, and even biological principles and devices."[3] The scholar Virginia Dignum wrote in *Responsible Artificial Intelligence* that AI consists of "artifacts that perceive the environment and take actions that maximize their chance of success at some goal."[4] AI is "a system that 'processes information in order to do something purposeful."[5] John McCarthy, Marvin L. Minsky, Nathaniel Rochester, and Claude E. Shannon define AI as "a computational artifact built through human intervention that thinks or acts like humans, or how we expect humans to think or act."[6] Based on these definitions, the general picture of AI technology is that it incorporates human-like intelligence by absorbing and incorporating information that allows it to react with a particular mode of action. The overall reality is that the potential of AI technologies is virtually limitless.

It is informative to look at the history of AI. There are several stages of development in the history of AI which includes its ups and downs. Starting from the Pre-AI stage (1943-1950) until the golden age of AI (1994-now).[7]

---

[2] Mirriam-Webster Dictionary, Artificial Intelligence, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/artificial%20intelligence

[3] Keith Frankish and William M. Ramsey. 2014. "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence*, ed. Keith Frankish and William M. Ramsey, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1.

[4] Virginia Dignum. 2019. *Responsible Artificial Intelligence: How to Develop and Use AI in a Responsible Way,* in *Artificial Intelligence: Foundations, Theory, and Algorithms,* ed. Barry O'Sullivan and Michael Wooldridge, Switzerland: Springer, 11.

[5] Ibid., 11.

[6] John McCarthy, Marvin L. Minsky, Nathaniel Rochester, and Claude E. Shannon, A proposal for the Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence, August 31, 1955. AI Magazine 27, 4 (2006), 12–14 in Dignum, *Responsible Artificial Intelligence*, 9.

[7] Lee, Raymond S. T. 2020. *Artificial Intelligence in Daily Life*. Springer, 21.

During the Pre-AI stage, Alan Turing published "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" in *Mind*, where he discussed a test of a machine's ability to exhibit intelligent behavior equivalent to or indistinguishable from that of humans.[8] Meanwhile, several main events have marked the golden age of AI (1994-now). First was the birth of the Internet and the development of intelligent agents, a sub- period that began in 1994.[9] Then, second came the chess computer, IBM's Deep Blue, an intelligent agent that defeated the reigning world champion in 1997.[10] The third event was the wide use of smartphones worldwide that has pushed us towards the age of accessible AI applications. "When the smartphone rose in popularity in the early 2000s, web designers were faced with the obstacle of truncating their websites to fit onto a much smaller screen."[11] Today, a vast array of mobile apps can be accessed instantly to help people address multiple needs.[12]

In the present golden age, the fourth hallmark was the invention of AI through human- like technologies such as Sophia, the robot. Sophia is "a robot that has the unique ability to connect and communicate with humans" because it is "a cognitive robotics platform."[13] David Hanson elaborates on what Sophia does: ". . . it's a social robot that uses artificial intelligence to see people, understand conversations, and form relationships."[14] However, Ben Goertzel, the architect of Sophia's brain, states that "Sophia is more of a user-interface than a human being—meaning it can be programmed to run different code

---

[8] Ibid., 22

[9] Ibid., 27

[10] Ibid., 27

[11] Nicolas Bayerque. 2018. "A Short History of Chatbots and Artificial Intelligence," in *The Reference Shelf: Artificial Intelligence,* ed. Micah Issitt, Ipswich, MA: H.W. Wilson, 38.

[12] Ibid., 39

[13] "Sophia," Hanson Robotics, accessed October 2020, https://www.hanson robotics.com/sophia-2020/

[14] Dave Gershgorn, "Hello, Sophia: Inside the Mechanical Brain of the World's First Robot Citizen," in *The Reference Shelf: Artificial Intelligence*, 41.

for different situations."[15] Sophia's contribution is significant because it was able to showcase different human-like components that work together.

These stages in the development of AI demonstrate that AI has evolved from the concept of a machine that exhibits intelligent behavior that is equivalent to or indistinguishable from that of humans to a robot that is not only shaped to resemble the human body but, most notably, is capable of human-like cognitive. From AI that can carry on specific tasks, based on separated algorithms created by humans, to "an image recognition algorithm [that] can detect a specific person's face, which can then cause another algorithm to pull up possible pre-written phrases."[16] The advancement of AI leads to questions about how machines learn and act and whether machines can have consciousness.

First is this question: How do machines learn? David Danks argues that "the value of machine learning is less in the output, and more in the way that the output can be used for future tasks: prediction, planning, classification, recognition, and so on."[17] "Machine-learning algorithms employ structural inference, and so if there are no patterns in the data, then there is nothing that can be inferred."[18] Accordingly, machine learning is roughly analogous to algorithm inputs and data provided. Machine learning relies on human work to specify and control the algorithm and provide the possible interpretation for the algorithm output.[19]

The second question is this: How do machines act? Generally, the AI process of making decisions about which actions to perform is made possible through the manipulation of the "Physical Symbol System Hypothesis."[20] "To get an

---

[15] Ibid., 41

[16] Ibid., 42

[17] David Danks, "Learning," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence*, 157.

[18] Ibid., 157

[19] Ibid., 161

[20] Eduardo Alonso, "Actions and Agents," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence*, 232.

AI system to 'act' it is enough to give it a logical representation of a theory of action (how systems make decisions and act accordingly) and get it to do a bit of theorem proving."[21] The system will be given a description and a set of actions with a list of preconditions for the action to be executed.[22] In Sophia, actions can be described in three configurations: First is a "research platform."[23] Dave Gershgorn points out that Sophia can answer simple questions like "Who are you looking at?" or "Is the door open or shut?" But it does not have the ability to analyze and provide answers to more profound questions -- unless they have been added as pre-written responses.[24] Second is "a speech-reciting robot."[25] "Goertzel says that Sophia can be pre-loaded with text that it'll speak, and then use machine learning to match facial expressions and pauses to the text."[26] Last is "a robotic chatbot."[27] Sophia is equipped with the ability to run a dialogue system, "where it can look at people, listen to what they say, and choose a pre-written response based on what the person said, and other factors gathered from the internet."[28]

Third is this question: Can machines have consciousness? Discussion about machine consciousness started in the mid-1990s.[29] "Most proposals on consciousness in artificial agents are conceptual at present and provide a set of potentially implementable principles."[30] 'Conscious' Mattie was the first functional prototype of a software agent that can write seminar

[21] Ibid., 232

[22] Ibid., 232

[23] Gershgorn, "Hello, Sophia," 42.

[24] Ibid., 42

[25] Ibid., 42

[26] Ibid., 42

[27] Ibid., 42

[28] Ibid., 42

[29] Matthias Scheutz. 2014. "Artificial Emotions and Machine Consciousness," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence*, ed. Keith Frankish and William M. Ramsey, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 258.

[30] Ibid., 260

announcements and communicate through emails with seminar organizers.[31] "A second prototype, IDA for 'Intelligent Distribution Agent,' was developed for the US Navy to facilitate the process of assigning sailors to new missions."[32] The third model is LIDA (Learning Intelligent Distribution Agent), "a complete cognitive architecture … which adds various types of learning to the previous architecture," and has been developed into several models.[33]

Briefly, AI technology advancement has gone through many phases and will continue to develop its quality. From the Turing test to Sophia the robot, AI technology development reached its most promising stage with the invention of the internet. The machine's capacity to operate in ways that imitate human learning and acting enters a promising phase with the invention of Sophia the robot, even though it is clear that Sophia does not yet represent the pinnacle of robot capabilities. AI, as a computational artifact, is a system invented by humans to mimic human thought processes and produce something purposeful. The development of AI technology leads to questions about how machines learn and act and whether machines can develop consciousness.

In the next part of this article, I will discuss how humans act, based on the work of Karol Wojtyla, The Acting Person, to show several characteristics that set human actions apart from machine actions and to present the ethical role of persons in using AI technology.

3. The *Acting Person* and the Acting Machine

The question of machine learning, acting, and consciousness is vital in philosophical studies of AI. What are the differences between human actions and machine actions? In this section, I will present Karol Wojtyla's investigation into person and act and relate it to the discussion of machine learning, acting, and consciousness.

---

[31] Ibid., 261

[32] Ibid., 261

[33] Ibid., 261

Wojtyla begins his investigation in The Acting Person by observing the phenomenon of duality in human experience. He contends that the human experience is the most complex and valuable experience accessible to a person.[34] Wojtyla declares that every human experience is a "single event," which means that not only is each human experience exclusive, but also it is unrepeatable.[35] Wojtyla states that the human experience is the elementary part of human cognition[36] and includes both the intellectual and sensory aspects of the physical body.[37]

Wojtyla points out that in human experience, there are two ways of acting. The first is "the man acts," and the second is "something happens to the man." The first reveals man's personal experience, in which "I act." The second reveals that man is the recipient of an outside force --- "something that happens to me," which comes from outside of myself so that I may or may not be conscious of it.[38] These two forms of action show the classical distinction Aquinas made between *actus humanus* and *actus hominis*, between human action and an act of a human being.

---

[34] Karol Wojtyla. 1979. *The Acting Person: A Contribution to Phenomenological Anthropology*, Analecta Husserliana, v. 10. Ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, trans. Andrzej Potocki, Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 3.

[35] Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 3; Karol Wojtyla. 1993. "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," in *Person and Community: Selected Essays. Catholic Thought from Lublin Vol. 4*, trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM, ed. Andrew N. Woznicki, New York: Peter Lang, 189.

[36] In human experience, cognition "is realized not through the truth of its own act (percipi) but through the truth of a transcendent object – something that exists with a real and objective existence independently of the act of knowing". Karol Wojtyla, "The Problem of Experience in Ethics," in *Person and Community*, 116.

[37] Wojtyla, "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," 188.

[38] Grzegorz Hołub, Tadeusz Biesaha, SDB, Jarosław Merecki, SDS, and Marek Kostur, 2019. *Karol Wojtyla: The Polish Christian Philosophy in the 20th Century*, ed. Grzegorz Hołub. Krakow: Ignatianum University Press Krakow, 347.

In human experience, a person as the subject and a concrete "I" both exist and act.[39] Wojtyla is convinced that "action reveals the person, and we look at the person through his action."[40] In fact, action provides "the best insight into the inherent essence of the person and allows us to understand the person most fully."[41] In order to analyze a person, one must start from the actions, argues Wojtyla.[42] In her actions, a person experiences herself both as the subject who is experiencing and as an object which is being experienced by the subject.[43]

Wojtyla identifies an element in the comprehensive experience of the human being that helps distinguish between I-act and something happens in me. He calls this element "self- determination."[44] In human experience, self-determination is associated with 'a sense of efficacy.' Wojtyla declares that, as a result, "'I act' means 'I am the efficient cause' of my action and of my self-actualization as a subject "when something merely 'happens' in me, for then I do not experience the efficacy of my personal self."[45] So Wojtyla concludes that "self- determination is a deeper and more basic dimension of the efficacy of the human self through which the acting human being is revealed as a personal subject."[46] "Efficacy indicates a relation between effect and cause—between the act formed and a person who performs the act."[47]

---

[39] Jove Jim S. Aguas, "Karol Wojtyla: On Person and Subjectivity," Ad Veritatem 8 (2), October 2009: 436.

[40] Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 11.

[41] Ibid., 11

[42] Ibid., 12; Grzegorz Hołub argues that in *The Acting Person*, Wojtyla is not aiming to justify the claim that man is a person; instead, he wanted to show "how man experiences himself as a person." Hołub et all., *Karol Wojtyła*, 50-51.

[43] Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," in *Person and Community*, 221.

[44] 46 Wojtyla, "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," 189.

[45] Ibid., 189.

[46] Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," 229.

[47] Gerard Beigel. 1997. *Faith and Social Justice in the Teaching of Pope John Paul II*. American University Studies Series VII Theology and Religion Vol. 191, New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc, 13.

But efficacy cannot represent the wholeness of personal subjectivity.[48] Still, efficacy in action corresponds to self-determination, because with it a person can take a deliberate action that involves self-determination.[49] To act is to realize "one's efficient causality,"[50] which includes one's ability to effect change.

Patrycja Maj and P. Popović states that self-determination manifests itself in the form of will.[51] It is the person who retains the will, and not the other way around.[52] In possessing the will, a person discovers "a fundamental orientation towards the inside, towards the subject."[53] Within self-determination, a person as a subject encounter herself (the subject) as an object.[54] Hence, a person becomes good or evil based on what she decides within herself. "Wojtyła stresses that this reality of the 'becoming' (in Latin: *fieri*) of the person" is the impact of self-determination.[55] Within the reality of 'becoming' in the human person a distinction can be made, says Wojtyla, between two ways of actualization, which are defined through the concepts of "doing" and "acting."[56] On the one hand, "doing" is closely related to the field of emotions, even though it is possible for a person to be aware of those emotions and guide them. Generally, when humans experience different feelings, this particular event is not accompanied by the experience of agency;

---

[48] Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," 229.

[49] Beigel, *Faith and Social Justice*, 13.

[50] In Thomistic understanding, efficient causality is a factor that brings about any cause. It is present to the effect, but it is not part of the effect. The principle of causality is that it produces something similar to itself. *Omne agen sagit simile sibi*: every agent produces something similar to itself (but does so diversely).

[51] Petar Popović and Patrycja Maj, "The Personalistic Value of the Human Act in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła,"
Anthropotes 32/2 (2016): 371.

[52] Ibid., 372

[53] Ibid., 372

[54] Ibid., 372

[55] Ibid., 373

[56] Hołub et al., *Karol Wojtyła*, 56.

hence this experience falls into the realm of doing.[57] On the other hand, "acting" plays a vital role in human agency because self-determination is closely tied to the experience of agency.[58] A person must act to reveal the whole self; in a way, a person can be seen as the developer of herself.

In Wojtyla 's understanding, "the value of the act must be integrated within the personalistic level of the value of the act."[59] Hence when act is performed, a person actualizes and realizes her own self.[60] A person is responsible for the "realization of values which he recognizes to be good, but first of all among these values to be realized is the person himself."[61] A person creates herself through self-determination when she sees herself as the efficient cause of her own actions.[62] Self-determination reveals the characteristic of self-possession and self-governance in a person.[63]

Wojtyla affirms "that action as the moment of the special apprehension of the person always manifests itself through consciousness."[64] Consciousness constitutes a distinct aspect of human action.[65] Doran reminds us that the condition of consciousness does not belong only to persons.[66] Still, the consciousness that is proper to a person is not only complex but also revealed in action.[67] Hence, it is necessary to differentiate between "conscious acting and the consciousness of acting."[68] When a person carries out a conscious act, she is conscious that she is acting. A person does more than act consciously;

---

[57] Ibid., 57

[58] Ibid., 56

[59] Popović and Maj, "The Personalistic Value," 367.

[60] Ibid., 367

[61] Kevin P. Doran. 1996. *Solidarity: A Synthesis of Personalism and Communalism in the Thought of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II*. New York: P. Lang, 136.

[62] Popović and Maj, "The Personalistic Value," 371.

[63] Ibid., 371

[64] Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 20

[65] Ibid., 30

[66] Doran, *Solidarity*, 125.

[67] Ibid., 124-126

[68] Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 28.

she is conscious that she is acting and that she is acting consciously.[69] The difference between "conscious" and "consciousness," is that "one is used attributively, when reference is made to conscious acting; the other is employed as a noun, which may be the subject, when the reference is to the consciousness of acting."[70]

In The Acting Person, Wojtyla also pay attention to the act of a person in participation together with others who are members of the community. In Wojtyla's examination, an act is understood as "a concrete form of access to a person and its structures, which reveal it as a value in the individual and community dimension."[71] In his discussion of participation, Wojtyla connects a person's action to her subjectivity. To be able to participate, a person, when acting together with others, retains her own personalistic value of her own actions while she simultaneously shares in the result of communal acting.[72] Participation enables a person to act together with others and, by doing so, reach her full meaning and potential as a person.[73] By stressing acting together with others, Wojtyla focuses on community membership, instead of associational relationships in society.[74] Participation in the community presupposes that each person is willingly involved in the shared action by living it out in each person's experiences.[75]

Participation intrinsically corresponds with both the person's integration and her transcendence, because when a person acts together with others, she finds

---

[69] Deborah Savage, "The Centrality of Lived Experience in Wojtyla's Account of the Person," *Annals of Philosophy*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (2013): 33.

[70] Aguas, "Karol Wojtyla: On Person and Subjectivity," 446.

[71] Hołub et all., *Karol Wojtyła*, 111.

[72] Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 269.

[73] Ibid., 276

[74] Ibid., 278

[75] Nancy Mardas Billias and Agnes B. Curry. 2008. "Introduction," in *Karol Wojtyla's Philosophical Legacy. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change Series I*, Culture and Value Volume 3, ed. George F. McLean. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 4.

her own personalistic value and the fulfillment of this value.[76] However, participation cannot be understood simply as sharing or taking part in something. "Rather, participation is the kind of transcendence and integration that each of us displays in action with others."[77] In participation, a person transcends herself and bypasses her own self for the benefit of others. In participation, a person also integrates herself; she makes sense of what is shared and acts upon it.[78] A person participates when she not only transcends her actions but permits the others to provide a response.[79] "Participation fulfills a person's transcendence and integration by first identifying one's own choice through self-determination to act together with others."[80] This process is accompanied by "the actualization, fulfillment, and realization of the personalistic value of the action."[81]

Based on Wojtyla's presentation on a person and act, as stated above, there are clear difference between a machine and a person's actions. Several key elements in this distinction. First, there is the fact that a person's actions represent her cognition, and that includes both the intellectual and sensory aspects of the physical body. Hence, a person's act reveals insight into the inherent essence of the person. A machine's action offers no insight into the machine's inherent essence because a machine's act is a series of algorithms and operations. A machine action's is not a real act at all, but rather a reaction to something from outside it that happens to it, based on the inputs that were prepared by humans. I am not claiming that it is impossible for a machine to have cognition; rather, I am only pointing out the failure of current machine actions to rise to the level of a true person's acts. Second, in action a person experiences herself both as the subject who is experiencing and as an object experienced by the subject, that is herself. This process is possible only with

---

[76] Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 270.

[77] Billias and Curry, "Introduction," 4.

[78] Ibid., 4

[79] Ibid., 4

[80] Andrè Ong. 2007. *The Ethics and Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyla*. PhD diss., Claremont Graduate University, 136.

[81] Ibid., 136

the existence of consciousness. When a person carries out a conscious act, she is conscious that she is acting, conscious of her act, and conscious of the others being affected by the act that she performed. A machine lacks these characteristics that will allow it to justify an act as its own act: a machine's act is grounded not in itself, but in the users' or the programmers' consciousness. A robot acts by processing data provided to achieve a specific goal, and the data and the processing method are programmed into it by someone outside of the robot.

Third, Wojtyla emphasizes the social aspect of a person's acts. In Wojtyla's thought, to be able to participate, a person, when acting together with others, retains her own personalistic value of her own actions while she simultaneously shares in the results of communal acting. Participation enables a person to act together with others and, by doing so, reach her full meaning and potential as a person. An AI technology capable of interacting with a human did not do so in order to find meaning and develop its full potential; it was done based only on meaningless performance and a series of symbols.

However, John R. Searle, in "Minds, Brains, and Programs," made several substantial claims in relation to a machine's ability to think and act like a human, in here I will mention two of them. First, he asked, can a man-made machine think? His answer is yes; for as long as one can reproduce an exact duplicate of the causes, one can duplicate the effects. Second, he asked, ". . . could something think, understand, and so on, solely by virtue of being a computer with the right sort of program? Could instantiating a program, the right program of course, by itself be a sufficient condition for understanding?"[82] To this question, his answer is no, "because the formal symbol manipulations by themselves don't have any intentionality. They are meaningless—they aren't even symbol manipulations, since the 'symbols'

[82] John R. Searle. 1997. "Minds, Brains, and Programs," in *Mind Design II: Philosophy, Psychology, and Artificial Intelligence*, ed. John Haugeland. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 199.

don't symbolize anything."[83] In addition, he explains why machines cannot have understanding: "in the linguistic jargon, they have only a syntax but no semantics. Such intentionality, as computers appear to have, is solely in the minds of those who program them and those who use them, those who send in the input and who interpret the output."[84]

In short, AI technology today still cannot be compared to human intelligence. "Human intelligence is multifaceted, containing cognitive, emotional and social aspects."[85] Thus, no advanced machine actions should be seen as equal to a person's actions. A person's act carries within it a moral obligation that comes with acknowledging human dignity.[86] In the next section, I will discuss an acting person's moral responsibility in the use of AI, especially in educational setting.

4. The Learner's Role as an Acting Person and Educational Policy on AI

Today, we use AI technology daily, so, as moral beings, we must pay attention to the ethics of AI. If persons are the ones responsible for using AI technology, then the ethical role of persons must receive more attention. Dignum argues that an urgency exists to discuss moral responsibility in the relationship between humans and AI technology. "Being fundamentally tools, AI systems are fully under the control and responsibility of their owners or users." Hence, users have a responsibility for the AI technology that they use. According to Wojtyla's *The Acting Person*, this moral responsibility is founded in human consciousness and conducted through human actions. The *actus humanus*, the human act, with the focus on the aspect of purpose and deliberateness, involves knowledge and will. This *actus humanus*, in Wojtyla, is a moral act. Further, in his analysis of *The Acting Person*, Tranzillo makes

---

[83] Ibid., 199

[84] Ibid., 199

[85] Dignum, *Responsible Artificial Intelligence*, 10.

[86] Ibid., 90

it clear that Wojtyla focuses on "the primacy of the (human) person, as the subject, in relation to the concrete moral act, … the act itself reveals the concrete reality and inner structure of the personal subject who performs it." Tranzillo affirms Wojtyla's primary emphasis, which is that: "operari sequitur esse, action follows on being." A being must first exist to act. This action does not include all kinds of actions in human experiences. Only a conscious act of a person is considered as a real act in Wojtyla's moral sphere. A conscious act is an act that is characterized by the will. The most distinctive conscious act performed by a person is a moral act. The moral act of an acting person leads to responsible use. This responsibility includes the development of AI to work towards the common goal in the community. Dignum states that this kind of responsibility "requires the commitment of all stakeholders and the active inclusion of all of society." Wojtyla discussed this kind of responsibility at the end of The Acting Person, in his presentation of persons' participation in the common good.

In developing educational policy on the use of AI, learners' ethical role as the acting person must be seen as one of the main foundations. Based on Wojtyla's presentation, the acting person emphasizes that the learners' ethical role in using AI within an educational setting must be integrated within the personalistic level of the value of the act because when an act is performed, a person actualizes and realizes her own self, hence can become a whole person.

Several critical elements in grounding educational policy on the use of AI in learners' ethical role as the acting person include: First, emphasize the decision to use AI by learners as a well- informed and conscious action with awareness of its limitations and biases. Second, focus on learners' moral consciousness that will lead to the ethical and responsible use of AI. Third, highlight the social aspect of learners' acts when participating and acting together with others in using AI. Participation enables a person to act together with others and, by doing so, reach her full meaning and potential as a person; hence, educational policy on the use of AI must be able to provide a space for this need.

Human beings cannot afford to support AI technologies unquestioningly. Promoting awareness of AI technology and facilitating discussion of its effects is vital. Human beings must dedicate themselves to active engagement in shaping AI advancement if they do not want to let AI shape their future lives. It is also crucial to define the relationship between human beings and AI, so we must pay attention to the ethical development of AI technologies and the ethics of the people behind the machines. Today, AI is being used to make life easier and more productive, but can AI technology help humans create a morally better society and a better quality of education? Drawing on the history and development of AI technologies and the acting AI concept in comparison with the acting person, AI technologies must be developed ethically to build a future where human beings are not competing with machines. Within the educational setting, the use of AI must be grounded on the awareness of learners' ethical role as the acting person.

As the discussion of the advancement of AI technologies with their human-like characteristic has begun to intensify in the twenty-first century, the analysis in this article has shown that the ultimate aim of creating a human-like "acting machine", has not yet been realized. Based on my earlier explanation of Wojtyla's presentation on the person and act, it is clear that machines and persons' actions are fundamentally different. AI technologies cannot be compared to human intelligence. However, in our twenty-first century life, we have been using AI technologies on a daily basis, and we must pay attention to the ethical responsibility within this relationship. An acting person's moral act leads to the responsible use and development of AI in concert with the common goal in the community that supports and enhances human well-being in all settings, including in education. Dignum has clarified that "responsible Artificial Intelligence is about human responsibility for the development of intelligent systems along fundamental human principles and values to ensure human flourishing and well-being in a sustainable world." As learners who live in the age of advanced AI, we are all obligated to participate and act morally in our commitments and actions that support the use and implementation of AI technologies that respect human dignity and social interdependence.

5. Conclusion

The use of AI in educational settings must be grounded in acknowledging the learner as a whole person (intellectually, spiritually, and ethically). In order to make sure that the use of AI in educational settings can fully support the formation of a whole person, educational policy on the use of AI has been directed to be focused on fostering the use of AI aligned with educational goals, promoting the ethical use of AI, building learners' capacity in the use of AI, and supporting the development of AI in education pedagogy must always put the learner as the main subject. The focus on the person as the center of education when it comes to the use of AI in educational settings, as has been advocated by UNESCO, is supported through the grounding of educational policy on the use of AI in learners' ethical ability to make moral decisions.

As has been explored above, within the educational setting, the use of AI has been through three paradigmatic shifts: first, AI-directed and the learner as the recipient; second, AI- supported and the learner as a collaborator; and third, AI-empowered and learner as a leader. In support of the third paradigm, focusing on learners' ethical role as the acting person as the foundation in all educational policies on using AI has been proven to be vital. The model of an AI-empowered learner as a leader can only be achieved if the agency of a person as a whole receives enough attention in the formation of educational policy on the use of AI. A person as a subject must be the center of the use of AI in the educational setting.

By focusing on a person's moral act, as introduced by Karol Wojtyla in The Acting Person, the need to focus on learners as leaders in the use of AI has been proven to be crucial. Acknowledging the complex dimensions of human intelligence, including cognitive, emotional, and social aspects, must lead to the grounding of educational policy on human ability and personal knowledge. No advanced machine actions should be considered equal to a person's actions. Acknowledging a person's act that carries within it a moral obligation that comes with acknowledging human dignity must lead to

grounding educational policy on the use of AI that respects humanity and its uniqueness.

According to Wojtyla's *The Acting Person*, moral responsibility is founded in human consciousness and conducted through human actions. The *actus humanus*, the human act, with the focus on the aspect of purpose and deliberateness, involves knowledge and will. This *actus humanus*, in Wojtyla, is a moral act. In developing educational policy on the use of AI, learners' ethical role as the acting person must be seen as one of the main foundations. Based on Wojtyla's presentation, the acting person emphasizes that the learners' ethical role in using AI within an educational setting must be integrated within the personalistic level of the value of the act because when an act is performed, a person actualizes and realizes her own self, hence can become a whole person. Several key elements in grounding educational policy on the use of AI in learners' ethical role as the acting person include: First, emphasize the decision to use AI by learners as a well-informed and conscious action with awareness of its limitations and biases. Second, focus on learners' moral consciousness that will lead to the ethical and responsible use of AI. Third, highlight the social aspect of learners' acts when participating and acting together with others in the use of AI. Participation enables a person to act together with others and, by doing so, reach her full meaning and potential as a person; hence, educational policy on the use of AI must be able to provide a space for this need.

6. Bibliography

Aguas, Jove Jim S. 2009. "Karol Wojtyla: On Person and Subjectivity." Ad Veritatem 8 (2), 413-453. 10.3860/adver.v8i2.1286

Alonso, Eduardo. 2014. "Actions and Agents." In The Cambridge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence, edited by Keith Frankish and William M. Ramsey. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bayerque, Nicholas. 2018. "A Short History of Chatbots and Artificial Intelligence." In *The Reference Shelf: Artificial Intelligence*, edited by Micah Issitt. Ipswich, MA: H.W. Wilson, 37-40.

Beigel, Gerard. 1997. Faith and Social Justice in the Teaching of Pope John Paul II. American University Studies Series VII Theology and Religion Vol. 191. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Billias, Nancy Mardas and Agnes B. Curry. 2008. "Introduction." In Karol Wojtyla's Philosophical Legacy. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change Series I, Culture and Value Volume 3, edited by George F. McLean, 1-14. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

Danks, David. 2014. "Learning." In The Cambridge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence, edited by Keith Frankish and William M. Ramsey. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 151-167.

Dignum, Virginia. 2019. Responsible Artificial Intelligence: How to Develop and Use AI in a Responsible Way. In: *Artificial Intelligence: Foundations, Theory, and Algorithms*, edited by Barry O'Sullivan and Michael Wooldridge. Berne: Springer.

Doran, Kevin P. 1996. *Solidarity: A Synthesis of Personalism and Communalism in the Thought of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II*. New York: P. Lang.

Frankish, Keith and William M. Ramsey. 2014. "Introduction," in The Cambridge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence, edited by Keith Frankish and William M. Ramsey, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-14.

Gershgorn, Dave. 2018. "Hello, Sophia: Inside the Mechanical Brain of the World's First Robot Citizen." In *The Reference Shelf: Artificial Intelligence*, edited by Micah Issitt, Ipswich, MA: H.W. Wilson, 41-43.

Gellaim, Daniel Bella. 2022. "Enterprising Academics: Heterarchical Policy Networks for Artificial Intelligence in British Higher Education." ECNU Review of Education 6 (4). https://doi.org/10.1177/2096531122114379

Hołub, Grzegorz, Tadeusz Biesaha, SDB, Jarosław Merecki, SDS, and Marek Kostur. 2019. *Karol Wojtyla: The Polish Christian Philosophy in the 20th Century* edited by Rev. Grzegorz Hołub. Krakow: Ignatianum University Press Krakow.

Lee, Raymond S. T. 2020. *Artificial Intelligence in Daily Life*. Berne: Springer.

Ong, Andrè. 2007. "The Ethics and Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyla." PhD diss., Claremont Graduate University.

Ouyang, Fan., Jiao Pengcheng. 2021. "Artificial Intelligence in Education: The Three Paradigms." *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence* (2), 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2021.100020.

Popović, Petar and Patrycja Maj. "The Personalistic Value of the Human Act in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła." Anthropotes 32/2 (2016).

Savage, Deborah. 2013. "The Centrality of Lived Experience in Wojtyla's Account of the Person." *Annals of Philosophy*, Vol. 61, No. 4, 19-51.

Searle, John R. 1997. "Minds, Brains, and Programs." In *Mind Design II: Philosophy, Psychology, and Artificial Intelligence*, edited by John Haugeland, Massachusetts, MA: MIT, 183-204.

Scheutz, Matthias. 2014. "Artificial Emotions and Machine Consciousness." In *The Cambridge Handbook of Artificial Intelligence*, edited by Keith Frankish and William M. Ramsey. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tranzillo, Jeffrey. 2013. *John Paul II on the Vulnerable*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press.

UNESCO. 2021. AI and Education: Guidance for Policy-Makers. https://doi.org/10.54675/PCSP7350

United Board. 2019. Whole Person Education: The United Board's Perspective on Its Principles and Practice.

Wojtyla, Karol. 1979. *The Acting Person: A Contribution to Phenomenological Anthropology*. Analecta Husserliana, v. 10, edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, translated by Andrzej Potocki. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

———— 1993. "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays. Catholic Thought from Lublin Vol. 4*, translated by Theresa Sandok, OSM, edited by Andrew N. Woznicki, New York, NY: Peter Lang, 187-196.

———— 1993. "The Problem of Experience in Ethics." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays. Catholic Thought from Lublin Vol. 4*, op. cit., 107-128.

————"The Person: Subject and Community." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays. Catholic Thought from Lublin Vol. 4*, op. cit., 219-262.

7. Short biography

Rev. Irene Ludji, Ph.D is Vice Dean and a Lecturer of Ethics at the Faculty of Theology at Satya Wacana Christian University (UKSW) in Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia. She graduated with a doctor of philosophy (Ph.D) degree in Philosophy of Religion and Theology from Claremont Graduate University. Irene's research interests include the ethics of solidarity, the ethics of nonviolence, Indonesian social ethics, and Christian ethics.

Email: irene.ludji@uksw.edu

journal of ethics in higher education

Harnessing AI for Enhancing Student Support Services

The Case Study of the University of the South Pacific

Rajni Chand, Raveena Goundar,
Centre for Flexible Learning,
The University of the South Pacific, Fiji

December 2024.

Keywords

University of the South Pacific, generative AI technology, student learning support, education and emerging technologies.

Abstract

In the unique educational landscape of small island countries in the Pacific, the University of the South Pacific (USP) has embarked on an innovative approach to augmenting student support services by integrating Generative AI technology. This initiative specifically caters to its diverse and dispersed student body across 12 countries and five time zones, addressing a critical need for accessible and empathetic support systems in higher education. To do so, the Semester Zero, an online preparatory course using GPT 3.5-Turbo, was created. Designed for all incoming students, it showcased the potential of AI to enhance student support services in institutions with far less challenging environments than USP.

Corresponding Authors: Dr Rajni Chand and Raveena Goundar, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji. Email: rajni.chand@usp.ac.fj

To quote this article: Chand, R., Goundar, R. 2024. "Harnessing AI for Enhancing Student Support Services: The Case of the University of the South Pacific". *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 5(2024): 145–158. DOI: 10.26034/fr.jehe.2024.6867

© the Author. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit https://jehe.globethics.net

1. The University of the South Pacific

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is a regional university in the Southern Hemisphere that was established in 1968 at Laucala Bay in Fiji at a former New Zealand Air Base. Initially, programs were offered to meet the educational needs of the newly independent regional countries. These included interdisciplinary courses in science, social sciences, economic development, and secondary school teacher training. The early 1970s saw USP offering extramural courses through its regional campuses. Over time, campuses were opened in all 12 countries. Courses and programmes up to PhD level are currently offered at USP. Beginning as a modest distance education provider for over 50 years, USP is one of the very few universities offering courses by all modes-F2F, Print, Online, and Blended from any of its 3 major and 14 other regional campuses (Latchem 2018).

A Pioneering Open Distance and Flexible Learning University

When USP was established in 1968, it was to serve a population of about 1.5 million people living in a geographically dispersed area covering over 33 million square kilometres of ocean and five time zones. Many of these South Pacific Island nations had just gained independence or were yet to gain theirs. Most of these countries lacked education institutions beyond junior secondary schools (equivalent to year 10) and were dependent upon their colonial governments to provide scholarships for higher education to their young adults. The need to provide education for the newly independent countries educated leaders and administrators led to the establishment of USP. However, it was still unaffordable for many to send their young learners to USP's main campus in Fiji for tertiary education.

Centre for Flexible Learning

USP's Extension Services, the subunit for its distance and continuing education was set up at the main campus in Fiji in the 1970s (Wallace, 1990). It consisted of management, course development and administration, and a dispatch section. The traditional printed materials were dispatched to students

with the expectation from them to submit their written assignments by post to be marked by Course coordinators and markers and returned by the same method. Campus-based tutorials were conducted for courses if country-based subject experts could be found. Occasional tutorial visits by lecturers from the Laucala campus were held. Satellite tutorials were conducted for most courses. Campus-based administrative staff provided counselling for potential students during enrolments. Over time, the academics traveling and teaching at regional campuses have increased, with blended, cohort, and flexi schools being offered at any of USP's 14 campuses. Over the years Extension Services has seen changes to its name from University Extension (UE) to Centre for Flexible and Distance Learning (CFDL) to its current name the Centre for Flexible Learning (CFL). By 2008 it also had a student learning support section.

2. Student Learning Support

Given the fact that there are more than 200 indigenous languages spoken in the South Pacific region (Lynch 1998), English is seen as a common language for communication for most purposes, including in classrooms. Thus, all courses at USP are taught in English. This leads to challenges faced by learners at the tertiary level. Studies conducted at USP by Chand (2008); Deverell (1989); Khan (2000); Khan & Mugler (2001) and McPherson, (2000) indicate the proficiency and competency challenges found among the students coming to USP. In the late 1970s the Student Support Centre was established (Khan 2000). Over time, it has seen changes in its name change from English Resource Unit (ERU) to Centre for the Enhancement of Learnings and Teaching, and Centre for the Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), to Student Learning Support (SLS) and moved from UE to schools and then back at CFL.

Situated within CFL, SLS provides support for learners through F2F and virtual support. Currently, SLS specialists are based at 8 of USP's campuses. Services provided include drop-in consultations, Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS), workshops of academic skills, identification, and support for 'at risk' learners, online workshops and chat forums through its Moodle

platform, and tailor-made workshops for specific groups and courses. The online workshop topics ranged from numeracy skills, reading, writing, and time management skills to exam preparation skills, plagiarism, AI, and the use of software and Apps for studying. While ERU and CELT provided support for learners only at the Laucala campus, the recent innovations have seen both synchronous and asynchronous support for learners based at any of USP's regional campuses. As such, the COVID-19 lockdown did not hinder the support required by learners since the online workshops provided them with continuous support for most of the literacy and numeracy upskilling. An initiative that was designed during the COVID-19 lockdown was an online program for potential learners to support them in gaining confidence for tertiary studies.

3. Semester Zero Program

During the COVID-19 lockdown, USP saw a total discontinuation of movement of staff and students within the region and even within large countries where there were reported cases of COVID-19. USP began offering online support for its students and converted all F2F courses into rapid online mode with virtual tutorial support. Covid-19 lockdown did not only hinder studies at tertiary institutions, but it also had an impact on other sectors of the community, including secondary schools. With limited face-to-face teaching, it was expected to impact the incoming new students entering the university. The year 2022 saw new students entering university after 2 years of studying in isolation during the last years of their high school. To orient these learners to the university's study environment as well as support them with the literacy, numeracy, and digital skills required for tertiary studies, a pre-enrolment free program was designed for these learners. Called 'Semester Zero' the online course was launched in January 2022 for potential 1st year students at USP. The course included basic literacy, numeracy, and digital skills activities, as well as basic information that new students entering a tertiary institution may need.

The course was installed on a Commonwealth of Learning (COL) designed and sponsored independent Moodle platform. Moodle is the learning

management system (LMS) used at USP. To allow new learners to trial the LMS as well as gain more literacy and numeracy skills before beginning their study at USP, this program was seen both as an online orientation program as well as a skills refresher program for the potential learners.

Currently, Semester Zero has been successfully offered for the last 3 years with a good number of potential learners completing the course. Since its successful launch, it has become a regular pre-enrolment program recommended to all potential USP students. Since it is an online program, even students based outside Fiji can enrol for the course.

In 2024, it was decided that an innovative AI GPT support would be embedded in the Semester Zero program to allow potential learners to try AI for learning.

Chat GPT

Artificial intelligence is playing a crucial role in the field of education. ChatGPT has a bigger impact on academics, especially students. The primary function of a chatbot is that it is a computer programme or application that uses voice or text inputs to replicate human communication (Brush & Scardina, 2021). Thus, giving an individual a real-like chat experience. As mentioned by Molnár & Szűts, (2018) and Surendran et al., (2020) chatbots are referred to by different names in the literature, including speech agents, digital assistants, AI assistants, smart virtual assistants, and virtual agents. After reviewing the literature on chatbots' application in education, Okonkwo and Ade-Ibijola (2021) concluded that the main purpose of chatbots in educational institutions is to enhance teaching and learning. In contrast, Pérez et al. (2020), categorized chatbots as "teaching-oriented chatbots" to instruct students about a specific subject and "service-oriented chatbots" to facilitate staff-student interaction. The study made a point of highlighting how popular the use of chatbots with a teaching focus has become. In a similar vein, Zhang et al.'s (2023) research found that the most typical educational goal of chatbots is to deliver instructional content.

In another study, Pereira (2016) created a chatbot for 23 college students in the computer science field called Dawebot for a different study. Following

the lessons, the students were tested on their comprehension of the content taught in class by responding to multiple-choice questions posed by the chatbot. According to the study, 89% of the students thought it was a good idea to use chatbots for Q&A sessions. Chatbots were often straightforward for students to use, which indicates their interest in the course grew. However, it was discovered in the study by Bii et al. (2018) that teachers who used chatbots to help with their lesson plans found the technology to be helpful in the classroom.

The impacts of a chatbot-mediated teaching method on students' computer science learning motivation and performance were investigated in a study by Yin et al. (2020). The study employed a quasi-experimental design. Upon completion of the study, it was discovered that the experimental group's students, who learned through chatbots, had a considerably better level of learning motivation than the control group's pupils, who learned using a traditional technique.

The proposed AI ChatGPT system at USP had the online chatbot system designed and spearheaded by the USP and COL team. The Project Leads meticulously planned and discussed the contents and manuals to be integrated into the chat interface. Over six weeks, between mid-December 2023 till mid-January 2024, the CFL/SLS team held regular meetings to ensure that the system was finely tuned to meet the needs of the learners. This collaborative effort culminated in the successful introduction of USP SEM ZERO-GPT to the target audience.

For 2024, USP SEM ZERO-GPT was designed to provide comprehensive support to over 3000 learners enrolled in the Semester Zero course. The course was offered before the beginning of Semester One, from January 8, 2024, till February 23, 2024. Semester One commenced on 26th February 2024. The AI-powered chat tool leverages GPT-based intelligence to address a wide range of queries, ensuring that students receive timely and accurate information. The key areas of support included:

— USP Moodle Platform: Guidance on navigating and utilizing the Moodle platform, a crucial tool for online learning at USP.

— Semester Zero Course: Assistance with course-related inquiries, helping students to understand and complete their coursework effectively.

— USP Handbook and Calendar: Access to information from the extensive 600+ page USP Handbook and Calendar, offering detailed insights into university policies, academic schedules, and other essential information.

Learners used both the Chat Interface and the Moodle Interface to access the system. The Web-based Chat Interface was a standalone application that learners could access from any device. Learners could log into the system using their email and the password they received through the email. They could then log in, chat with the system, and get instant responses to their queries.

The Moodle platform has a Chat Widget plugin inside the Semester Zero Moodle page. For this, learners did not need to log in separately since they would have already logged into the course Moodle page.

AI in Open, Distance, and Flexible Learning

The regional students had very little experience using LMS, Web-Based Chat Interface, ChatGPT, or engaging with online forums. The Semester Zero exposure created digital skill development as well as confidence among learners in using online learning platforms. Previous studies by Abuhassan et al (2020), Jaques & Salmon, (2007); Lau & Shaikh, (2012); Salmon, (2011); Salmon (2014), all found that learners' experience with an online platform in their learning environment provides them with added advantages, especially for those learners who are studying in isolation.

User Engagement

The USP's SEM ZERO-GPT system received 619 queries from the regional users (COL, 2024). These queries ranged from content focused questions including questions on:

— the Semester Zero program,

- use of the learning platform,
- enrolment and handbook-related queries,
- USP-related questions about the enrolment procedures, programs etc.
- Invalid questions
- Other

Figure 1 shows the distribution of questions in the categories mentioned.

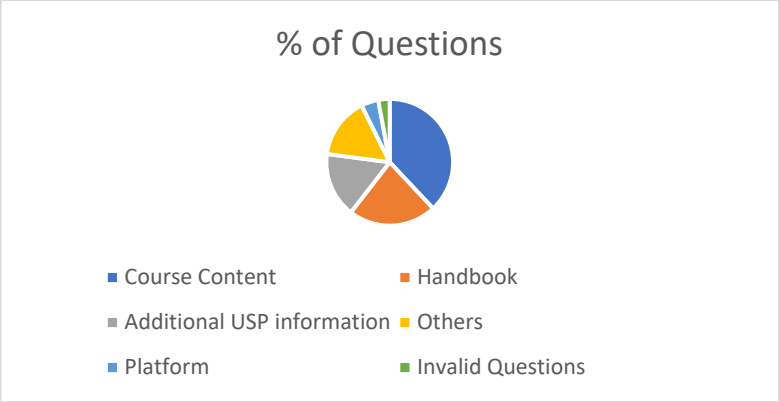

Table 1 shows the distribution of the questions mentioned above.

Types of questions	**% of Questions**
Course Content	38.0
Handbook	22.5
Additional USP Information	16.6
Others	15.6
Platform	4.4
Invalid Questions	2.9

The fact that 38.2% of the questions were related to the course content reflects the learners' interest in the course. 16.6% of the queries were about USP's Handbook and Calendar indicating the learners' interest in seeking further information regarding their future studies (COL, 2024). Learners were also interested in finding more details about the platform used at USP, and included queries on the course's page accessibility, navigation, and assessments.

System Interface

Around 66.7% of the queries came from the Chat Interface, and around 33.3% of the queries came from the Moodle Plugin Interface. This shows that while the Chat Interface was the preferred choice for users, the usage of Moodle Plugin was also significant. Hence, the Moodle Plugin was a successful initiative to further ease access to the system (COL, 2024). Figure 2 and Table 2 provide a graphical and tabular representation of the queries across different interfaces.

Figure 2: Distribution of queries across Interface

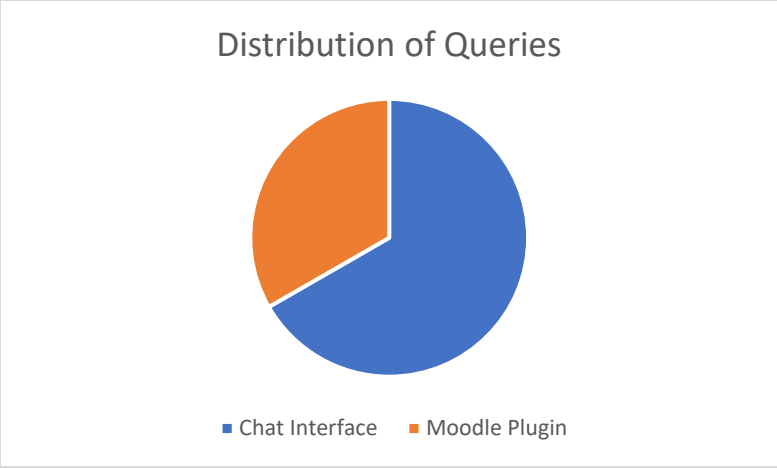

Table 2: Distribution of queries across Interface

Interface	**% of Questions**
Chat Interface	66.7
Moodle Plugin	33.3

The Chat Interface provided answers in real-time allowing learners to interact giving them a real-life experience. The quick response time, especially for isolated regional learners, gave them a companionship experience. This could be seen from the nature of queries and comments learners sent such as "*I am a new student. How can I succeed at the University*?"

"*Thank you for helping me* 😊"

4. Insights and Recommendation

While USP's SEM ZERO-GPT system was innovative, it demonstrated the learners' willingness to engage with a new system. It also showed the learners' confidence in trialling an AI-powered tool and their interest in using the system to seek responses beyond the course or university-related questions.

There were queries in non-English, which can be resolved in future offerings by embedding simple language translation and multilingual support.

5. Conclusion

Learners anywhere in the world need first-hand information regarding the institutions and programs they plan to study. Many times, learners change their choice of institution or program when they do not receive satisfying feedback to their queries in time. This is even more challenging for USP's regional students who cannot afford to travel to their country's main center for basic queries. USP's SEM ZERO-GPT system showed a potential for universities servicing regions like USP's. The potential learners, in most cases young adults may not have the patience, nor the means to get responses to their queries regarding university studies. SEM ZERO-GPT has shown that

engaging learners even before orientation, or O Week, can be a good marketing strategy as well as guide learners on the university's expectations of their literacy, numeracy, and digital skills. While some areas need improvement such as those for language translation, SEM ZERO-GPT at USP is a very successful innovative program that can be seen as a pioneering model for Online Orientation programs.

6. Bibliography

Bii, P. K., Too, J. K., & Mukwa, C. W. 2018. "Teacher attitude towards use of chatbots in routine teaching". *Universal Journal of Educational Research, 6*(7), 1586–1597. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2018.060719

Brush, K., & Scardina, J. 2021. *Chatbot*. https://www.techtarget.com/searchcustomerexperience/definition/chatbot, Informa and TechTarget, website (26/12/2021).

Chand, R. 2007, Listening Needs of Distance Learners: A Case Study of EAP Learners at the University of the South Pacific, PhD thesis, English; Linguistics, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. http://hdl.handle.net/10523/201

Commonwealth of Learning. 2024. "*Design and deploy a GPT-powered learner support system for a course, Semester Zero Report on User Behaviour, Project C24-274".* Vancouver: The Commonwealth of Learning

Deverell, G. 1989. "The relationship between English proficiency and academic success at the University of the South Pacific". *Directions*, 11(1), 10-18.

Hassan Abuhassna1, et al. 2020, "Development of a new model on utilizing online learning platforms to improve students' academic achievements and satisfaction". *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher* Education, 17:38 https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-020-00216-z

Jaques, D., & Salmon, G. 2007. *Learning in Groups: A Handbook for Face-to-face and Online Environments.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Khan, V. 2000. "English Language Support at the University of the South Pacific". *Directions: Journal of Educational Studies*, 22(1), 37-52.

Khan, V. & Mugler, F. 2001, 'The Fiji form 7 prescription and the language needs of first year tertiary students'. *Directions*, vol. 23, no. 2, 20-49.

Latchem, C. 2018. *Open and Distance Non-Formal Education in Developing Countries*. Springer Briefs in Open and Distance Education

Lau, C. Y., & Shaikh, J. M. 2012. "The impacts of personal qualities on online learning readiness at Curtin Sarawak Malaysia (CSM)". *Educational Research and Reviews*, 7(20), 430–444.

Lynch, J. 1998. *Pacific Languages: An introduction*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press

McPherson, K. 2000. "Testing Matters: English language skills at the University of the South Pacific". *Pacific curriculum network* 9(1), 12-13.

Molnar, G., & Szűts, Z. 2018. "The Role of Chatbots in Formal Education". *IEEE 16th International Symposium on Intelligent Systems and Informatics*, 000197-000202, https://doi.org/10.1109/SISY.2018.8524609.

Okonkwo, C. W., & Ade-Ibijola, A. 2021. "Chatbots applications in education: A systematic review". *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 2, 100033. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2021.100033

Pereira, J. 2016. "Leveraging chatbots to improve self-guided learning through conversational quizzes". *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Technological Ecosystems for Enhancing Multiculturality - TEEM '16*. Association for Computing Machinery, 911-918.

Perez, J. Q., Daradoumis, T., & Puig, J. M. M. 2020. "Rediscovering the use of chatbots in education: Asystematic literature review". *Computer Applications in Engineering Education, 28*, 1549–1565. https://doi.org/10.1002/cae.22326

Salmon, G. 2011. *E-moderating: The key to teaching and learning online*, (3rd ed.,). London: Routledge.

Salmon, G. 2014. "Learning innovation: A framework for transformation". *European Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 17(1), 219–235.

Surendran, A.K., Murali, R., & Babu, R. 2020. Conversational AI-A retrieval based chatbot. https://easychair.org/publications/preprint/LnTd. (12/12/2022)

Wallace, J. P. "Extension Studies at the University of the South Pacific: An Agenda for Research". *Directions: Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, May 1990, 29-36.

Yin, J., Goh, T. T., Yang, B., & Xiaobin, Y. 2020. "Conversation technology with micro-learning: The impact of chatbot based learning on students' learning motivation and performance". *Journal of Educational Computing Research, 59*(1), 154–177. https://doi.org/10.1177/0735633120952067

Zhang, R., Zou, D., & Cheng, G. 2023." A review of chatbot-assisted learning: Pedagogical approaches, implementations, factors leading to effectiveness, theories, and future directions". *Interactive Learning Environments*. https://doi.org/10. 1080/10494 820.2023.2202704

7. Short biography

Dr Rajni Kaushal Chand is the Director for CFL at USP. She has been with USP for over 25 years as a student, teacher, researcher and course coordinator. She has travelled extensively in the USP region and internationally and has in-depth knowledge on Open and Distance Learning (ODL) for small and

developing South Pacific regional countries. She has presented her research findings at various international ODL, Applied Linguistics and Indian Diaspora conferences. Dr Rajni Chand has also worked in the course development and editing sections for USP's Distance Learning section.
Dr Rajni Chand holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Otago. She received a position in the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Women and Leadership in ODL training program and has been appointed a mentor in the COL's Commonwealth Wise Women mentoring programme. She is the regional director for PACFOLD-the Pacific Centre for Flexible and Open Learning for Development in the South Pacific. She is also a member of Board of Trustees for femLinkPacific; a major regional feminist media NGO. She has recently been appointed as one of the Global Vice Presidents of Sun Moon University.

Email: rajni.chand@usp.ac.fj

Ms. Raveena Goundar is a dedicated Student Learning Specialist at the University of the South Pacific (USP). Since 2021, Ms. Goundar has served as the Project Lead for the Semester Zero project, driving innovation in course design and implementation to support incoming students. Ms. Goundar also works closely with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), collaborating on several projects aimed at fostering academic excellence and digital innovation at USP. Currently, Ms. Goundar is pursuing a PhD in Arts at USP, further deepening her expertise and commitment to higher education in the Pacific region.

Email: raveenagoundar@icloud.com

Acknowledgment

The authors wish to acknowledge the support of COL and MFAT for supporting the regional project that assisted in designing and launching of Semester Zero at USP.

journal of ethics in higher education

Africa Dreams of Artificial Intelligence

A Critical Analysis of its Limits in Open and Distance Learning

Helen Titilola Olojede, Felix Kayode Olakulehin, National Open University of Nigeria

December 2024.

Keywords

Artificial intelligence, open and distance learning, Africa, teaching and learning, AI in research, didactic methodologies and philosophy of education.

Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) has recently emerged as a transformative force in teaching and learning practices, with profound implications for open and distance learning (ODL), which relies heavily on technology. Despite its global impact, the extent of African societies' engagement with AI remains trivial. This paper critically reflects on the ethical, legal, social, pedagogical and technological implications of AI in ODL in sub-Saharan Africa, drawing insights from the Nigerian experience. Adopting the scoping review methodology, the paper explores and synthesises existing literature to foreground a critical analysis of the implications of AI in the African context.

Corresponding Authors: Helen Titilola Olojede, Felix Kayode Olakulehin, National Open University, Nigeria. Email: olojede@noun.edu.ng

To quote this article: Olojede, T., Olakulehin , F. K. 2024. "Africa Dreams of Artificial Intelligence. A Critical Analysis of its Limits in Open and Distance Learning". *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 5(2024): 159–181. DOI: 10.26034/fr.jehe.2024.6869

© the Author. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit https://jehe.globethics.net

1. Introduction

The advent of technologies in classrooms dates back to the 19th and 20th centuries with the invention and use of wireless telegraph and electronic television (Malekos, 2023). However, the application of artificial intelligence in education is as old as the birth of artificial intelligence (AI) itself. One may claim that education is the first field of knowledge implied in the enterprise of AI when one considers the proposal that birthed AI at the Dartmouth conference of 1956. The proposal claims that a machine can adequately replicate all learning facets or other characteristics of intelligence (McCarthy et al., 1955). Thus, education has been an integral part of AI since its inception. Beyond the mere mention of 'learning', the work of Alan Turing is foundational to the use of computers in teaching and learning. This is especially evident in his 'Imitation Game' popularly known as the 'Turing Test' and the later 'reversed Turing Test' (Turing, 1950).

Programmed Logic for Automatic Operations (PLATO) is another early instance of AI in the 1960s that used computer-assisted instruction (CAI); it was equally employed as a research tool to investigate people's learning patterns. Many colleges, schools and vocational training institutions utilise it (Jones, 2015). The 20th century witnessed the emergence of learning management systems. In contrast, the 21st century marked a great turning point with the development of massive open online courses (MOOC) (Moe, 2015 & Doroudi, 2022) and the revolutionary ChatGPT, a large language model of OpenAI. The advent of ChatGPT has exhumed the conversation about whether a machine can have human-level intelligence, which Turing's imitation Game answered in the affirmative.

2. Statement of the Problem

The growth and expansion of artificial intelligence exert significant pressure on higher education institutions globally and justifiably. Students of higher education institutions and the professoriate have had to grapple with the emergence of AI in different ways. Much has been said about the potential of artificial intelligence to power our universities, transforming the way

research, education and the administration of higher education institutions (HEIs) are carried out. As a model that offers the ability to create content, simulate scenarios, and assist in research and decision-making, AI can and is revolutionising the design and delivery of open and distance learning in previously unimagined ways. On the one hand, there are many ways that AI impacts open and distance learning (ODL) and optimises its distinctive features. On the other hand, it exerts more pressure on ODL in the arena of ethics and quality assurance than may be visible in the conventional HE context. Academics in ODL may find AI helpful for generating learning content, providing personalised learning support and designing assessment options, while distance learners themselves would use AI, especially GenAI for assignments, essays, and generally as solutions to the rigorous academic demands of their distance learning courses. This opens up new vistas of debate. Is AI just speaking to AI? That is, when AI is used to create content, and develop assessments by one party and AI is used to produce assessment responses by the other party, are we not creating a scenario where AI is merely engaging AI? What are the ethical issues at play in this scenario? What are the implications of using AI in this way for the survival of the ODL community of practice? Would academics/ distance education survive the coming revolution in self-aware learning content systems? While there are discussions and proposals of ethics of artificial intelligence in education (AIED) in general, we are looking at this specifically in the context of ODL. These and other issues will be examined in the course of this paper.

3. Significance

AI's dynamic and emerging nature makes it a fertile ground for research studies to generate literature addressing some pressing concerns, particularly educational ones. To this end, while there are a few works that address specific issues such as ethical or pedagogical or technical implications in education in general, this study, however, interrogates the quintuplet issues of ethical, legal, social, pedagogical and technical implications of artificial intelligence in higher education specifically as it pertains to open and distributed learning.

4. Methodology

The methodological approach adopted for this study involves a scoping review of available literature. The aim is to comprehensively explore and synthesise existing literature on the research topic, providing a solid foundation for the following critical analysis. The scoping review identifies the breadth of available literature on the research topic, offering an overview of key concepts, existing gaps, and potential themes within the field. The identification of relevant literature was undertaken using a broad exploration approach, which involves a search of electronic databases such as Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science, which were interrogated using relevant keywords and controlled vocabulary related to the research topic. Additionally, hand-searching of reference lists and citation tracking were employed to examine pertinent literature thoroughly. Inclusion criteria were defined to encompass studies relevant to the key research focus, which is a critical analysis and reflection on the ethical, legal, social, pedagogical and technological implications of AI in ODL. Sources included peer-reviewed articles, conference proceedings, and grey literature. Publications were excluded if they were older than five years; did not align with the research focus; or lacked sufficient methodological rigor. Data retrieval incorporated a systematic extraction of pertinent meta-data from the identified studies, such as the design, key findings, and the methods adopted. The data were charted and synthesised to provide an overview of the existing literature landscape. The scoping review findings were analysed thematically, allowing for the identification of common themes, patterns, and gaps within the literature. This analysis informed the development of the systematic review protocol. Data extraction involved systematically retrieving relevant information from selected studies, including key findings and methodological details. The synthesised data were then subjected to thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of overarching themes and patterns across the body of literature.

5. Scope and Limitations

While this study might have ramifications for other levels and forms of education, likewise to campus-based conventional institutions, this study focuses on the implication of AI in higher education, specifically in open and distributed learning spaces. The concern of the paper is on the ethical, legal, social, pedagogical, and technical implications; it does not, if at all, directly concern economic, political, cognitive or neurological implications, except where they have implications for the ethical, legal, pedagogical and technological issues. The study is limited, on the one hand, by the nascent nature of the boom and application of AI in education generally and open and distance learning specifically. On the other hand, the study is limited by the available regulations and publications around and on AI generally and specifically, in the sub-Saharan African context at the time of this study. Another limitation of this study is that it is devoid of a specialised appraisal of AI in one particular institution and country, given that the levels of AI technological adoption and utilisation vary significantly by country and, thus, by institution. It thus stands the risk of over-generalisation. However, given the analysts' familiarity with the contemporary Nigerian context, significant reference was made to the implications of AI for ODL in Nigeria as a foil for analysing the wider sub-Saharan African landscape.

6. Literature Review

Implications of Artificial Intelligence for Open and Distance Learning

As observed earlier, AI has wide-ranging and far-reaching implications for education and research, especially in ODL, with its massive reliance on technology. In line with the purpose of this paper, the critical implications of AI for higher education and open/distance learning in the sub-Saharan African context are examined in this section through the ethical, legal, social, pedagogical and technical lenses.

Ethical

The application of AI in education, using various generative AI, virtual reality, metaverse, and augmented reality, is revolutionising how teaching, learning and assessments are done. The reason for this is because of the wide-ranging implications it has for teaching, learning and assessment and especially the issue of academic integrity that accompanies its use (Popenici, 2023; Nature, 2023; Göçen & Aydemir, 2020; Sharma, 2021). Given this, the need to spell out what is acceptable and unacceptable of its use becomes pertinent; hence, there is a need to examine its various implications, particularly in education and, more particularly, in open and distributed learning spaces.

The ethics of AI is still very much nascent, with a global consensus on its regulation. Despite this, the initial report of the AI advisory body (2023) details five guiding principles: AI ought to be administered comprehensively by everyone and for the good of everyone, the interest of the public must be central to the management of AI, the administration of AI ought to be rooted in data management and furtherance of data commons, global administration of AI is sacrosanct with a firm reliance on multi-lateral cooperation, AI administration ought to be entrenched in UN Charters and similar universal ones on human rights (AI Advisory Body, 2023). Beyond this, what there is at best are various proposals from different sectors such as academia, non-profit organisations, government, private sectors and the like. Some commonalities among the proposed ethical regulations include:

— Management and Oversight - this theme is replicated in several codes that address artificial intelligence in education (AIED). It stipulates that respect should be accorded to international laws and nations' sovereignty regarding data manipulation. It encourages the involvement of an expanded stakeholder beyond the traditional or statutory ones to include youths, children and anti-discrimination monitoring bodies and the participation of new stakeholders as the technology evolves (UNESCO, 2021). OECD (2021) report captures this idea as ethics that guides accountable management of reliable AI.

— Human Oversight/Centredness - there is a requirement on member states always to endeavour that ethical and legal accountability is attributable to physical persons and legal entities. Human oversight relates to individual human administration and comprehensive collective management/governance. Humans may employ AI systems for greater effectiveness. Still, the choice to do this in certain circumstances solely depends on humans, and AI systems can never depose the responsibility and accountability expected of humans. As a form of control, grave matters involving life and death should not be yielded to AI systems. OECD echoes several similar sentiments with the admonishments to AI actors to accord all through the life process of AI system some regard to the democratic principles such as liberty, human dignity, independence, confidentiality and privacy, secured data, non-segregation, diversity and difference, inclusivity, the principle of fairness, and the inward acknowledgement of labour rights (OECD, 2021). Consequently, AI actors are required to institute measures consistent with human ability for determination and which are both highly developed and suitable to circumstances. The Beijing Consensus noted the importance of human oversight and centredness by stressing the continuous relevance of teachers and their rights and work conditions even with the presence of machines (Beijing Consensus on Artificial Intelligence, 2019).

— Transparency and Explainability - there ought to be full disclosure to all stakeholders when AI algorithms are employed to make decisions that affect their lives; they should equally be able to make a case to delegated staff or the sector or organisation for review and reversal of untoward decisions. Explanations pertain to the comprehensibility of AI systems regarding the algorithms' inputs, outputs and operational procedures. Explanations ought to be made available to people from concerned AI practitioners when requested (UNESCO, 2021). The Beijing consensus emphasises the need for AI systems to be ethically planned, unprejudiced and easily

reviewed, with its effects on persons and society observed and appraised all through the life cycle (Beijing Consensus, 2019).

— Sustainability - is especially important because having a liveable and flourishing society is based on accomplishing interrelated goals on the socio-cultural, humanitarian, economic and environmental spectrum (UNESCO, 2021). The emergence of AI can either make or mark their achievement based on their applicability in countries with differing development rates. A constant evaluation of the impact of AI technologies on these goals should be done because of their dynamic nature and affinity with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2021).

— Privacy - the need to preserve, promote and respect human dignity, autonomy and agency is at the heart of the need for privacy in AI. Data harvested ought to be properly handled in tandem with international law and stipulations of UNESCO with no prejudice to applicable domestic frameworks. AI actors need to ensure that the life cycle of AI ensures the preservation of personal information (UNESCO, 2021).

— Limits on Use, Safety and Harm Prevention - while the technology of AI does not by itself bring about a thriving human and environmental ecosystem, there should be proportionality in its life cycle such that it does not go beyond what is required for the accomplishment of permissible goals and purposes fitting to a context. Procedures must be implemented to evaluate risks, and measures must be adopted to forestall the recurrence of harm if there is harm to human beings, their rights, autonomy, groups of people or society as a whole (UNESCO, 2021). OECD (2021) captures this with its emphasis that AI systems ought to perform as intended, devoid of unwarranted safety risks in all their phases.

— Inclusiveness - this behoves all AI actors to foster social justice, fairness and non-discrimination in adherence to international law. The goods of AI technologies must, therefore, be accessible to everyone with specific consideration of the needs of a diverse range of people, groups, cultures, languages, persons who are differently

> abled, girls and women, oppressed and vulnerable people or persons in vulnerable circumstances. The digital divide that might be responsible for unequal access and participation in AI technologies ought to be addressed by member states. There is a need for solidarity between technologically advanced states and the least technologically advanced states, whereby the former ensures the latter reap the goods of AI technologies in terms of access and participation in a fair and just manner, thus maintaining a just and fair world order (UNESCO, 2021).

The UNESCO Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research (2023) discusses seven ways to manage GenAI in education. The first encourages member states to ratify and implement relevant global data protection regulations or craft new ones. The second is for governments to finance and either embrace a holistic national AI strategy or rework existing ones to incorporate novel developments in AI, such as the advent of generative AI. It is especially important to ethically manage this multi-sectorially, particularly in education. The third is to strengthen and execute specific AI ethics regulations. There is a need for more countries to both institute and enforce ethical guiding principles on AI, particularly in education, not just in terms of skill and talent acquisition but more in terms of ethical administration.

The fourth step requires other countries to urgently amend and execute extant copyright laws to administer AI-generated content. Traditional copyright laws must be revised to cater to the novel challenges GenAI brings. Only China, the EU and the United States have amended their copyright laws to take cognisance of the implications of GenAI. While the US copyright office has asserted that AI output cannot be safeguarded under copyright law and that copyright can only cover resources produced by human ingenuity, the EU, in its Act, behoves AI developers to divulge copyrighted resources utilised in the development of their systems; China nonetheless calls for tagging of results of GenAI as such while acknowledging them as products of digital composition (UNESCO Guidance, 2023).

The fifth step, based on having a detailed management structure for GenAI, equally demands GenAI systems developers tag images, videos and other content by AI in tandem with extant regulations. It suggests that more GenAI-specific frameworks should be developed to fill the lacuna in extant local guidelines and laws. The sixth step is to empower teachers, researchers, schools and educational institutions with skills for the right use of GenAI in education and research, particularly its merits, demerits and risks. The seventh step is to ratiocinate on the near-future consequence of GenAI for education and research. This is especially true in terms of how knowledge is created, imparted, and authenticated in various educational aspects (UNESCO Guidance, 2023). Given that the adoption of GenAI is still nascent and uncertainties are surrounding its long-term implications, the document recommends open, public, and inclusive discussions to include governments, private sectors, and other stakeholders for holistic contributions to amendments of regulations and policies.

More concretely, human-centredness, for instance, in ODL, implies that the entirety of the pedagogical process in terms of teaching, learning and assessment, even though distant, is designed and hinged on human supervision and not left solely to the dictates of the machine, AI. Human-centredness in teaching implies that a robot or a chatbot such as ChatGPT does not substitute the place of the teacher or tutor but rather that the traditional roles get modified where the teacher no longer takes centre stage like a sage but rather assumes the Socratic midwife who guides and helps the learner to the right use of AI in a way that is ethical and which fosters critical thinking rather than mental atrophy. Human-centredness thus implies that teachers will not be 'deleted' as feared in some quarters, and the learners are not some isolated entities. AI serves as a unitive force between the learner and the teacher and is not divisive as is usually touted. In the ODL space, it means that the curriculum and course materials are designed with the closer symbiotic relationship between the learner and the tutor aided by AI in mind.

The issue of privacy is especially pertinent in ODL space with its heavy reliance on technology. The privacy issue is implied in the humongous amount of data employed to train AI systems which it continually requires through learner engagements to continue to provide personalised learning to

each learner. Privacy concerns are also endemic in the 'datafication of education' found in learning analytics, which many ODL institutions employ because of its suitability for their context. While it is of utmost importance to preserve, promote and respect the dignity, autonomy and agency of learners in line with applicable ethical and legal frameworks, there ought to also be a 'limit on the use' of AI to curb and mitigate the general 'culture of surveillance' inadvertently implied in the use of various technologies for predictive learning. Limit on use pertains to not crossing a certain threshold of the use of AI. There ought to be a specified limit on collecting, using, transferring, and maintaining personal data, as well as on targeted advertisement.

The UNESCO Recommendation instead captures quite succinctly the issue of inclusion. However, its policy area six on gender leaves much to be desired with its emphases on STEM for the participation of girls and women. The need for STEAM and, much more importantly, to incentivise women and girls to take up positions in such areas is pertinent. As disciplinary silos collapse, arts and humanities offer outlets for women and girls to participate in STEM-related disciplines, which not just makes for a holistic representation of women but also makes for a humanised technology as there is more urgent need in a technology-driven world to foster meaningful collaboration amongst disciplines to ensure technology is developed and deployed for the good of humanity. We need not de-emphasise a group of disciplines to emphasise some others.

Legal

Intellectual property rights are one of the issues AI faces in education. The legal question is whether AI can create or own the patent. The US Supreme Court in 2023 refused to entertain a case brought to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for a patent to be issued for the creation of a Device for the Autonomous Bootstrapping of Unified Sentience (DABUS) artificial intelligence system said to have created peculiar examples wholly by itself. The justices declined the appeal because only human inventors can be issued a patent. Thus, AI systems cannot be recognised as inventors; only a human person can be an inventor (Brittain, 2023).

The issue of copyright and authorship of AI-generated content is another legal issue that has sprung up a whirlwind of ideas. The question surrounding the ongoing debate on the issue of copyright and authorship in AI is: Can the AI system be considered the author with copyright ownership of the content it generates? Traditional copyright law conceives authorship in terms of human agency and innovation/creative powers of the mind as fundamental to authorship; legal luminaries, however, argue that humans ought to possess rights of ownership since they are central to the creation and modification of the AI systems. The third camp to the debate opines that given that an AI system independently produces content free of human management and interference, it should, therefore, be acknowledged as a creator and as a probable copyright owner (Copping & Ezra, 2023).

Implied in copyright issues are infringement concerns because of the risk of inadvertent copyright violation given the vast amount of content the AI system is 'tutored' on, especially when the system has been trained on copyrighted materials. Adequately giving credit to AI-created works is also concerning. Attributing properly acknowledges intellectual property rights and fosters transparency in recognising inputs from various sources. Another issue worth mentioning is liability for the outputs of large language models. Whom should we hold responsible for the generation of defamatory or violating content? This becomes problematic because of its automated nature (Ahuja, 2023).

Social

AI can foster collaboration and social learning in ODL settings despite the physical and spatial distance. Intelligent chatbots and virtual assistants can facilitate discussions, answer queries, and provide a sense of community among learners. In the ODL context, the theories of transactional distance and the community of inquiry are frameworks that crystallise the relationship between instructional design and delivery. They help to understand the effects of students' contentedness on their academic performance. Both the transactional distance and community of inquiry framework are concerned with reducing social and psychological distance, which often leads to phenomena such as drop-outs and attrition in distance education.

Transactional distance is a perceived cognitive and communication lacuna where misapprehension could thrive between the instructor and the learners (Moore, 2018).

The theory underscores social exchange instead of technological interaction in understanding the relationship between tutors and learners separated in time and space. The community of inquiry model produces an engaging and robust socio-constructivist learning experience through three interrelated constructs – social, cognitive, and teaching presence. The pedagogical shift involves transmitting knowledge and cultivating collaborative and social learning experiences, enriching the educational journey for all participants. The social implications of AI in this context derive from its functionality in enabling distance learners to exhibit greater autonomy over their learning and social experiences. As some analysts have argued, AI is likely to have various significant social consequences based on geography. People's conceptions and views of AI tend to be deeply influenced by culture and society (Hagerty & Rubinov, 2019). Peer social support is one of the hallmarks of broad and multifaceted social support systems that enhance individual well-being and group relations, influencing various aspects of human life, society, and the economy, and the evolution of AI into most facets of human life threatens important human relationships in unimaginable ways. Apart from issues such as privacy concerns, which have become centre-stage, almost at par with the dominance of AI, there are also concerns about potential redundancies created at the lower and middle levels of the teaching and research roles. The development of virtual AI assistants means that these teachers will not be required for some roles, and some functions previously performed by research assistants will suddenly disappear. There is also the threat of virtual assistants becoming too mechanical and disembodied and unable to demonstrate humanity and empathy; some learners may sorely need to adjust to the challenges and biases associated with their learning experiences (Sætra & Fosch-Villaronga, 2021).

Pedagogical

In examining the pedagogical implications of AI for teaching and learning in the open and distance context, it seems necessary to extend beyond the often-

touted affordances and drawbacks of AI. Undoubtedly, there are new possibilities for teaching and learning, especially for an innovative mode of education such as ODL, which privileges flexibility and adaptability above traditional elements of education delivery, with pedagogical considerations of incorporating AI in the teaching and learning process. Those are of utmost importance. Pedagogy lies at the heart of effective teaching and learning. In the realm of ODL, where geographical distances and diverse learner needs prevail, educators face unique challenges. Incorporating AI introduces exciting new dimensions to pedagogy, assessment and learner engagement, promising enhanced personalisation, interactivity, and efficiency (Han et al., 2023). However, this requires carefully examining how AI aligns with established pedagogical principles.

One of the goals of ODL is the democratisation of education, making learning accessible to many learners across multiple locations. Indeed, the key features of ODL, such as Enhanced Access, Equity and Equality, Openness and Flexibility, Elaborate Learner Support Systems, Quality Self-Learning resources, Authentic Assessment, Social Justice, Inclusive Participation, and Learner Centredness are amenable to functionalities of Generative AI models. Generative AI impacts ODL and optimises its distinctive features in many ways. In content generation and curation, AI provides an automated instructional delivery which may support academics in developing course materials and lectures, enabling them to focus on more interactive and engaging aspects of the teaching and learning process. As mentioned earlier, AI can also support the design and development of authentic assessments, producing a range of questions for tutor-marked assignments and examination items to create a more robust, personalised, and error-free assessment model.

Another key pedagogical consideration is the potential for AI to facilitate personalised learning experiences. AI algorithms can analyse individual learner data, adapting content and assessments to cater to each student's pace, preferences, and learning style. This may also have implications for the social dimensions of open and distance learning interaction. Personalisation fosters a more engaging and effective learning journey, addressing the diverse needs of ODL students scattered across the learning locale. Thus, AI offers distance

learners who often operate asynchronously real-time feedback, eliminating the spatial gap between tutors and distance learners. AI-powered automated assessment tools can offer immediate insights into student performance, enabling timely interventions and support (Naidu & Sevnarayan, 2023). This responsiveness contributes to a more supportive and dynamic learning environment. However, the provenance of the content database may limit this phenomenon. Databases in developing countries are still heavily dependent on the Global North, which implies that when the AI is interrogated, the responses often derive from existing databases from the Global North - resulting in outcomes that lack a deep root in the local context.

As stated earlier, pedagogical considerations of AI in teaching and learning are crucial in the open and distance learning delivery mode. AI systems provide constructive support for e-learning and teaching, comprising individualised studying, automating evaluation and administrative activities, and creating authentic and scenario-based assessments. Nonetheless, despite the promising nature of AI, the effect of AI systems on the cultural values and social expectations relating to students' engagement with their tutors is still uncertain – especially in a developing world context like Nigeria's. In online learning, the interaction between students and instructors in the form of feedback, support, and presence significantly affects students' contentedness and academic performance. As a result, determining how students and instructors understand the effects of AI systems on their relationships is critical to recognising issues and challenges, including barriers that limit the ability of AI systems to fulfil the expectations of students and instructors. The pedagogical implications of AI in ODL unfold in three broad ways: teaching, learning and assessment.

As demonstrated earlier, AI has contributed immensely to developing content that is adaptable to the needs of learners in real time and can address the diverse needs of individuals. One key limitation that may be underscored is the weakness of AI in producing content that has contextual relevance to the context of a developing country like Nigeria.

Technological

Integration of AI in ODL has far-reaching technological implications, innovating and revolutionising ODL by evolving solutions to enhance the learning experience. Without a doubt, this impacts the technological aspects of ODL (Dogan et al., 2023). A much-touted advantage of AI for ODL is personalised learning. It enables AI algorithms to analyse student data and use them to create individualised learning pathways based on each learner's unique characteristics and needs. This enables learners to access instructional content that aligns with their characteristics and needs to enhance effective and efficient learning experiences. Similarly, AI-powered adaptive learning platforms continuously measure learners' progress and modify the difficulty levels and learning content to reflect ability levels and needs (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2023). Adaptability responds to learner diversities, ensuring each learner is appropriately engaged and supported throughout the ODL course. The possibility of AI automating assessment processes, including grading and providing constructive feedback, is another critical implication for ODL. This reduces the burden on instructional facilitators and allows for faster feedback cycles, enhancing the overall learning experience for distance learners. Other features, such as intelligent tutoring systems, natural language processing (NLP), and predictive analytics, can potentially increase ODL delivery efficiency when properly designed and implemented.

Meanwhile, the technological implications of AI in the context of ODL are transformative, offering opportunities to enhance personalisation, engagement, and overall learning outcomes (Uunona & Goosen, 2023). Careful consideration must be given to ethical concerns and the need for continuous monitoring and improvement in applying AI technologies in ODL delivery. One area that continues to challenge users is the implications for the socio-cultural context. There is an assumption that players in ODL in the Global South have the same digital literacy skill levels as those in the Global North, yet this is not necessarily the case. What this means is that despite the sophistication of the best algorithms of AI adopted and deployed for various ODL functions, there is a need for operable social justice mechanisms which keep the needs of the most diverse learners at the back of the mind so that they are not inadvertently left out of the intellectual orbit of an AI-driven ODL

delivery process that does not take their digital literacy limitations into account.

7. What does it add up to? A reflexive analysis of AI in education and research

Many of the above principles on how AI ought to be engaged in education are undoubtedly apt and commendable. At the risk of rehashing what has already been discussed, the need to situate humans at the centre of AI administration has become imperative; likewise, the recommendation to have a pellucid algorithm and one that can easily be explained. These principles are at the heart of adequate regulation of AI in education. Despite this, there are issues to be addressed in regulating AI in education.

The first pertains to the proliferation of principles and the potential for confusion on which to adopt. There is a need for a global body such as UNESCO to sit together with other regional groups to harmonise its different regulations and those of regional groups to have some global consensus regarding a comprehensive document on AIED. As it stands, it is confusing as to which of the different proposals to go with when searching for AIED principles. A second area where more work needs to be done is rectifying the shortfall in some of the proposals discussed. The various implications of AI are felt in teaching, learning and assessment. Yet, none of these documents takes the pains to analyse its principles singly or collectively with recourse to each of these aspects of learning for a more comprehensive and easily understandable application of AI in education. There is a need to transcend the abstract theorisation of how AIED should be administered to practical analyses that employ case studies or role plays for students/learners. For instance, what does human oversight mean (and each of the principles) in employing AI in various teaching, learning, and assessment components? While naysayers might see this breakdown as needless or redundant, domesticating the principles by relating them to how they concretely impact teaching, learning, and assessment would go a long way in fostering the understanding of all the stakeholders.

In addition, in AIED discourse, education is often treated as a single whole with principles to guide AIED discussed with such an assumption. However, there is a need to properly disambiguate education into its various sectors, such as primary, secondary, and tertiary education, with a consideration of those with special learning abilities / or gifted learners. As this is done, principles to guide AI ought to be tailored to these different sections of education and learners. What applies in one educational sector might apply in another; however, it would be a gross over-generalisation if we assume, for instance, that the same human oversight required for preschool kids applies to college students.

Regarding the legal implications of copyright laws, the idea pushed by those who opine that AI systems autonomously create content devoid of human intervention is arguable. This is because AI is not self-created; it is brought about through the ingenuity of its efficient cause - humans. It appears spurious to think that AI systems should be copyright owners because they produce content free of human intervention. The machine learning component of AI would not have been possible if the efficient cause had not instigated it in the first place. Further, although humans are central to creating and fine-tuning AI systems, it does not accord them the right to ownership. In the case of large language models, the data they are trained on is gotten from the works of several other authors, which in itself springs up copyright issues.

8. Conclusion

The dream of AI in ODL in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Nigeria, is characterised by ambitious promises and confounding challenges, almost in equal dimensions. Although the potential benefits seem quite obvious, there are critical limitations in the areas of infrastructure, culture, ethics, and pedagogy that have negative impacts. As has been shown in this paper, there is an imperative for a comprehensive analysis of possible mechanisms that can be used to harness AI for African education systems generally and open and distance learning specifically in its current state. Such situation analysis will move the practice of open and distance learning in Africa closer to the system's aspirations. Thus, the critical analyses and reflections on the

ethical, legal, social, pedagogical, and technological implications of AI in Open and Distance Learning in a developing country like Nigeria that have been undertaken in this paper underscore the multifaceted nature of this transformative integration. As practitioners continue to examine the evolving landscape of AI-enhanced education, it becomes evident that the ethical considerations surrounding learner data, privacy, and algorithmic biases demand serious attention.

As practitioners, we have the ethical responsibility of ensuring that AI deployment for ODL in a developing country like Nigeria is infused with an adequate dose of transparency, fairness, and accountability. The governance protocols for protecting learners' data and privacy concerns must be a priority. Thus, appropriate safeguards and ethical principles must be outlined and shared across all levels of users to minimise the possible risks. Closely linked to broad ethical issues is the legal consideration, which relates to the intersection of AI and education concerning copyright, intellectual property, agency of LLM and the attendant regulatory issues. Thus, beyond adherence to ethical considerations, it is essential to balance adopting innovative solutions with compliance with existing legal provisions to ensure that AI applications in ODL do not conflict with national regulations and international conventions.

Regarding the socio-cultural and economic issues surrounding AI-driven solutions, there is a need to ensure that AI's benefits in ODL are appropriate and equally responsive, accessible and inclusive to diverse categories of users across the ODL space. This close attention to social justice will eliminate the possibility of reproducing existing social inequalities in the AI-driven ODL milieu. On the pedagogical issues, it is predictable that the integration of AI will prompt a reconsideration of traditional teaching and learning methodologies. However, the mantra of claiming that AI would facilitate personalised learning experiences and adaptability must be taken beyond the level of rhetorics; ODL practitioners must be deliberate in infusing social presence into the technological augmentation and ensuring that critical attention is given to the preservation of meaningful personal engagements in teaching and learning process. Technological advancements in AI demand continuous reflection on the implications of adopting cutting-edge

technologies. A nuanced understanding of the possible prejudices embedded in algorithms and the need for ongoing technological literacy becomes paramount to exploiting the goods of AI while preventing unintended consequences.

9. Bibliography

Ahuja, V. 2020. "Artificial intelligence and copyright issues and challenges." *ILI Law Review*. Winter Issue, 270-85. Available at: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3864922

AI Advisory Council. 2023. Interim Report: Governing AI for Humanity. https://www.un.org/techenvoy/sites/www.un.org.techenvoy/files/ai_advisory_body_interim_report.pdf

Bozkurt, A., & Sharma, R. C. 2023. "Challenging the status quo and exploring the new boundaries in the age of algorithms: Reimagining the role of generative AI in distance education and online learning." *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 18(1). http://www.asianjde.com/ojs/index.php/AsianJDE/article/view/714

Brittain, B. 2023. US Supreme Court rejects computer scientist's lawsuit over AI-generated inventions. *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/legal/us-supreme-court-rejects-computer-scientists-lawsuit-over-ai-generated-2023-04-24/

Copping, D., & Ezra, E. 2023. AI in higher education: Legal insights. *Farrer & Co*. https://www.farrer.co.uk/news-and-insights/ai-in-higher-education-legal-insights/

Doroudi, S. 2022. "The intertwined histories of artificial intelligence and education." *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education*, 33(4), 885-928. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40593-022-00313-2

Göçen, A., & Aydemir, F. 2020. "Artificial Intelligence in Education and Schools." *Research on Education and Media*, 12(1), 13-21. https://doi.org/10.2478/rem-2020-0003

Hagerty, A., & Rubinov, I. 2019. "Global AI ethics: A review of the social impacts and ethical implications of artificial intelligence." *arXiv*. https://arxiv.org/abs/1907.07892

Han, B., Nawaz, S., Buchanan, G., & McKay, D. 2023. Ethical and Pedagogical Impacts of AI in Education. In N. Wang, G. Rebolledo-Mendez, N. Matsuda, O. C. Santos, & V. Dimitrova (Eds.), *Artificial Intelligence in Education*. AIED 2023. Lecture Notes in Computer Science, Vol. 13916. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-36272-9_54

Jones, S. 2015. PLATO. Encyclopaedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/PLATO-education-system

Malekos, N. 2023. The rise of artificial intelligence in education: Will AI disrupt eLearning? LearnWorlds Blog. https://www.learnworlds.com/blog/the-rise-of-artificial-intelligence-in-education/

McCarthy, J., Minsky, M., Shannon, C. E., Rochester, N., & Dartmouth College. 1955. A proposal for the Dartmouth summer research project on artificial intelligence. *AI Magazine*, 27(4). https://doi.org/10.1609/aimag.v27i4.1904

Moe, R. 2015. The brief and expansive history (and future) of the MOOC: Why two divergent models share the same name. *Current Issues in Emerging eLearning*, 2(1), 2. https://scholarworks.umb.edu/ciee/vol2/iss1/2/

Moore, M. G. 1993/2005. The theory of transactional distance. In Desmond Keegan (Ed.), *Theoretical Principles of Distance Education*: New York: Routledge, Ch. 2, 22-38. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203983065

Naidu, K., & Sevnarayan, K. 2023. "ChatGPT: An ever-increasing encroachment of artificial intelligence in online assessment in distance education." *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, 13(3). https://doi.org/10.30935/ojcmt/13291

Nature. 2023. Tools such as ChatGPT threaten transparent science: Here are our ground rules for their use. *Nature*. Editorial. https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-00191-1

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2021. Recommendation of the Council on AI. https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0449

Popenici, S. 2023. *Artificial Intelligence and Learning Futures*. New York: Routledge, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003266563

Sætra, H. S., & Fosch-Villaronga, E. 2021. "Research in AI has implications for society: How do we respond?" *Morals & Machines* 1(1), 62-75, http://dx.doi.org/10.5771/2747-5182-2021-1-60

Sharma, R. C. 2021. Applications of artificial intelligence in education. *Education Matters@ETMA*, July-August, 2-4. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355035239

Turing, A. 1950. Computing machinery and intelligence. *Mind*, 59. https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/LIX.236.433

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2023. Guidance for generative AI in education and research. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386693

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2019. Beijing Consensus on artificial intelligence and education. Outcome document of the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Education, Planning Education in the AI Era: Lead the Leap. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/ pf0000368303

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2021. Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379920.page=14

Uunona, G. N., & Goosen, L. 2023. Leveraging ethical standards in artificial intelligence technologies: A guideline for responsible teaching and

learning applications. In *Handbook of Research on Instructional Technologies in Health Education and Allied Disciplines*, IGI Global, 310-330; https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-7164-7.ch014

10. Short biography

Helen Titilola Olojede is a Lecturer and the Head of the Department of Philosophy at the National Open University of Nigeria. She is the PI of GenAI Research in the Global South (funded by the Notre Dame – IBM Tech Ethics Lab) and a researcher in the training workshop on GenAI (funded by UNESCO). Her current research focus is on the ethics of AI. She is an ODL practitioner. Titilola was named 100 Brilliant Women in AI Ethics for 2024.

Email: holojede@noun.edu.ng

Felix Kayode Olakulehin is a lecturer & research fellow at the National Open University of Nigeria. He received graduate training in distance education and educational planning and policy. His research interests include open, distance and online learning; higher education; artificial Intelligence; social justice and lifelong learning. He is a co-researcher in the team that received a research grant from the Notre Dame Tech Ethics Lab and a grant for training on the UNESCO guidance on AI in education and research.

journal of ethics in higher education

Peace Spirituality Through Interreligious Engagement

A Case of Education to Toleration and Peace Spirituality in Yogyakarta

Imanuel Geovasky,
Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

December 2024.

Keywords

Education to tolerance, public space, peace and spirituality, interreligious dialogue, interreligious engagement in the Indonesian context, Muslims and Christians in the public sphere.

Abstract

Historically, Yogyakarta had enjoyed the reputation of being a bastion of interreligious tolerance in Indonesia. Still, a growing spate of events that were manifestations of religious intolerance calls for a rethinking of that narrative. This paper examines public space civility, peace spirituality, and interreligious engagement in Yogyakarta. Through a quantitative survey approach, it is found that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between positive public space civility and peace spirituality. Apart from the positive correlations of public behaviour and peace spirituality, there is also a theory-practice gap, in that most measures seemed to make the Muslim and Christian participants alike appear very insecure. The current study extends earlier research and underlines how grassroots interreligious engagement can stand in front in peace-making, enhancing spirituality, and religious tolerance.

Corresponding Authors: Imanuel Geovasky, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia. Email: imanuelgeovasky@mail.ugm.ac.id

To quote this article: Geovasky, Imanuel. 2024. “Peace Spirituality through Interreligious Engagement: A Case of Education to Toleration and Peace Spirituality in Yogyakarta”. *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 5(2024): 183–198. DOI: 10.26034/fr.jehe.2024.6870 © the Author. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit https://jehe.globethics.net

1. Introduction

Despite its position as a beacon of tolerance, Yogyakarta confronts hurdles in sustaining social cohesion despite its diverse racial, cultural, and religious identities. A recent study by Kamil (2018) and Hakim (2021) emphasizes the prevalence of intolerance in the city, causing concerns among academics and religious communities. Thus, there is a need to examine the contradiction between Yogyakarta's reputation for openness and the documented intolerance. Of the works to note, by far, the categorization of Yogyakarta as an "intolerant city" by the Wahid Institute itself due to rising violence and intolerance over the past five years, hence requiring further investigation into the interreligious relations and engagements between Islam and Christianity. Among the guiding questions are: How is the behaviour of Muslims and Christians in the public sphere related to peace spirituality in Yogyakarta, and secondly, how does inter-religious engagement use a culture of peace and tolerance?

2. Interreligious Tolerance in Yogyakarta: A Contested Narrative

While Yogyakarta's reputation rests on a history of tolerance Smith (2014), recent studies by Kamil (2018) and Widjaja et al. (2020, 2021) reveal the rise of cases and tendencies that contest this narrative. Widjaja et al. (2020) studied how identity politics influences the behaviour of both Muslim and Christian groups in the public spaces of Yogyakarta, targeting particularly young people. It follows, therefore, that there is a relation between the salience of identity and intergroup conflict.

One such example, given by Sa'idah (2020), was in 2018 when people claiming to observe Islamic teachings destroyed other people's property, which they claimed was associated with the rituals called the "*Sedekah Laut*," or Sea Offerings. This act heightens how misinterpretation of religious doctrine may lead to intolerance. Other incidents that make this storyline more complicated are given by Rusdi (2021). These are the vandalizing of a Christian tombstone and the rejection of residence to a Christian family on

account of their religion. The latter incident speaks to how local regulations could further add to increased interfaith tensions, as shown by the eventual repeal of the discriminatory decree.

Rusdi (2021) concludes that the state is an actor in developing interreligious tolerance in the country echoes broader discussions on the role of legal frameworks and state intervention. The case of Yogyakarta's challenge to maintain its image as a tolerant city underlined the will of multi-approaches in dealing with societal attitudes affected by identity politics and failed legal and administrative structures.

3. Interreligious Relations in Indonesian Context

Indonesia was established upon the principles of Pancasila as the Unitary Republic of Indonesia in Bahasa Indonesia, *Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia* or NKRI, enshrining the national motto "*bhineka tunggal ika*" or unity in diversity. The latter national motto underlines how the nation accepts the inherent diversity within it, including religious pluralism. The diversity of religions in Indonesia is not a matter of choice; it is a basic social fact. For this reason, interreligious encounters cannot be avoided within Indonesian society.

Cheetham et al. (2013) highlight the ongoing nature of interfaith relations, emphasizing that religious communities have interacted "both historically and in the contemporary world." This ongoing interaction fosters stronger engagement and cohesion among today's increasingly diverse faith communities. However, not all interreligious relationships are without complications. While a long history of harmony between religious groups does exist, Cheetham et al. (2013) also highlight the historical conflicts between religious groups. Phan and Tan (2013) add weight to this assertion when they state that while globalization and migration have enabled interfaith encounters, these elements of globalization and migration have brought the issues of power related to majority/minority distinctions between religious groups. In support, Phan and Tan state:

> “In addition, increased mobility in today’s world has generated large-scale movement of peoples, increasing diversity and plurality, and intensifying tensions between the dominant community in the host countries and newcomer minorities. More problematic is the use of terror and violence by a dominant majority community against a vulnerable minority community to conform to the majority’s definition of identity and social belonging. (p. 221)

On the other hand, Marianne Moyaert argues interreligious relations and dialogue should include modern ideals of equality, respect, and tolerance (Cheetham et al. 2013).

Paul F. Knitter (1995) argues for interreligious dialogue built upon a foundation of shared human experience. He criticizes the rejection of a common agenda of discussion, claiming it serves as a sign of the predominance of power play more than of the genuine expression of truth. For Knitter (2008) human suffering provides a converging point of religious dialogue. While he describes suffering as destructive, he then emphasizes common humanity as a uniting factor. In Indonesia and Asia, suffering has been personified in poverty, hunger, the spectre of natural calamities, and ecological destruction. This cuts across religious lines since it hurts every human being and the entire cosmos. The overcoming of hardships together brings to the fore the unity of all humankind. Whichever part of the earth it is, whichever religious persuasion it may be, humanity shares one destiny as inhabitants of this globe.

The strategy of Knitter (2008) is to opt for an interfaith dialogue based on a sense of common vulnerability and responsibility. As befitting a pragmatic approach, Knitter believes that an interfaith dialogue inspired by shared interests develops a sense of friendship with other faiths. Engaging in collective action, struggle, and suffering over issues like peace, justice, poverty, and disaster fosters this sense of camaraderie. This approach can be employed as a common path to facilitate more amicable dialogue across religious divides. Knitter (2008) illustrates this with his experience of dialogue with Maha Ghosananda (a Cambodian Buddhist leader).

They developed a deeper connection after listening to and being moved by the narratives of the Acteal massacre survivors in Chiapas, Mexico (December 1997). This connection transcended the one established during discussions on Buddhist and Christian teachings or shared meditation.

Shared concerns, however, are not adequate in the quest for an ethical structure for interreligious relations if an attitude of openness does not emerge among participants. Knitter (2001) therefore emphasizes that openness needs to be preconditioned before dialogues and shared ethical endeavours take place. It is simultaneously one of crucial importance to preserve and proclaim faith commitments amidst the dialogue, as Delio (2009) affirms. After all, the meeting of faith perspectives that is interfaith dialogue allows participants to learn from one another.

4. Interreligious Engagement

The rhetoric of interreligious relations has developed into an acting-oriented perspective now labelled as interreligious engagement. Interreligious engagement refers to the worth of an enabling and constructive relationship that flourishes among individuals hailing from various religious and spiritual backgrounds. Three theoretical pillars describe mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. Thus, the pillars can be shown through formal dialogues, service projects, or educative ones undertaken together. Interreligious engagement is therefore all about fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of the varied tapestry of religious and spiritual traditions that a community may host (Lattu, 2016, 2019).

Interreligious engagement goes beyond a conversation. It is a range of activities, formal and informal, intended to build relationships and understanding leading to respect and cooperation by and among people from different religious backgrounds (Lattu, 2016). In this context, the approach of deploying interreligious engagement for social change relies on the discourse as an interventionist methodology that is almost guaranteed to have an impact on addressing social ills to effect social change. Individuals of different religious backgrounds can share opinions and find commonalities to help

them overcome various challenges; this may provide a way to achieve social cohesion (Mayhew et al. 2022).

Lattu (2019) emphasizes the evolving nature of interfaith dialogue, noting its progression "from textual discussion to social action." This perspective broadens the definition of dialogue to encompass everyday social interaction and communication between religions. When formal discussions are difficult to conduct, "life dialogue" becomes a valuable tool for understanding the teachings and values of different faiths (Lattu, 2019). Moreover, Lattu (2016) proposes a propositional oral-based interfaith engagement model that emphasizes ordinary contact and casual conversations in bridging the gap between people of different faiths. It realizes that formal talks are not the sole source of interfaith involvement, and day-to-day interactions may yield the same level of effectiveness to bring people closer to a mutual understanding.

Contextualization is emphasized in inter-religious involvement. The framework insists on the need for any approach to interfaith conversation to draw its relevance from the specific cultural, social, and theological contexts wherein they take place. This paradigm encourages inclusiveness. According to Lattu (2016) and Suheri & Maula (2022), it does point out that interfaith conversation need not be more than the passing or planned contact but possibly through ordinary interchange and informal conversation. This in turn opens participation to a wide variance of individuals.

5. Methodology of Empirical Study

In the study, a collaboration of the researchers from the Peace and Conflict Resolution Cluster, Faculty of Theology, Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, namely Paulus S. Widjaja, Edy Nugroho, and Imanuel Geovasky, evaluated the possible correlation between the behaviours that Muslims and Christians have in public space with their peace spirituality in Yogyakarta. This study used a quantitative approach with survey methodology, conducted from January to May 2023. The target populations in this study are Muslims and Christians who reside in Yogyakarta City and its surroundings such as Kulon Progo, Gunung Kidul Sleman Regency, and Bantul Regency. A total of 1,277 questionnaires were distributed and collected between March and May 2023.

The theoretical framework for this research drew upon established concepts of public space, positive peace, and the virtue and spirituality of peace. The study utilized Jurgen Habermas' (1985, 1989) theories of behaviour in public spaces, focusing on deliberation, participation, and representation. Deliberation refers to the process of creating public opinion through communication, effectively bridging the gap between the private and public spheres. Participation signifies the collaborative effort in shaping the nation's history. Thus, representation is defined as serving as an ethical role model for one's social group within the public sphere (Habermas, 1985, 1989). In this research, it draws on the use of Johan Galtung's (1969, 1996) concept of positive peace. Positive peace is more than the absence of conflict. According to Galtung (1996), it is the intentional creation of structures and processes that contribute to peacebuilding. This is done by nurturing inclusive identities to embrace pluralism and a realization of the worth of diversified groups within society. These efforts contribute to the creation of a more just society, where power is shared equitably and grievances are addressed constructively.

The study also incorporated Paulus S. Widjaja's (2020) framework of peace virtues and spirituality, encompassing hope, vulnerability, humility, forbearance, and empathy. The findings of this research were presented at the Global Mennonite Peace Conference III held at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, United States, from June 15-18, 2023.

6. Results

The quantitative analysis yielded the following key findings: *First,* correlation between public space behaviour and peace spirituality. A statistically significant positive correlation was observed between the behaviour of Muslims and Christians in public spaces and their peace spirituality (average correlation score: 0.578 for both groups). Notably, the average score for Muslims turned out to be a little higher, 0.609, as compared to that for Christians, 0.531. This would possibly indicate that there is some connection between good behaviour outdoors and inner peace stemming from spiritual values.

Another is the gap in positive peace versus empathy: the study has found a big difference between the conceptual understanding of positive peace Galtung famously called positive peace and how that is translated into the action of empathy towards others of different faiths. While there may be a conceptual understanding of positive peace, it appears that translation into actual acts that are empathetic toward those of other faiths is minimal. This suggests an area that might be further explored and attended to.

Thirdly, insecurity and interfaith relationships. One of the disturbing trends recorded was that of feelings of insecurity among Muslim and Christian subjects. This seems to stand in the way of being openly receptive to interfaith dialogue and having good relations with other people of a different faith.

Fourthly, God and Religion are double-edged swords. Surprisingly, the research found that God and religion, which may potentially bring peace and understanding, also contribute to feelings of insecurity within interfaith relations. This suggests an ambivalent interaction between religious identity and social interaction, which will require further probing.

Fifth, religious leaders and the public have a gap in Pluralism. The research uncovered a possible gap in the attitudes of religious leaders and those of the general public. Whereas religious leaders may adopt the principles of religious pluralism, the lived experience of the people seems to meet with civic pluralism: an experience rooted in shared citizenship rather than theological comprehension. This gap deserves further investigation on how these two different approaches to interfaith can be mended.

7. Discussion

The Interreligious Relations between Muslims and Christians in Yogyakarta

The atmosphere of uneasiness pervades relations between Muslims and Christians in Yogyakarta. It may have prevented the full acceptance of persons of different religions. There is a gap between each religion's ideas about peace and good relations with fellow humans and the reality of public

behavior that is still tinged by scepticism and fear of openness to individuals of different religions. It symbolizes the big gap that always exists between understanding and reality, as evidenced by the understanding between the Positive Peace of the idea and Empathy of the practice for others in every faith.

Interreligious relations, Cheetham et al. argue (2013), have always oscillated between peace and conflict. Long periods of peaceful relations can be characterized by conflictual relations that only appear a few times. As in the context of Yogyakarta, interfaith relations have historically been peaceful and harmonious. However, due to the emergence of several intolerance incidents in recent years, Yogyakarta is considered an intolerant province. Intolerance actions can affect the views of religious believers with a negative stigma, prejudice, and nuances that seem full of conflict and cannot fully accept the existence of other religious believers without the opportunity to clarify (Fordham & Ogbu 1986, Steele 1997). Particularly considering Phan and Tan's (2013) perspective that relations between majority and minority groups are not easy because of different power relations, this interfaith encounter needs to be managed seriously. In the meantime, in daily life, more religious people have peaceful and harmonious relations with followers of other religions.

Therefore, serious attention to the issue of intolerance that arises and a comprehensive solution in every case that occurs is required. It is also important to involve all, whether it is the government, religious leaders, civil society, academics, and observers of tolerance, in the issue of interreligious intolerance. While stories of interreligious peace are fundamental, they may be drowned out by larger public discourses voicing intolerance. In this respect, we also have a greater need to promote the counter-narrative through the effective dissemination of stories of success in interfaith cooperation and collaboration. Increasing the volume of counter-narratives promotes a shift toward everyday practices of interfaith coexistence that are in truth reflective of the peaceful teaching of various religions.

Inclusivity and Exclusivity in Interreligious Relations

Only the elite religious leaders engage in religious pluralism, while ordinary people continue to engage in civic pluralism. This reflects a significant divide in the comprehension and application of interreligious interactions between public religious adherents and the elite. According to the data analysis, religious elites or leaders share an inclusive identity, while ordinary people (religious believers) share an exclusive identity. This outcome supports Mietzner and Muhtadi's (2020) research findings, which stated, "a significant mismatch between the self-perception of the NU leadership and the actual views held by the NU grassroots. NU followers are generally as intolerant of religious minorities as the rest of the Indonesian Muslim population, and in some cases, even more intolerant."

Given that grassroots religious people are used to interacting with one another in their daily lives, this finding is ironic. However, this daily life interaction appears not sufficient to make them have complete openness to other religious communities. In the findings, religious pluralism is only a feature of religious leaders, therefore more authentic interfaith dialogues that involve religious believers at the grassroots are needed. In this sense, an inclusive identity will encourage authentic interreligious relations not easily influenced by negative issues that generate intolerance towards people of other religions.

The Challenge for Interreligious Engagement

The finding indicates that the behaviour of Muslims and Christians in public spaces is correlated at an average score of 0.578 concerning peace spirituality. This means that interreligious engagement leads to peace. The finding brings forth the importance of deliberation, participation, and representation in public spaces, which are elements of interreligious engagement. These behaviours are positively associated with peace spirituality; hence, these are contributing to a culture of peace and tolerance.

There are, however, some challenges faced with the interreligious engagement discourse. The result reveals the large gap between understanding and actualities in the areas of positive peace and empathy. This challenges by suggesting that there is a need for more interreligious

engagement and cooperation to bridge this gap. The finding shows that the feeling of insecurity toward each other hinders the full embrace of people of other religions. This challenges interreligious engagement by highlighting the need to address this insecurity, particularly when God and religion are brought into the picture.

This finding underlines that elite religious leaders are already acting in the mode of religious pluralism, whereas ordinary people are still in the civic pluralism mode. Religious pluralism means a recognition of, and respect for, the legitimacy of different religious traditions. It emphasizes peaceful coexistence and interfaith dialogue despite differing beliefs. John Hick (1989) defines it as "the view that the ultimate reality, or God, is known or experienced in different ways within the various world religions." On the other hand, civic pluralism focuses on shared values and principles that create a cohesive society, even if citizens hold diverse religious beliefs. It emphasizes tolerance, respect for the law, and the separation of religion from the state. Charles Taylor (1992) discusses civic pluralism in the context of multicultural societies. Taylor (1992) emphasizes the importance of citizens developing a "shared space" where they can "affirm a good within which, and for the sake of which, they can endorse differing and even antagonistic ultimate ends." This challenges interreligious engagement by suggesting that there is a need for more inclusive and widespread interreligious engagement to promote peace. General empirical data support the approach through the identification of the importance of interreligious engagement for the nurturance of peace spirituality. However, it also works to challenge the theory in identifying further areas of work needed if there are to be gaps and insecurities in the full embracing of interfaith cooperation.

8. Conclusion

This, considering recent conflicts, requires the giving of a new commitment to interreligious engagement if Yogyakarta's reputation for tolerance is to be maintained. This can also provide insightful lessons in building an inclusive and peaceful region. This study tests one association between positive behaviour in public places and inner peace premised on spiritual values that

were affirmatory of the central pillar in interreligious engagement frameworks: mutual understanding. Positive social contact along religious lines is more urgent today. On the other hand, the gap that has appeared between understanding positive peace and the practice of empathy underlines the requirement to go beyond theoretical discussions. Lattu (2019) emphasizes the shift from "textual discussion to social action" in interreligious engagement. Interreligious engagement that actively cultivates empathy between Muslims and Christians through collaborative service projects or educational initiatives can bridge this gap.

The insecurity felt by both Muslim and Christian adherers presents a significant barrier. Such insecurities are torn down by interreligious programs that foster honest dialogue. Moreover, religious pluralistic programs that celebrate religious differences develop an appreciation for the community's "rich tapestry of religious and spiritual traditions" as stated by Lattu (2019). This is the gap between religious leaders embracing pluralism while their public directs them to civic pluralism, hence needing a grassroots approach. Grassroots inter-religious engagement between ordinary people in both communities may nurture a sense of shared humanity and advance a tilt toward tolerance at the level of the community. It recognizes the importance of contextualization and allows the possibility of participation beyond formal settings, enabling inclusivity. With such interreligious engagement policies, Yogyakarta can further develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the various religious expressions within its midst and firmly establish its reputation as a bastion of tolerance.

9. References

Cheetham, David, Pratt, Douglas, and Thomas, David (eds.). 2013. *Understanding Interreligious Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Delio, I. 2009. Religious Pluralism and the Coincidence of Opposites. *Theological Studies*, (70), December.

Fordham, S., and Ogbu, J. U. 1986. Black students' school success: Coping with the "burden of acting white". *Urban Review*, 18, 176- 206. doi:10.1007/BF01112192

Galtung, J. 1969. Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-188.

Galtung, J. 1996. *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. London: Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446221631

Habermas, J. 1985. *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Translated by Thomas McCarthy. Reprint. Vol. 1. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. 1989. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Polity Press.

Hakim, A. L. 2021. Pancasila and an Attempt to Revitalize Religious Tolerance in Yogyakarta. *Sosiohumaniora: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora,* Vol. 7 (2), 83-98.

Hick, J. 1989. *The Myth of God Incarnate.* SCM Press.

Kamil, M. 2018. Cultural Tolerance, Diversity, and Pluralism: The Recognition of Yogyakarta as The City of Tolerance. *Jurnal Logos*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 23-36.

Knitter, P. F. 1995. *One Earth Many Religions*, New York: Orbis Books.

Knitter, P. F. 2001. Commitment to One-Openness to Others: A Challenge for Christians. *Horizons*, 28/2, 255-270.

Knitter, P. F. 2008. *Pengantar Teologi Agama-agama*, Yogyakarta: Penerbit Kanisius.

Lattu, I. Y.M. 2016. A Sociological Breakthrough of Interreligious Engagement in Everyday-Symbolic Interaction Perspectives. *Religió: Jurnal Studi Agama-agama.* Vol. 6, No. 2, 164-185.

Lattu, I. Y.M. 2019. "Beyond Interreligious Dialogue: Oral-Based Interreligious Engagements in Indonesia." In *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion. Volume 10*, edited by Giuseppe Giordan and Andrew P. Lynch, Brill, 70–90.

Lattu, I. Y.M. 2023. "Ante-Sacred-Space and Interreligious Sphere in a Covid-19 ICU Room," in *Interconnectivity, Subversion, and Healing in World Christianity*, Afe Adogame and Aminta Arrington, eds. London: Bloomsbury Academic Publishing: 161–172.

Lattu, I. 2023. *Rethinking Interreligious Dialogue: Orality, Collective Memory and Interreligious Engagements in Indonesia*. Leiden and Paderborn: Brill - F. Schöningh, 61–91.

Mayhew, Matthew J., Musbah Shaheen, and B. Ashley Staples. 2022. Redefining Interfaith Engagement: A Case Study of One Evangelical Institution. *Christian Higher Education*, 23(3), https://doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2022.2142989

Mietzner, Marcus, and Muhtadi, Burhanuddin. 2020. The Myth of Pluralism: Nahdlatul Ulama and the Politics of Religious Tolerance in Indonesia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia,* Vol. 42, No. 1, 58–84. https://doi.org/10.1355/cs42-1c

Moyaert, M. 2013. Interreligious Dialogue. in Cheetham, David, Pratt, Douglas, and Thomas, David (eds.). *Understanding Interreligious Relations.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moyaert, Marriane. 2019. *Broadening Scope of Interreligious Studies: Interspirituality*. New York: Palgrave, 1–34.

Phan, Peter C., and Jonathan Y. Tan. 2013. Interreligious Majority-Minority Dynamics. in Cheetham, David, Douglas Pratt, and David Thomas (eds.). *Understanding Interreligious Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rusdi, M. 2021. Penanganan Intoleransi oleh Pemerintah Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta. *Pranata Hukum,* Vol. 3, No. 1, 129-145.

Sa'idah, Z. 2020. Srikandi Lintas Iman: Upaya Melawan Intoleransi Beragama di Yogyakarta. *Palastren Jurnal Studi Gender*, Vol. 13. No. 2; https://doi.org/10.21043/palastren.v13i2.7532

Steele, C. M. 1997. A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist, 52*(6), 613-629. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.52.6.613

Suhadi (Ed.), 2018. *Costly Tolerance, Tantangan Baru Dialog Muslim-Kristen di Indonesia dan Belanda.* Yogyakarta: Center for Religion and Cross-Cultural Studies (CRCS).

Suheri & Maula, Haris Fatwa Dinal. 2022. Towards an Interreligious Engagement: A Case Study of Paguyuban Eklasing Budi Murko (PEBM) in Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta. *Religio: Jurnal Studi Agama-agama*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 63-81, https://doi.org/10.15642/religio.v12i1.1861

Taylor, C. 1992. The Politics of Recognition. In: A. Gutmann (Ed.), *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 25-74.

Widjaja, P. S. 2020. "Aktualisasi Pancasila Berdasarkan Etika Kebajikan Kristiani." *DUNAMIS: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani* 4 (2): 143–68, https://doi.org/10.30648/dun.v4i2.247

Widjaja, Paulus S., Wibowo, Djoko Prasetyo Adi, & Geovasky, Imanuel. 2021. Politik Identitas dan Religiusitas Perdamaian Berbasis Pancasila di Ruang Publik. *Gema Teologika*, Vol 6. No. 1, 95-126, https://doi.org/10.21460/gema.2021.61.658

Widjaja, Paulus S., Wibowo, Djoko Prasetyo Adi, Nugroho, Edy, and Geovasky, Imanuel. 2020. *Dampak Politik Identitas terhadap Perilaku Umat Kristiani di Ruang Publik*, Yogyakarta: Taman Pustaka Kristen.

10. Short biography

Imanuel Geovasky is a doctorate student at the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS), Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM). Ordained as a pastor in the Christian Church of Java, he holds a Master of Arts in Peace Studies from the Graduate School of Public Policy and Social Research, International Christian University, Tokyo, Japan, and a Bachelor of Theology from the Faculty of Theology, Duta Wacana Christian University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. His research interests focus on polarization, identity politics, religious tolerance, peace education, and peacebuilding.

Email: imanuelgeovasky@mail.ugm.ac.id

Acknowledgments

I gratefully acknowledge the research collaboration of Dr. Paulus S. Widjaja and Mr. Edy Nugroho. The *Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan* (LPDP) Scholarship from the Ministry of Finance of The Republic of Indonesia provides financial support for my doctoral studies, enabling me to pursue my current doctoral research without financial constraints.

journal of ethics in higher education

Primary School Curricula Towards Sustainable Peace Education in Post-genocide Rwanda

Edouard Ntakirutimana, Emmanuel Niyibizi,
Protestant Univ. of Rwanda

December 2024 (reedited January 2025)

Keywords

Peace education, sustainable peace, school curricula, primary education

Abstract

Rwanda is a country that experienced the tragic genocide against Tutsi in 1994. In the aftermath of this, a number of initiatives were taken in the country for sustainable peace through reconstruction and reconciliation. In the education sector, peace and values education is part of the school curricula. The study at hand explores, through document analysis, the perspectives of peace education in primary school curricula of Rwanda. This study aims at explicit and implicit perspectives in which primary school curricula reflect peace education. Though the identified perspectives seem to be promising as far as sustainable peace education is concerned, further empirical studies are recommended to explore how the stated topics, values and teaching methods are put into practice in teaching and learning process.

Corresponding Authors: Edouard Ntakirutimana, Emmanuel Niyibizi, Protestant University of Rwanda, Email: ntaedo79@gmail.com

To quote this article: Ntakirutimana, E., Niyibizi, E., 2024. "Primary School Curricula Towards Sustainable Peace Education in Post-genocide Rwanda". *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 5(2024): 199–214. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26034/fr.jehe.2024.6893

© the Author. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit https://jehe.globethics.net

1. Context and problem

The centrality of this article is about the integration of peace education in primary school curricula in Rwanda. Education for peace is a critical topic in the aftermath of 1994 genocide against Tutsi. Education for peace is a concept that is understood as a way of transforming the culture of violence into a culture of peace by inculcating peaceful skills and attitudes to children (Sapao and Dacles 2021). It is the social action that helps the people to find solutions to different forms of violence, injustice, and inequality in the community (Schultze-Kraft 2022). Normally there is peace when different forms of violence including conflict, threats to life, prejudice, coercion, social deprivation, corruption, poverty, injustice, and so many others are absent (Bashir, et al. 2022, 29). Peace education comes as a solution by alleviating, mediating, as well overcoming the deep-seated conflict dynamics and enemy images. It is one of the approaches used within and outside of the schools to build peace among individuals, groups, nations, and societies (Stetter 2021). In this paper, we talk about the perspectives of Rwandan primary school curricula toward sustainable peace education.

Double-sidedness of education towards peace

Education may be taken as a golden tool to shape young's mindset by providing different knowledge and skills. It is a tool to save, sustain and transform life-long processes and shape the youth's future. It offers competencies, knowledge, and skills to the children for building their future and their society (Shohel 2022). That is evident that education can impact positively on the social cohesion of the community but also it may evidently have a socially destructive impact on it (Bush and Saltarelli 2000). In relation to peace, education can serve a dual function: it can either perpetuate conflict and undermine peace, or it can foster peacebuilding and mitigate conflict (King 2005).

On the negative side of education, the school may be the source of violence including direct, structural, and cultural violence. Direct violence is the one that is the intentional psychological and physical harm to the children within the schools. The structural one regards all forms of violence done through institutional and social mechanisms alienating children or teachers from their

basic rights. Finally, cultural violence refers to different elements of culture or symbolic mechanisms used to justify or legitimize direct and structural violence such as gender issues, or religious norms (Capistrano, et al. 2021, 3).

In the context of Rwanda, from the colonial era, the formal education system was used in one way or another to shape the social injustice, inequality, and segregation and hence contributing to far factors that played a significant role preparing genocide perpetrated against Tutsis (Byanafashe and Rutayisire 2016). The colonial education policies have introduced and sharpened ethnic distribution. In their textbooks used in schools, they documented the difference between Tutsis and Hutus emphasizing linking physical appearances with the intellectual capacity (Bush and Saltarelli 2000). This was inculcating the racist doctrines. Different books and curricula written before the 1994 genocide perpetrated against Tutsis (Hodgkin 2006, 201), especially the one that regarded the curriculum of history embedded divisive stereotypes between Hutu and Tutsis children (King 2005). In the beginning, the colonial education system favoured the Tutsis and discriminated the Hutu, and later the first and second Republics' education systems favoured the Hutu, discriminated against the Tutsis, and excluded most Rwandans to the benefit of a group of the ruling elite. This kind of education characterized by structural violence led many Rwandans to remain in the poverty and is of the factors at the root of the genocide perpetrated against Tutsi in 1994, where more than a million were massacred (Burde, et al. 2004).

On the positive side of education, even though educational discrepancies may lead to social conflict and poverty for those who are not educated, it was proven that education especially of good quality for all is an important instrument for social cohesion (Shohel 2022). Education is a positive force, when the schools are inclusive, promote the culture of merit, and the funding mechanisms that promote all children instead of promoting only the elites (Burde, et al. 2004). This kind of education, implemented in a wise manner, gives access to all people and promotes intellectual freedom and critical thinking (Moshman 2015). Education continues to be used as one of the major tools for overcoming and reducing the effect of violence around the world. The World Declaration on Education for all by UNESCO in 1990 used education to lay down practical strategies (Walker-Keleher 2006). As example, effective teaching and learning

that promote education for peace are implemented in classroom through activating methods involving the student's active participation in their learning to strengthen their self-esteem and confidence for their daily problem solving (Scheunpflug and Wenz 2012).

Curriculum framework of peace in schools

Peace education can include different concepts like human rights, social justice, non-violence and puts its focus on the individual peace. It addresses or prevents violent situations, teaches different solutions to conflicts, and encourages people to have peaceful attitudes. It is a long-standing process of sharing common ground with citizenship education perceived in the world's citizens' interdependence through tolerance as well as the respect for others' rights and differences (Bashir, et al. 2022, 30). Therefore, education for peace is conceptualized in five types including education on human rights, international education, environmental education, conflict resolution education, and education for development. In practice, peace education is understood in two dimensions including "education about peace" and "education for peace" (Bermeo 2022). Education about peace regards the acquisition of knowledge on peace and violence especially by teaching the history, the effect of violence and war, as well as different nonviolence alternative possibilities. While education for peace focuses on getting the necessary skills to live in peace and create different peaceful activities. This dimension develops different skills including conflict resolution, respect, intercultural communication, democracy, equality, and equity.

The curriculum for peace education should address different types of peace education, in the way that the two dimensions are clearly reflected. The curriculum that prepares students for peace should address the universal values including justice, freedom, tolerance, gender equality, human rights as well as respect for other's life (MISHRA 2015). The curriculum should address the peacefulness in three domains of students' lives including intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup domains (Nelson 2021, 110). The intrapersonal involves but not limited to self-acceptance, nonviolence toward self, self-compassion, self-motives, self-perceptions, satisfaction, calmness. Concerning the interpersonal peacefulness includes behaviours and attitudes of creating and

maintaining nonviolent and harmonious relationships with other people like cooperation, helpfulness, consideration, or agreeability with others. Finally, the intergroup domain regards the individuals' behaviours and attitudes supporting other groups or nations (op. cit).

In the context of Rwanda, education in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide against Tutsis seems to be used as a tool for transformational change, building an inclusive society, and overcoming ethnic stereotypes by promoting the common national identity for all Rwandans (Schulz and Sentama 2021, 1052). The ministry of education was committed to education promoting peace. Accordingly, a number of curricula reforms has taken place at different levels of education. In this regard, themes of human rights and reconciliation including education of citizens who are free from all discrimination, self- and social responsibility are reflected in the curricula frameworks (MINEDUC/REB 2015). Additionally, promotion of a culture of peace, emphasis on national and international values like justice, tolerance, peace, solidarity, and democracy are part of overall education agenda in the aftermath of 1994 (Green 2020). After the genocide, different reforms were initiated in order to revise and bring up to date the curriculum addressing national and global contexts. The current was initiated in 2016 as competence-based teaching. All in all, peace education is mentioned in the school curricula as cross-cutting topic. However, empirical research to delineate its integration in primary school curricula is still limited. Therefore, the current study analyses critically the integration of peace education in today's competence-based curriculum designed for primary education this study is guided by the research question: "How is peace education integrated into Rwandan primary school curricula?".

2. Methods

This paper was conducted through documentary analysis of the curriculum programs and school textbooks of primary education in Rwanda. The thematic content analysis was used to examine the documents by identifying the themes, concepts and pedagogical strategies to be used for peace education in primary schools (Alhojailan 2012, 42). Three subjects were analysed in primary, including social studies, Kinyarwanda and mathematics. The documents

analysed include curriculum program, student textbooks and teacher guides. This method of analysis involved the identification and interpretation of themes within these curriculum documents. This method helped to go deep into the curriculum content to understand its intention and to assess how it is aligned with sustainable peace education. The analysis covered the content, teaching methods, and activities to be given to the students.

3. Results: Sustainable peace education in Rwandan primary curricula

This section presents the results of an analysis of the Rwandan primary schools' curricula regarding the sustainable peace. The analysis let to the generation of two core paradigms. They include explicit content-centred and implicit process-based peace education as reflected in the primary school curricula.

Explicit peace education: Content-centred

The curriculum guide and textbooks demonstrate an explicit integration of peace education in two distinct aspects such as direct and indirect content. In the first aspect, the content of peace is referenced in chapters that are specifically dedicated to peace education. There are expressed in different forms, including the culture of peace, the fight against genocide, justice and peace, respect, tolerance, human rights and conflict resolution (REB 2024, 17-35), unity and reconciliation, living in harmony, mutual help and protection (REB 2022a). The textbook of social sciences details the content of peace in different topics. Each topic is described and then a series of activities are planned for students to engage the students with the content for memorising what they have learned, analysing the case studies or develop their own strategies for promoting peace in the community. In the textbook of Kinyarwanda, the concept of peace is explicitly articulated in various reading passages, including an excerpt from the text titled "Kwita ku batishoboye" which translates to "Caring for the disadvantaged".

> "Those who are disadvantaged should be treated with dignity, respect, or not be isolated. Since they are not the authors of their existence, mistreating them would be unfair.

> Therefore, the disadvantaged should not be abandoned, but they should be cared for in a way that gives them a sense of value and trust (REB 2022a, 18[1]).

In this excerpt, the content is designed to educate the child on the value of respecting, caring for, and protecting individuals who may be underprivileged or marginalised within the society. This illustrate that the planned learning package for children incorporates the principles of empathy, equity and inclusion. The content also encompasses various peace building activities undertaken in the Rwandan community. One of such activities is collaborative effort of the local community to resolve conflicts through the village reconciliation council, known as the "Abunzi, Mediator" (REB 2022a, 156). Furthermore, the content is also illustrated with pictorial representation, which demonstrate the role of the community in addressing and resolving conflict to promote or preserve peace.

The concept of peace is reflected directly in the texts and activities describes in the textbooks of *Social Sciences and Kinyarwanda*, which illustrate a range of values associated with peace, including but not limited to friendship, forgiveness, justice, rightness, love, patience, forgiveness, passion, togetherness, fairness, humility, respect, non-retaliation, and mutual support, tolerance.

Additionally, the curriculum encompasses other content that pertains to peace though in a more indirect way. Aspects such as human rights, gender, environmental sustainability, social solidarity, social cohesion, and citizenship education are also incorporated in the program materials and serve to educate the children in the values of peace and social cohesion (REB 2022a, REB 2024). As a result of engagement with this content, learners develop an understanding

[1] Abatishoboye bagomba guhabwa agaciro, ntibasuzugurwe cyangwa ngo bahabwe akato. Kubagirira nabi kwaba ari ukubarenganya kuko baba atari bo babyiteye. Abatishoboye rero ntibagomba gutereranwa ahubwo bagomba kwitabwaho ku buryo bumva bafite agaciro n'ikizere cyo kubaho. [Engl. transl. by the authors].

of a number of peace-related values, including tolerance, equity, justice for vulnerable groups, inclusion, human dignity, integrity and democracy.

A comparative analysis of the three subjects' students' books reveals that the textbook of social sciences and the textbook of Kinyarwanda include both direct and indirect content related to peace education. In contrast, the book of mathematics does not have any explicit content linked to peace education.

Implicit peace education: Process-based perspectives

The content of peace education is also reflected in Rwandan curricula and textbooks in implicit ways, including the expected learners' competencies methods of teaching as well as activities for engaging the students in learning.

The curriculum delineates competences that have to be cultivated through teaching and learning activities. They are called "generic competences". They include collaboration, teamwork, cooperation, life skills, communication, critical thinking and interpersonal management (REB 2022b, 14, REB 2022c, 7). As these competences are developed, there is a likelihood that they implicitly shape the harmony of the community. In addition, the formulation of exercises, the content provided and the methodology used contribute to shaping of the different cross-cutting issues. The cross-cutting issues that facilitate the development of peace within curriculum include peace education, values, environmental sustainability, gender, as well as inclusive education. These concepts are integrated implicitly within other topics to that are taught explicitly.

Furthermore, the program elucidates various pedagogical approaches that can be employed in the classroom. Some of those approaches could particularly be conducive to the cultivation of peace education, particularly those that engage students in active, reflective and collaborative engagement with their peers. Among these participative leaning strategies include pairs and group discussions, which can facilitate and enhance respect of others ideas, mutual respect, tolerance and other collaborative values.

Summary

In short, the concept of peace education is both explicitly and implicitly reflected in the formal curricula for Rwandan education especially in the

documents that guide primary education as far as the mother language and social sciences subjects are concerned. In contrast, the documents guiding mathematics do not explicitly address the concepts of peace. Furthermore, the learning activities provided in the textbooks do not facilitate the development of competences that enable students to engage with the application of those concepts in the contexts of their lived experiences.

4. Debate about Peace education: Reflecting curriculum for sustainable peace

In a society of post-genocide era, peace education is a crucial concept that should be reflected in the curriculum of every single subject. It is also a global concept, given that the world is experiencing numerous global conflicts, social inequalities as well as environmental crises. The concept of sustainable peace extends beyond the mere absence of the armed conflict. Rather, it compasses the creation of societies that promote the core dimensions of sustainable development, including social cohesion, economic equity and environmental stewardship (Fleetwood 2020, 4, Khoshnava, et al. 2019, 1). A curriculum that integrates the various dimensions of sustainable peace, including social justice, ecological sustainability and economic equity may facilitate the students understanding of these concepts and their capacity to act upon them within their communities. Education provides students with the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of social justice, and instils the capacity to actualise it through the promotion of the human rights, inclusivity and the resilience at the individual and community levels. Such education may prompt students to reflect on and act for ecological sustainability through cultivating an understanding of the interdependence between human well-being and environmental health, and subsequently taking action to protect natural resources. Furthermore, education may facilitate the cultivation of economic equity, which could potentially mitigate the systemic inequalities that are the main source of conflict and instability in different communities. Accordingly, a curriculum of sustainable peace development adopts the interdisciplinary approach to facilitate students' comprehension of the intricate interconnection

between different separate domains of knowledge and to elucidate the multifaceted influences of social, economic and environmental factors on peace.

Moreover, education for sustainable peace is reflected in two dimensions namely "negative peace and positive peace". The concept of negative peace denotes the absence of war or conflict. In contrast, positive peace reflects peace as an atmosphere characterised by the presence of prosperity, justice and freedom (Wahyudin 2018, 23). Therefore, the curriculum should not only reflect the negative peace but also the positive peace to educate a complete citizen able to develop sustainable peace.

In examining the Rwandan primary curriculum, it become evident that peace education is reflected both explicitly and implicitly in the curricula and textbooks of social studies and Kinyarwanda, yet not explicitly reflected in the mathematics textbooks and curriculum. The absence of explicit peace education content and the lack of alignment between the planned exercises and real-life of learning experiences may hinder students' ability to reflect on how mathematical concepts can be utilised for the advancement of peace within their communities. This highlights a crucial aspect that requires particular attention during the curriculum development. Furthermore, the curriculum should extend beyond the mere development of values to encompass the cultivation of individual life skills, and professional competences, and critical thinking abilities that are applicable in the real-world context of children. Additionally, this should be achieved in a way that enables individuals to identify solutions to problems that students and their community are facing, thereby contributing to the creation of a more harmonious and peaceful society. This necessitates the reflection of peace in a cross-curricular approach. An activity in mathematics, for instance, can reflect issues such as environmental protection, and conflict resolution, or economic resilience and equity.

It is imperative that students be encouraged to engage with their communities, participate in service-learning projects, and tackle the authentic, real-world problems in order to nurture their deep understanding of the local and global challenges that they will inevitably encounter in their future endeavours. The curriculum must facilitate experiential learning, enabling students to apply

the theoretical knowledge in practical, real-world contexts and thereby enhance their ability to contribute to peacebuilding efforts.

A curriculum must be clear and promote with critical participatory pedagogy in order to facilitate sustainable peace education. This entails encouraging learners engage in a reflection about their own behaviours and contribution as community members. This can be accomplished through problem-based or place-based educational approaches. Such approaches engage learners in social critique and critical thinking by analysing their local context (Wahyudin 2018, 29). Education has potential to enhance the students' resilience through exposure to the challenges facing their community. While attempting to identify solutions, students may experience disappointment or failure. However, as they become more familiar with these challenges, potentials consequences or the disaster associated with them tend to diminish. Students are assisted in perceiving challenges not as disasters but the potential avenues for creative engagement (Standish und Nygren 2018, 103). This critical pedagogy enables educators to challenge the existing power structures and engage students in discussion about privilege, inequality and justice. Furthermore, the aspect of cooperative learning must be emphasised for active, interactive and reflective participation of learners through various methods including but not limited to case studies, role play, group discussion, journaling, storytelling, empathy activities, negotiations, and mediation practices (Obeka und Nwigwe 2024, 438). In short, the critical participatory pedagogy emphasises critical reflection, dialogue and the co-creation of knowledge, thereby fostering an environment conducive to learners sharing their perspectives and engaging in transformative actions.

A curriculum that reflects the principles of sustainable peace must prioritise the inclusivity and incorporate global citizenship education. It is imperative that the learners receive education that cultivate awareness and action to ensure the integration of marginalised individuals and enable them to have a voice. It is also crucial to foster a sense of belonging not only to the local community but also to a global community. This enables students to understand and react to the global issues such as climate change, human rights, and migration. It instils in them an understanding of their role in the global community and the significance of collective action in developing sustainable peace.

In Rwandan, traditional approaches were reinvented and used in the post-genocide peace-building process (Gatwa und Mbonyinkebe 2022). Though not all explicitly reflected in the analysed curricula and textbooks, mediation through traditional reconciliatory approaches, such as Gacaca and Abunzi, are part of the school and teacher education curricula (REB, 2020b; MINEDUC/REB, 2015). This implies the reinvention of traditional approaches for the post-genocide peace building process. Moreover, the traditional educational approaches fostering resilience, solidarity and mutual support are important for sustainable peace in the post-genocide context. Accordingly, the sustainability of peace education that values indigenous approaches is an important step for making school curricula valuable channels of sustainable peace.

5. Conclusion

The integration of the concept of sustainable peace in the school curricula is a crucial step in equipping a new generation of individuals with the necessary competences to address the pressing challenges facing our society today. The school curricula may employ a variety of approaches, including interdisciplinary approach, critical and participatory pedagogy, experiential learning, inclusivity, and global citizenship education. These strategies can be used to equip the school learners with competences necessary to become proactive contributors to sustainable peace.

Given the swiftly evolving changes transpiring globally, which are accompanied by intricate complexities, creating unforeseen opportunity gaps and challenges, it is absolutely imperative that education robustly promotes justice, equity, and environmental sustainability to foster the creation of a harmonious and cohesive local and global society.

This study examined how peace education is integrated into the primary school curriculum in Rwanda. However, in order to develop competences, the process of teaching and learning is of great importance. Consequently, further research is required to assess the integration of peace in the classroom setting, as well as in assessments, in the context of Rwanda and similar contexts.

6. Bibliography

Alhojailan, Mohammed Ibrahim. 2012. "Thematic analysis: critical review of its process and evaluation." *West East Journal of Social Sciences* (1) 1: 39-47.

Bashir, Samra, Ayesha Liaquat, Syed Kashif Hussain, and Raheela Sarfraz. 2022. "Peace education in Pakistan; analysis of educational policies to examine the reality." *Harf-o-Sukhan* 6 (1): 29-40.

Bermeo, Maria Jose. 2022. "Peace Education, International Trends." *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, and Conflict* 4 (3): 459-469. doi:10.1016/B978-012373985-8.00126-4.

Burde, Dana, Tammy Arnstein, Christine Pagen, and Zeena Zakharia. 2004. *Education in emergencies and post-conflict situations: Problems, responses, and possibilities.* New York: Society for International Education Teachers College, Columbia University.

Bush, Kenneth D., and Diana Saltarelli. 2000. *The two faces of education in ethnic conflict: Towards a peacebuilding education for children.* Florence: UNICEF.

Byanafashe, Deo, and Paul Rutayisire. 2016. *History of Rwanda: From the beginning to the end of the twentieth Century.* Kigali: NURC.

Capistrano, Daniel, Seaneen Sloan, Jennifer Symonds, Elena Jennifer, Ciaran Sugrue, and Dympna Devine. 2021. "Assessing experiences with violence and peace in primary schools in Sierra Leone." *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research.* https://doi.org/10.1108/JACPR-09-2021-0633.

Fleetwood, Janet. 2020. "Social Justice, Food Loss, and the Sustainable Development Goals in the Era of COVID-19." *Sustainability* 12: 5027.

Gatwa, Tharcisse, and Deo Mbonyinkebe. 2022. *Home Grown Initiatives and Nation Building in Africa: The Dynamic of Social and Cultural Heritages in Rwanda.* Münster: LIT Verlag.

Green, Joyce Yip. 2020. "Rwandan Infant Caregiving: Promoting a Culture of Peace." In *Parents and Caregivers Across Cultures: Positive Development from Infancy Through Adulthood*, by Brien K. Ashdown and Amanda N. Faherty, 11-30. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

Hodgkin, Marian. 2006. "Reconciliation in Rwanda: Education, History and the State." *Journal of International Affairs* 60 (1): 199-210.

Khoshnava, Seyed Meysam, Raheleh Rostami, Rosli Mohamad Zin, Dalia Štreimikie, Alireza Yousefpour, Wadim Strielkowski, and Abbas Mardani. 2019. "Aligning the Criteria of Green Economy (GE) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to Implement Sustainable Development." *Sustainability* 11: 4615. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11174615.

King, Elisabeth. 2005. "Educating for conflict or peace: Challenges and dilemmas in Post-conflict Rwanda." *International Journal* 6 (4): 904-9018.

MINEDUC/REB. 2015. *Competence-based curriculum: Summary of curriculum framework pre-primary to upper secondary.* Kigali: REB.

MISHRA, Lokanath. 2015. "Implementing Peace Education in Secondary Schools of Odisha: Perception of Stake Holders." *Sakarya University Journal of Education* 5 (2): 47-54.

Moshman, David. 2015. "Identity, history, and education in Rwanda: Reflections on the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize." *Child Abuse & Neglect* 44: 1-4.

Nelson, Linden L. 2021. "Identifying Determinants of Individual Peacefulness: A Psychological Foundation for Peace Education." *American Psychological Association* 27 (2): 109–119.

Obeka, Ngozi O., and N. Nwigwe. 2024. "Curriculum for peace education and national development at tertiary education level." *EBSU Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 14 (2): 431-441.

REB. 2019. *Social and Religious Studies for Rwanda: P4 Pupil's Book.* Rwanda Education Board (REB).

REB. 2024a. *Social and Religious Studies: Pupil's books-Primary 4.* Kigali: REB (Rwanda Education Board).

REB. 2022b. *Ikinyarwanda: Igitabo cy'umunyeshuri-Amashuri abanza-Umwaka wa kane.* Kigali: REB-Rwanda Education Board.

REB. 2022c. *Social and religious studies syllabus for upper primary* . Kigali: REB-Rwanda Education Board.

REB. 2022d. *Mathematics Syllabus for upper primary.* Edited by send edition. Kigali: REB- Rwanda Education Board.

Sapao, Alicia D., and Darwin Don M. Dacles. 2021. "Peace Education and Peace Culture in a Philippine Schools Division." *American Journal of Educational Research* 9 (12): 730-745.

Scheunpflug, Annette, and Mark Wenz. 2012. *Transnational Study on Core Social Competencies - a Sustainable Contribution to Quality in Education and Social Cohesion in Society.* Tunis : Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).

Schultze-Kraft, Markus. 2022. *Education for Sustaining Peace through Historical Memory.* Berlin : Palgrave Macmillan .

Schulz, Michael, and Ezechiel Sentama. 2021. "The relational legacies of colonialism: peace education and reconciliation in Rwanda." *Third World Quarterly* 42 (5): 1052-1068. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.1853521.

Shohel, M. Mahruf C. 2022. "Education in emergencies: challenges of providing education for Rohingya children living in refugee camps in Bangladesh." *Education Inquiry* 13 (1): 104-126. https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2020.1823121.

Standish, Katerina, and Thomas Nygren. 2018. "Looking for peace in the Swedish National Curricula." *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy* 4 (2): 92–106.

Stetter, Stephan. 2021. "What Fosters and What Hampers Sustainable Peace Education?: Policy Insights, Practical Experiences and Recommendations from Europe and Beyond." *The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR).*

Wahyudin, Dinn. 2018. "Peace Education Curriculum In the Context of Education Sustainable Development (ESD)." *Journal of Sustainable Development Education and Research* 2 (1): 21-32.

Walker-Keleher, Jessica. 2006. "Reconceptualizing the Relationship between Conflict and Education: The Case of Rwanda." *Fletcher Journal of Human Security* 21: 35-53.

7. Short biography

Edouard Ntakirutimana is a PhD scholar in Foundations of Education from Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, Germany. He is a lecturer at Protestant University of Rwanda. His research interests include research training and integrity, global and peace education.

E-mail: ntaedo79@gmail.com

Emmanuel Niyibizi holds a PhD in Foundations of Education from Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, Germany. He is a senior Lecturer and Director of Research at Protestant University of Rwanda. His research interests include educational quality, citizenship education, international education and digitalization of education.

E-mail: emafique@gmail.com

Beyond Crisis: Discernment in Decision-making for Sustainable Church Health

Hardiyan Triasmoroadi
United Theological Seminary,
Saint Paul, Minnesota, United States.
Balewiyata Institute,
East Java Christian Church, Indonesia

December 2024, republ. Jan. 2025.

Keywords

Social discernment, Ignatian discernment, contemplative artistic practice, decision-making, overcoming Church's crisis, Protestant Church in Indonesia.

Abstract

This study explores the integration of discernment into the decision-making framework. Focusing on the financial crisis within the East Java Christian Church, which led to opposition, distrust, and the collapse of peace within the Church, it identifies a disconnection between decision-making and spiritual awareness. By examining social discernment, Ignatian discernment, and contemplative artistic practice, the researcher proposes practical steps for implementation. Ultimately, this essay advocates for a comprehensive approach to discernment that not only addresses immediate crisis but also lays the groundwork for sustainable institutional health, trust, and peace within church communities.

Corresponding Authors: D. Min. Hardiyan Triasmoroadi, United Theological Seminary, Saint Paul, Minnesota, United States. East Java Christian Church. Email: adi.triasmoroadi@unitedseminary.edu
To quote this article: Triasmoroadi, H. 2024. "Beyond Crisis: Discernment in Decision-making for Sustainable Church Health". *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 5(2024): 215–239. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26034/fr.jehe.2024.6894
© the Author. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit https://jehe.globethics.net

1. Introduction

The World Council of Churches (WCC) published a significant document in 2013, titled "The Church Towards a Common Vision." This document emphasizes the Church as the body of Christ, tasked with a mission which is deeply rooted in God's overarching design (or "economy") for creation. It asserts that through the act and power of the Holy Spirit, the Church is empowered to carry out her life-giving mission through prophetic and compassionate ministry, thereby participating in God's work of healing a broken world (WCC 2013:5). However, a problem arises. How can we understand the Church's role as God's agent in compassionate ministry while she grapples with profound internal crisis?

One of the most profound and illustrative examples for this problem is derived from the East Java Christian Church context. Starting from 2020/2021, the Synod of the East Java Christian Church in Indonesia[1] faced a significant crisis that undermined congregants' trust. Initially triggered by financial losses due to improper decision-making processes, this situation led to distrust and dissatisfaction among some reverends and congregants. Many began to question the effectiveness of the executive board's decision and work. As the crisis escalated, dissenting voices emerged within the congregants and stakeholders, forming into an opposition group that accused church leaders of corruption. This group portrayed the leaders as corrupt figures and launched negative campaigns on social media, exacerbating tensions, and distrust within parts of the Church community.

What happened? From an institutional point of view, based on reports by the internal church investigation team, the problem concerns mismanagement, particularly the failure of the decision-making process. The Church's internal investigation team concluded that the executive board was investment

[1] The East Java Christian Church or *Greja Kristen Jawi Wetan* is a mainline Protestant church which exist and serve exclusively in the territory of the East Java Province in Indonesia, established since December 11th, 1932. See: https://gkjw.or.id/tentang-gkjw/sejarah accessed 10/18/2024

illiterate.[2] Then the new task force established by the general synod, namely "the Church Management and Revision Team," also found that the relationship between power and participation among members of the executive board seems to have broken down and appeared disobedient to the rules of the Church's leadership.[3] As convener of this new task force, I found that power was not distributed to all members of the executive board but was instead concentrated in the hands of the President, Vice-President, and General Secretary. Not all members of the executive board were involved in the decision-making process. Consequently, there was a loss of internal peace and trust within the Church community. This resulted in decreased ministerial performance, such as distrust and dissatisfaction among some reverends and congregants, also stimulating the emergence of an opposed group. So how do we cope with the institutional crisis within the Church?

Drawing from the institutional crisis in the context of the East Java Christian Church, I argue that it is more than just a problem of bad governance or mismanagement. It is a spiritual crisis. In my view, the root of this problem lies in how to make good decisions which are inextricably related to spiritual awareness. Therefore, to navigate the institutional crisis and restore trust among congregations, it is essential not only to strengthen good church management but also employing discernment within any decision-making process.

2. Methodology

In doing so, in this essay, I employ qualitative analytical methods through literature reviews to explore and elaborate the role of discernment. My aim is to provide a theoretical perspective that contributes to the existing body of

---

[2] Team Investigasi, *Laporan Tim Investigasi Independent* (Malang: Majelis Agung GKJW, 2021). (*Investigation Team. Independent Investigation Reports Document,* 2021).

[3] Tim Revisi Organisasi dan Tata Laksana Keuangan, Laporan Interim TROK GKJW (Malang: MA GKJW, 2022), 8. (*Church Management and Revision Team. TROK Interim Report*, 2022).

knowledge. At the same time, I intend offering practical guidance to demonstrate the integration of discernment into decision-making process that can restore trust, maintain peace, and improve institutional performance for sustainable church health.

3. The Heart of Discernment: Listening

The crisis inevitably immersed the Church in a state of liminality.[4] Liminality refers to the transitional space between an ending and a new beginning, whether it applies to an individual, a place, an organization, or an institution (Beaumont, 2019: 5). It can also describe the disorientation of an entire era or civilization (Szakolczai 2009: 151). Liminality signifies a state between already and not yet, neither here nor there. In liminality, decision-making is particularly critical and must pass through a control level and a chain of command, which may appear paralyzed. How then can we maintain clarity about the purpose of the Church amidst the mystery and uncertainty arising from this crisis? To answer this question, I believe it is urgent to employ discernment to support the decision-making process.

The word "discernment" is derived from Greek *diakriseis,* which literally means "to determine, to separate, to distinguish, to decide between two things."[5] Walter Earl Fluker in his book, "Ethical Leadership" explains discernment as, "Looking around, cultivating intuition, looking deeply and pondering harder questions of values, developing self-reflection" (Fluker

---

[4] The word liminality or liminal is derived from Latin, *limen*, meaning a threshold. As a term it was coined by Arnold Van Gennep in the field of anthropology in 1909 and popularized by the writing of anthropologist Victor Turner in the 1960s. See: Victor Turner. 1967. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal period in Rites de Passage," *The Forest of Symbols*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

[5] Susan Beaumont stated, "To discern is to see through the essence of matter. Discernment distinguishes the real from the phony, the true from the false, good from evil, and the path toward God and path away from God. See Susan Beaumont. 2019. *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're going: Leading in a Liminal Season*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing, 68.

2009: 176-180). Therefore, discernment can also be understood as spiritual judgment, assessment, and estimation.

However, at its core, discernment involves listening, to obey, and pay attention to God's prompting, as well as God active presence, direction, and guidance. As Ruth Haley Barton contends: "It involves listening to each other and to what's going on in the depths of our souls, where God's Spirit witnesses with our spirit about things that are true" (Barton 2012: 202-203). Regarding communal listening on a broader level, Congregation-Initiated Community-Based Advocacy (CICBA) which seeks social transformation, has laid the groundwork for faith-based organization through what they called "three great listenings,": (1) Listening to God led by pastoral leader through prayer, bible reading, bible study, and sermons as a way to pay attention to God and remembering that Holy Spirit is always present. (2) Listening to one another in a congregation using one-to-one relational meetings, which leads to forming relationships and informing concerns and interests. (3) Listening to neighbors within communities including those in poverty—thus engaging with a wider public (Fredrickson 2021: 21-24).

The challenges arise when we encounter strong resistance involving listening and discerning. Susan Beaumont reminds us that, "We have forgotten our discernment tradition, our centuries-old practices of discernment feel foreign and out of place in our religious institutions." (Beaumont 2019: 67). However, in this runaway world, we often find ourselves busy fulfilling demanding tasks. Problems compel us to make decisions quickly, leading us to feel we lack time for pause or reflection. Meanwhile, a Chinese Philosopher, Lao Tsu, wisely stated:

> "Better stop than fill to the brim.
> Over sharpen the blade and the edge will soon blunt.
> Amass a store of gold and jade, and no one can protect it.
> Claim wealth and titles, and disaster will follow.
> Retire when the work is done.
> This is the way of heaven. (Kellerman 2010: 2)

Lao Tsu emphasizes the necessity of employing spiritual awareness—to slow down, pause, stop, and draw a healthy boundary before being consumed by

greed-driven desires that lead to disaster. In a nutshell, we should engage in discernment by disrupting the routine and engage in silence to deeply listen the Holy Spirit while it allows a critical introspection of thinking and actions that opens avenues toward positive transformation of the identified dissatisfying situations.

4. Problem of Decision-making Procedures

Etymologically, the word "decision" comes from the Latin word *decidere*, which means "to cut off." Cindy Suarez, with the help of Prospect theory tools, had mapped the difference between decision making and choice (Suarez 2018: 54). However, in my view, the decision-making process always involves and incorporates choice, because to decide is to choose.

In the decision-making process, indeed, we need to employ rigorous rational approaches, as follows:

Step one	Defining the problem.
Step two	Looking for root cause.
Step three	Gathering data.
Step four	Interpreting data.
Step five	Brainstorming alternatives/options.
Step six	Establishing decision criteria.
Step seven	Evaluating alternatives.
Step eight	Assessing risk and return.
Step nine	Selecting an optimal solution

Table 1: Deciding Approach List by Beaumont (2019: 72)

However, the rigidity of decision-making procedures, as can be seen in table one is problematic, because it relies too much on human capacity. Beaumont succinctly addressed this problematic aspect by stating that, "Decision making is grounded in logical thinking and rational discourse. Decision-making assumes that we have the capacity to understand and solve our own problems and that this works best by maximizing available resources and maintaining order." (Beaumont 2019: 71). Spiritually speaking, this logical

approach is called *cataphatic.* The word *cataphatic* is derived from Greek, rooted in *phanai* (speak), and *kata-phatikos* (affirmative).

Cataphatic engages "our reason, memory, imagination, feelings and will" (Bourgeault 2004: 44). The *cataphatic* approach, *via positiva* or positive affirmation, means to understand and express the nature of God. It is the way of knowing, utilizing words, voice, images, ideas, and concepts to approach God (Beaumont 2019: 81). Unfortunately, decision-making within a framework of rational control and a chain of straight-forward and critical analysis appears to be paralyzed in the context of liminality. Therefore, it is not enough to apply the *cataphatic* approach. It is also important to tap in a deep listening process and discerning God's will in an *apophatic* way (Bourgeault 2004: 44).

Apophatikos means negative.[6] The *apophatic* approach does not make use of faculties, it bypasses our capacities for reason, imagination, visualization, emotion, and memory (Bourgeault 2004: 45). Christine Valters Paintner explains the *apophatic* path as contemplative, meditative prayer, of moving beyond image to an experience of the sheer presence of God (Paintner 2011:51). Thus, to effectively navigate decision-making in the context of liminality, which is characterized by uncertainty, we need to employ an *apophatic* perspective as well.

We can engage in the *apophatic* approach through the evocative and aesthetic language of the arts. The artists' deep yearning to find beauty, give it form, and expression encompasses both the *cataphatic* and *apophatic* approaches simultaneously. By cultivating contemplative and artistic practices that embody both *cataphatic* and *apophatic* approaches, we can give space for the beauty of the arts to speak and guide a decision-making process along an unknown path. Thus, the decision-making process needs to develop a new

---

[6] Further elaboration of the apophatic theology can be read in Pseudo Dionysius, "The Complete Works, trans. Colm Luibheid. *A Volume of The Classics of Western Spirituality*, ed. John Farina. 1987. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press. See also John Peter Kenney, "The Critical Value of Negative Theology," *Harvard Theological Review.* Vol. 86, No. 4, October 1993: 439-453. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816000030650

language that not only upholds truth (*verum*) and goodness (*bonum*) but also embraces beauty (*pulchrum*).[7]

As discernment is crucial during liminality—characterized by uncertainty arising from crisis, it is vital to discuss practical steps involved in this process. Therefore, I propose three steps: (1) Three fundamental discernment questions, (2) Social discernment, and (3) The integration of the Ignatian discernment framework and contemplative artistic practices.

I have deliberately structured these steps to retrieve and employ the wisdom of ancient traditions, such as Ignatian discernment which is intended to help a person live in the moment and deal with uncertainty (Nullens 2019: 196). At the same time, I also integrate it with contemporary social and communal discernment involving contemplative artistic practices. By doing so, we can maintain a balance between personal and collective, inward and outward, *cataphatic* and *apophatic* approach in the discernment process. This synthesis embraces what I call a "comprehensive discernment model for decision-making" which I will elaborate on in the next sections.

5. Practical Steps

Step #1 | Discerning Three Fundamental Questions

Monica Sharma suggests that if we want to stand and manifest our greatness and make changes in the world we dream about and want to live in, then we must grapple with the question of being and doing (Sharma 2017:17). Furthermore, we need to exercise a willingness to learn from the context of the past, in order to rewrite the present and reframe the future. Therefore,

[7] Further discussion regarding the artist's rule to provide contemplative framework can be read in: Hardiyan Triasmoroadi, "Make Way for Beauty: The Role of Contemplative Artistic Practice in Navigating Religious Education along the Unknowing Path" *Theologia in Loco*, Vol.5, No. 1 (2023): 72-82. https://doi.org/10.55935/thilo.v5i1.274

amidst crisis and liminality, it is urgent to discern three fundamental questions that I adopted from Gil Rendle (2019: 339), as follows:

- "Who are we?"
- "What has God called us to do?"
- "Who is our neighbour?"

In the first step of the discernment process, three fundamental questions are important to exercise. The first question is addressing the aspect of being, or identity. The second question is concerning the aspect of doing, or mission. And the third question is particularly considering the context of existence.

After discerning these three fundamental questions, and as a practical consideration, the institutions should enhance their decision-making process through the guidance of social discernment and Ignatian discernment.

Step#2 | Employing Social Discernment

As a way to go beyond the personal dimension and lift up social concerns, Elizabeth Liebert in her book "The Soul of Discernment: A Spiritual Practice for Communities and Institutions," teaches us how to dismantle injustice in social situations using what she called the social discernment model (Liebert 2015:135). The social discernment model is relevant to respond to the need of spiritual guidance when dealing with complexities of social systems, which comprises the following dimensions:

- *Insertion*: immersing oneself in the experiences of those involved as an attempt to notice, observe, and describe the current situation.
- *Social analysis:* deepening understanding and observation by examining the system's dynamics to grasp its entirety.
- *Theological reflection and prayer:* incorporating a crucial part to discernment, namely contemplative prayer and spiritual listening, to receive Spirit's guidance.

— *Decision and confirmation:* seeking the Spirit's confirmation —as part of the Ignatian discernment—before finalizing decisions, balancing head work with heart work, *cataphatic* with *apophatic*.

— *Implementation and evaluation*: taking action with thoughtful planning, thinking, feeling, prayer and reflection that implementation will require (Liebert 2015:12-13).

The social discernment model does not have to be understood as hierarchical, but rather as following the flow of a pastoral cycle:

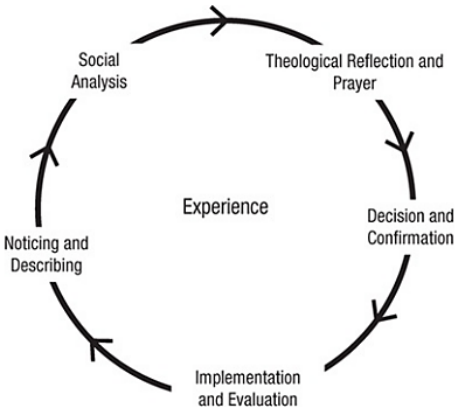

Figure 1: Social Discernment Schema by Liebert

In this way, the social discernment shows similarity with the theory of U. The theory of U reposes on a contemplative model and image that begins on the left side of "U" then descends into silence at the bottom, where it connects to the source of inspiration and will, allowing inner knowing beyond one's mind to disrupt this introspection. And then ascends on the other side of the "U" into deeper ways of seeing and of being prepared for transformative action transcending old ways.

The key difference between the theory of U and the social discernment is that the social discernment places an emphasis on seeking spiritual confirmation before finalizing decisions. In social discernment, the discerner engages in community engagement, and contemplative listening to ensure that actions

stem from a deep spiritual freedom as a way to ensure spiritual confirmation before any action. Whereas the theory of U draws on secular interpretations of Eastern philosophies rather than Christian spirituality. It calls for "presencing", which involves deep listening but does not include prayer or theological reflections. In summary, the theory of U focuses on organizational transformation through collective learning and innovation and relies on internal power without a specific religious orientation (Liebert 2015:140-142, Nullens 2019: 203).

Step#3 | Ignatian Discernment & Contemplative Artistic Practice

The social discernment derived from the Ignatian discernment model provides an effective spiritual framework for everyday life decision-making processes. Ignatian discernment emphasizes that God is present in our world and actively engaged in our lives. It is a pathway to deeper prayer, to make decisions guided by keen discernment, and an active life of service to others.[8]

In my view, it would be constructive to integrate the Ignatian discernment with contemplative artistic practice as a means of harmonizing the way of knowing or *cataphatic* and the way of unknowing or *apophatic*. I believe that a deliberate effort to incorporate and combine Ignatian discernment with contemplative artistic practices will be invaluable for the institutions, including churches, in cultivating its decision-making process comprehensively.

Thus, I present Jim Manney's framework of eleven Ignatian steps for decision-making incorporating excerpts of Ignatius' original text.[9]

---

[8] Short definition of Ignatian spirituality taken from: http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/what-is-ignatian-spirituality accessed: 22 Oct. 2024.

[9] An Ignatian Framework for making a Decision by Jim Manney taken from: https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/making-good-decisions/an-approach-to-good-choices/an-ignatian-framework-for-making-a-decision/ accessed: 22 October 2024. Original text of "Ignatian Sixth Point of the First Way of Making a Choice" translated

Additionally, I juxtapose the framework with an offering to involve contemplative artistic practice inspired by Christine Valter Paintner (2011), Cindi Beth Johnson (2023), Julia Cameron (2021), and incorporates local Javanese tradition such as *Jagongan* and *Joged Amerta,* as follows:

Step	**Framework Of Decision Making**	**Contemplative Artistic Practice**
One	Identify the decision to be made or the issue to be resolved. *Ignatian discernment original text: [178] To place before myself the thing about which I wish to make a choice*	Contemplative walk.[10] Within identification process, cultivate walks as a way to listen to the ways the Divine speaks through the world. Listen to your own heart beating, listen to the ways that new ideas arise in this space.
Two	Formulate the issue in a proposal. *Original text: [179] It is necessary to have as my objective the end for which I am created, that is to praise God our Lord and*	Centering Prayer.[11] Combine the proposal formulation with the Centering Prayer: - Prepare sacred and silent space. Engage in silence. - Whenever a thought comes into your mind, simply let

from Spanish to English by Timothy M. Gallagher. See Appendix: Complete Text of St. Ignatius in Timothy M. Gallagher, O.M.V. 2009. *Discerning the Will of God: An Ignatian Guide to Christian Decision Making*, New York: Crossroad Publishing, 112-114.

[10] Christine Valters Paintner. 2011. *Artist Rule: Nurturing Your Creative Soul with Monastic Wisdom*, Notre Dame, Indiana: Sorin Books, 16-17. And Julia Cameron. 2021. *The Listening Path: The Creative Art of Attention*. NY: St. Martin's Essentials, 13-30.

[11] Cynthia Bourgeault, *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*, 18-19.

	save my soul. In addition, I must be indifferent, without any disordered attachment, so that I am not more inclined or disposed to accept the thing before me than to refuse it, nor to refuse it rather than accept it, but that I find myself like a balance at equilibrium ready to follow whatever I perceive to be more for the glory and praise of God.	the thought go and return to that open, silent attending upon the depths. Not because thinking is bad, but because it pulls you back to the surface of yourself. - Use a short word or phrase, known as a "sacred word," such as "Jesus or peace" or "be still" to help you let go of the thought promptly and cleanly.
Three	Pray for openness to God's will and for freedom from prejudgment and addictions. *Original text: [180] To ask God our Lord that he be pleased to move my will and place in my soul what I ought to do in the matter before me that would be more for his praise and glory, using my intellect well and faithfully to weigh the matter, and choosing in accord with what is pleasing to his most holy will.*	*Lectio* or *visio divina*.[12] To welcome God's will we can use prayer through sacred readings (*lectio divina*) or sacred images (*visio divina*) to let the depth dimension of Scripture and the story to meet us where we are at the time, no matter what our experience may be.

[12] Christine Valters Paintner, *Artist Rule*, 17-18.

Four	Gather all the necessary information. *Original text: [181] To consider by way of reasoning how many advantages or benefits accrue to me if I have the office or benefice proposed. Solely for the praise of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul; and, on the contrary, to consider in the same way the disadvantages and dangers there would be in having it. Then to do the same in the second part, that is, to look at the advantages/disadvantages and benefit/dangers in not having it*	Engage in silence.[13] Combine the effort to compile information with silence. It is through silence and detachment that one can develop a receptive attitude and becomes open to new options and possibilities. Spend 5-10 minutes in sacred space/place in silence. Pay attention to your inhale-exhale process, your feelings, wisdom, and insights. Write or doodle about your solitude process.
Five	Welcome and open to receive God's will. *Original text: [182] After I have thought and reasoned in this way about every aspect of the matter*	Receive Picture.[14] Shift your notion of photography from "taking" a picture to welcoming and receiving a picture. - Think of a picture as a gift, a mystery, an experience of

[13] Cindi Beth Johnson in Hardiyan Triasmoroadi. 2023. "Make Way for Beauty: The Role of Contemplative Artistic Practice in Navigating Religious Education along the Unknowing Path", *Theologia in Loco*, Vol.5, No. 1, 80-82. https://doi.org/10.55935/thilo.v5i1.274

[14] Cindi Beth Johnson in Hardiyan Triasmoroadi, *Make Way for Beauty*, 80-82.

	before me, I will look to see toward which alternative reason inclines more: and in this way according to the greater movement of reason, I should come to a decision in the matter under deliberation.	wonder, and an opportunity for contemplation. - Prepare to receive pictures by holding your smartphone camera at waist level and focusing on what looks interesting. - Don't look through the viewfinder; instead, let the camera surprise you as you "receive" photos. - Afterwards, meditate on what you have received, noticing surprises and new insights.
Six	State all the reasons for and all the reasons against each alternative in the proposal. *Original text: [183] Having made this choice or decision, the person who has made it should with much diligence, turn to prayer before God our Lord and offer him this choice, so that his Divine Majesty may be pleased to receive and confirm it, if it is for his greater service and praise.*	Collage as Reflection.[15] - Have a stack of magazines or catalogues nearby. - Thumb through them quickly but with a curious eye. - Approach the pages as though you are in a dialogue with the questions. - Avoid "visual proof-texting." "Visual Proof Texting" might mean that you look for a picture of a tree because you want a tree, because you think a tree is a symbol of hope. - This becomes more about illustrating (or doing a visual "proof text") as opposed to engaging a theme or concept.

[15] Cindi Beth Johnson in Hardiyan Triasmoroadi, *Make Way for Beauty*, 80-82.

		Instead, think about listening to what you see.
Seven	Do a formal evaluation of all the advantages and disadvantages.	Take a cycle or slow walk-in silence without listening to any music.[16] - Be conscious. - Welcome everything, receive everything. - Pay attention to your body, feelings, and surroundings. - Gently allow your breath to carry your awareness from your head down to your heart.
Eight	Observe the direction of your will while reflecting on the advantages and disadvantages.	*Jagongan*[17] There are some possible obstacles to Ignatian discernment that can hinder the process of discernment and decision making, such as: projections, disordered attachments like inferiority complexes, superiority complexes, or glorified self-images, "shoulds" or "oughts" that tyrannize, perfectionism, fears, materialistic greed and

[16] Cindi Beth Johnson in Hardiyan Triasmoroadi, *Make Way for Beauty*, 80-82.

[17] *Jagongan* is a traditional Javanese word that means hanging out, having conversations with others, spending time relaxing together or socializing informally. *Jagongan* is a public construction in that the Church invites people to enter and gather in the Church space. To explore more on *jagongan* see: Triasmoroadi, Hardiyan. 2023. Building Bridges of Multifaith Awareness: A Visionary Proposal from the East Java Christian Church. *Societas Dei*, 10(2):185-207. https://doi.org/10.33550/sd.v10i2.406

		possessiveness, past hurts and self-pity, competitiveness that leads to envy, impatience with yourself or others, lust, ingratitude, and irreverence, desire for control, power, status, prestige, exclusiveness, and so forth.[18] So, in this process, you can invite the spiritual directors or employ *jagongan* as a group spiritual direction to accompany your journey toward clarity.
Nine	Ask God to give you feelings of consolation about the preferred option.	Visual Art Exploration.[19] - Have some paper and crayons, markers, or colored pencils available. - As the memories, images, and feelings unfold, use color and shape to express some of what is moving in your prayer. - Just let the expression unfold without judgement; let it be a prayer and journey of discovery.
Ten	Trust in God and make your decision, even if you are not certain about it.	The Artist Date.[20] Do something that enchants or interests you such as: go to

[18] Jim Manney. See https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/making-good-decisions/an-approach-to-good-choices/an-ignatian-framework-for-making-a-decision/accessed: 26 December 2023.

[19] Christine Valters Paintner, *Artist Rule,* 21-22.

[20] Julia Cameron, *The Listening Path,* 13-30.

		movies, visit a gallery, as a way to receive, listen, restore new ideas and images.
Eleven	Confirm the decision.	Movement exploration.[21] - Engage with *Joged Amerta* or Amerta movement [22] - Walking the spiral or labyrinth as symbol of integration and non-linear experience. - Take some time to center yourself, focusing on the journey and invite the Divine and community across time and space to be with you. - Listen to the invitation each moment, keeping an open mind and heart. - Take as long as you need to reach the center, listening to the wisdom and guidance of the cloud of witnesses as you travel. - Pause at the center to receive whatever gift offered.

Table 2: Ignatian Discernment Framework & Contemplative Artistic Practice

However, in our volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world, especially amidst of crisis, the arts have unique capacity to tap into the

[21] Christine Valters Paintner, *Artist Rule,* 118-119.

[22] Joged Amerta initiated by Javanese artist namely Suprapto Suryodarmo. See: https://youtu.be/x2zhPvyoNyc and https://youtu.be/qcXIMe9WJpY?si=L-eq5gQv2B0EQFb0 accessed: 14/11/2024

mystery and liminality. Through contemplative artistic practices, the silence aspect of prayer in Ignatian discernment, can be expressed in an aesthetic and evocative language without losing it *apophatic* nature. By integrating Ignatian discernment with contemplative artistic practice we can have a multifaceted approach to the discernment process that balance both *cataphatic* and *apophatic* dimensions. This integration not only enriches our understanding, but also enhances emotional processing and fosters community engagement. Furthermore, it strengthens active participation in the world, as a way to finding God in all things—as Ignatian profound adage. In that way, we can receive wisdom to navigate uncertainty with spiritual depth and creativity.

6. Recommendations

In order to make a good decision and avoid failure in the future, the Church as an institution or organisation should delve into comprehensive discernment diligently as a way to represent the Church as an organism or the body of Christ in the world. The comprehensive discernment model consists of employing three discerning questions in combination with the decision-making approach *(table one)*, social discernment *(figure 1)*, the integration of Ignatian discernment framework and contemplative artistic practice *(table two)*, that I formulate in table three, as follows:

Process	**Deciding approach**	**Social discernment**	**Ignatian discernment**
One	Defining the problem	Insertion (noticing & describing)	Identify the decision to be made
Two	Looking for root cause	Social analysis	Formulate the issue
Three	-	-	Prayer
Four	Gathering data	Social analysis	Gather all the necessary information

Five	Interpreting data	Theological reflection	Welcome and receive God's will
Six	Brainstorming alternatives/options.	Theological reflection	State all the reasons and all the reasons against each alternative
Seven	Establishing decision criteria	Theological reflection	Do formal evaluation of all the advantages & disadvantages
Eight	Evaluating alternatives.	Decision and confirmation	Observe the direction of will while reflecting on the advantages and disadvantages
Nine	Assessing risk and return	Decision and confirmation	Ask God to give feelings of consolation
Ten	-	-	Trust in God and make decision
Eleven	Selecting an optimal solution	Implementation and evaluation	Confirm the decision

Table 3: Comprehensive Discernment Model for Decision-Making, summarized by Hardiyan

Within table three we can recognize points of similarities that intersect each other. The framework in table three can be further contextualized and customized to make it fit into the particular context. Nevertheless, we must keep in mind the principle to employ *cataphatic* and *apophatic* approaches, as a way to exercise both human ratio or logic and provide a proper space for the Spirit's guidance, while at the same time engage the contemplative artistic practice.

Finally, based on table three, I recommend the comprehensive discernment schema in circular mode, emphasizing that after the confirmation of the decision, there is need for prayer again as recognition of our human limitation

and vulnerability that lead us to the faith in God's guidance through Holy Spirit, as follows:

Figure 2: Circular Comprehensive Discernment for Decision Making Schema, constructed by Hardiyan

I am cognisant of the fact that such a comprehensive discernment model for decision making is lengthy, posing a challenge for those seeking a straightforward, clear, and quick answer, or rapid solutions. Institutionally speaking, and in consideration that diverse people involved in the discernment process may not always share the same mindset or values. Therefore, an extensive respectful listening process and an open-hearted dialogue are necessary to build trust among all participants. We might tend to privilege fast cultures to move as quickly as possible toward action, instead

of dedicating ourselves to slowing down spirituality, deep listening, and give attention required to receive God's spirit working within us and our structures. Conversely, excessive analysis could lead to stagnation and indecision. However, as Liebert addressed, through grace, this meticulous pursuit can yield profound transformation as we gradually seek God amidst our systems.[23]

7. Conclusion

The role of discernment encourages leaders, who rule at the top of the organisational pyramid, controlling money, ideas, and hold ecclesiastical power to learn and to let their power go in a *kenotic* spirit. The role of discernment, seriously applied, will enable leaders to listen, immerse themselves into a situation demanding solutions, embracing the margins, and communicating directly with those affected in the communities at grass-roots level, in true humility and genuine openness.

The use of discernment in the context of the Church, will allow and invite decision makers to employ theological reflection, contemplative prayer, and spiritual discipline to receive confirmation from the Holy Spirit, before acting or making decision. As vulnerable beings, we certainly make mistakes and rarely have the ability to make the right decisions. However, if we live in discernment and listening to the Spirit's guidance, at least we will be able to admit our weaknesses, accept limitations with all humility and trust God leading us on the way to a more compassionate, just and peaceful cohabitation with those we are called to live with on this earth.

Decision-making, therefore, becomes a social and spiritual practice, emphasizing the importance of slowing down to listen to God's guidance. Incorporating discernment that will influence decision-making processes, will transform institutional task into sacred practices. By aligning decisions with such a discernment that values critical introspection, spiritual disruption

[23] See Elizabet Kvernen, *The Soul of Discernment: An Interview with Elizabeth Liebert* https://collegevilleinstitute.org/bearings/the-soul-of-discernment/accessed 10/21/2024

and social consideration and empathy, the institutions can lead to actions that resonate with the divine will, in which at the same time they would be able to restore trust, reconcile the dispute, maintain peace, engage in ethical church governance and enhance institutional stability for sustainable church health.

8. Bibliography

Barton, Ruth Haley. 2012. *Pursuing God's Will Together: a discernment practice for leadership groups,* Illinois: InterVarsity Press.

Beaumont, Susan. 2019. *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're going: Leading in a Liminal Season*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Inc.

Bourgeault, Cynthia. 2004. *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening,* Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications.

Cameron, Julia. 2021. *The Listening Path: The Creative Art of Attention,* NY: St. Martin's Essentials.

Dionysius, Pseudo. 1987. *The Complete Works*, translated by Colm Luibheid, edited by John Farina *A volume of The Classics of Western Spirituality*, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

Elizabet Kvernen, Elizabet. 2024. *The Soul of Discernment: An Interview with Elizabeth Liebert* https://collegevilleinstitute.org/bearings/the-soul-of-discernment/ en.html (10/21/2024).

Fluker, Walter Earl. 2009. *Ethical Leadership,* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Fredrickson et. al. 2021. *Faith-Based Organizing: A Congregational Planning Resource for Addressing Poverty* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers.

Gallagher, Timothy M. O.M.V. 2009. *Discerning the Will of God: An Ignatian Guide to Christian Decision Making*, New York: Crossroad Publishing.

Kenney, John Peter. 1993. "The Critical Value of Negative Theology," *Harvard Theological Review.* 86, no. 4 (October 1993): 439-453. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816000030650

Liebert, Elizabeth. 2015. *The Soul of Discernment: A Spiritual Practice for Communities and Institutions,* Westminster: John Knox Press.

Manney, Jim. 2023. *An Ignatian Framework for Making a Decision* https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/making-good-decisions/an-approach-to-good-choices/an-ignatian-framework-for-making-a-decision/ en.html (26/10/2023).

Nullens, Patrick. 2019. From Spirituality to Responsible Leadership: Ignatian Discernment and Theory of U, in J. Kok, S.C van den Heuvel (eds.), *Leading in a VUCA World: Contributions to Management Science*, Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98884-9_12

Paintner, Christine Valters. 2011. *Artist Rule: Nurturing Your Creative Soul with Monastic Wisdom,* Notre Dame, Indiana: Sorin Books.

Sharma, Monica. 2017. *Radical Transformational Leadership: Strategic Action for Change Agents,* Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Suarez, Cindi. 2018. *The Power Manual: How to Master Complex Power Dynamics,* British Columbia: New Society Publishers.

Szakolczai, Arpad. 2009. "Liminality and Experience: Structuring Transitory Situations and Transformative Events." *International Political Anthropology Journal*, Vol. 2. No.1, 151.

Triasmoroadi, Hardiyan. 2023. "Make Way for Beauty: The Role of Contemplative Artistic Practice in Navigating Religious Education along the Unknowing Path" *Theologia in Loco*, Vol.5*,* No. 1, 72-82. https://doi.org/10.55935/thilo.v5i1.274

Turner, Victor. 1967. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal period in Rites de Passage," *The Forest of Symbols,* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Rendle, Gil. 2019. *Quietly Courageous: Leading the Church in a Changing World,* Lanham Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

World Communion of Church. 2013. *The Church Towards a Common Vision Faith and Order Paper No. 214,* Swiss: WCC Publication

9. Short biography

Hardiyan Triasmoroadi is a Reverend of the East Java Christian Church (*Greja Kristen Jawi Wetan*), Malang, East Java, Indonesia. His academic pursuits are driven by a keen interest in exploring the nexus of arts and spirituality, as well as deepening his understanding of ecclesiology and constructive theology. From 2021 to 2025 he has been engaged in doctoral studies (Doctor of Ministry, D. Min.) at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, USA. Prior to this, he earned a Bachelor of Theology degree in 2005 from Duta Wacana Christian University, followed by a Magister of Theologiae in 2018 from Jakarta Theological Seminary (STFT Jakarta).

Email: adi.triasmoroadi@unitedseminary.edu

journal of ethics in higher education

Restorative Justice and Post-Genocide Reconciliation

Ethical Implications and Community Healing in Rwanda

Jonas Musengimana,

Protestant University of Rwanda

December 2024; revised 2025.

Keywords

Rwanda, community healing, justice, peace process, post-war care, genocide

Abstract

This paper explores the role of restorative justice in post-genocide reconciliation in Rwanda, focusing on its ethical implications and impact on community healing. Following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda faced the challenge of addressing survivors' trauma, fostering national unity, and reconciling a divided society. Key initiatives, including the Gacaca court system, emphasized dialogue, accountability, and forgiveness to promote healing. Using restorative justice and social reconstruction theories as its conceptual frameworks, this study examines how restorative justice fosters trust, dignity, and relationship restoration, while addressing ethical challenges. Also, through a desk review of existing literature, reports, and case studies, this study synthesizes key findings on the effectiveness of restorative justice.

Corresponding Authors: Jonas Musengimana, EPR Church and Protestant University of Rwanda (PUR), Email: jmusenge@gmail.com.

To quote this article: Musengimana, Jonas. 2024. "Restorative Justice and Post-Genocide Reconciliation: Ethical Implications and Community Healing in Rwanda". *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education* 5(2024): 241-261. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26034/fr.jehe.2024.6897 © the Author. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Visit https://jehe.globethics.net

1. Introduction

In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, the country had many challenges caused by that tragedy of the century which caused the death of over one million of people, a big number of orphans and widows, the destruction of infrastructures, de displacement of refugees among many others. In response, Rwanda embarked in a time of restoration of the fractured nation. The reconciliation process and the national unity have been used as the main tools of the restorative justice (Cohen, S., & O'Rourke, D., 2011). Central to this effort was the Gacaca court system, a traditional community-based judicial process designed to facilitate dialogue, promote accountability, and encourage forgiveness between perpetrators and survivors (Nzabonimpa, F., 2014).

However, while the Rwandan government's approach to post-genocide justice and reconciliation has been widely lauded for its innovative use of community-based justice, questions remain about the true nature of reconciliation and the ethical implications of the restorative justice processes employed (Clark, 2010) (Huyse, L., 2008). While restorative justice generally emphasizes repairing harm, restoring relationships, and promoting collective healing, it is important to critically evaluate how these ideals translate into the Rwandan context. How do relationships between perpetrators and victims evolve today? What ethical challenges arise from these relationships, and what are the narratives that remain silenced in the pursuit of national unity? Furthermore, where are the fractures in Rwandan society that continue to shape collective memory and ongoing reconciliation efforts?

This paper presents an essay that answers a question about how Restorative Justice functions as a mechanism for reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda, highlighting its ethical implications for healing and the restoration of relationships. Restorative justice is interpreted in various ways. For some, it primarily involves an encounter process where stakeholders collaboratively decide what actions are needed to address the harm caused by a crime. For others, it represents an alternative conception of justice that prioritizes healing and repairing harm over punitive measures. It is also viewed as a value-driven approach emphasizing cooperation, respect, and reparative

conflict resolution. Some advocate for its broader application, calling for transformative societal structures and relationships. Ultimately, restorative justice offers a hopeful vision that even in the aftermath of tragedy, healing and positive change are achievable through intentional and restorative practices (Johnstone, G., & Van Ness, D. (Eds.), 2006).

By providing an in-depth analysis of the evolving relationships between perpetrators and victims, the ethical dimensions of restorative justice, and the state of reconciliation in Rwanda today, this paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of post-conflict healing. The findings will also offer insights into the broader application of restorative justice principles in other post-conflict societies, providing valuable lessons that can be adapted to different cultural and historical contexts (Van der Merwe, H., 2009).

2. Background of the Study

The 1994 genocide against Tutsi involved of a lot of atrocities: killings, rape and stilling were committed. According to the UN outreach program, during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, more than one million Tutsi, as well as moderate Hutu who opposed the atrocities, were killed by Hutu extremists. Additionally, approximately 250,000 women were subjected to rape, and the country's infrastructure and developmental progress were devastated (Dallaire, R., 2004).

The Government of Rwanda led by RPF started giving justice to those who sought it and made accountable everyone who had been involved in the 1994 genocide against Tutsi. At the beginning, more than 120,000 people have been arrested accused of participating in the killing, many others joined them in the jail (United Nations, 2014).

The country had a big number of wounded survivors. To deal with the big number of offenders and to heal the wounds of the survivors, a serious judicial system was needed at that time. The restorative justice played a significant role in uniting the community. Rwanda's genocide has led to social fragmentation, emphasizing the need for social capital reinforcement through

inclusive practices and restorative justice initiatives for community healing (Brown, 2020).

3. Literature Review

Restorative justice as a way to genocide recidivism prevention

Central to the restorative justice process in Rwanda is the principle of acknowledgment and truth-telling. In Gacaca courts, survivors have the opportunity to share their experiences, while perpetrators confess their crimes. This dynamic fosters a validating environment for victims, affirming their experiences and promoting accountability (Clark, 2010). Acknowledgment of harm is crucial for healing; it allows victims to process their trauma and facilitates a shared understanding of the past among community members (Schaal, S., et al., 2012).

Restorative justice, rather than punishment, conceives of justice as "repair" to the harm caused by crime and conflict. In the context of Rwanda, that kind of justice was needed to handle various challenges left by the 1994 genocide against Tutsi. The first action undertaken by the Government of Rwanda was to end impunity and make everyone accountable of his/her actions, not only for punishing but also to plan ahead on how punishment may be effective, with a moral lesson to the perpetrators. The Government of Rwanda introduced a system of repentance in the Gacaca court system and other judicial court system towards the national reconciliation.

The second way used by the Government of Rwanda is the community service for common interest known as TIG "*Travaux d'intérêt général*". In fact, TIG is a Rwandan program allowing people found guilty of participating in the 1994 genocide against Tutsi to serve part of their sentences doing community services as an alternative penalty to imprisonment. It's a good way of rectification, correction, and integration to the convicts by reducing the time they should spend in incarceration and to contribute to the development of the country (Twagirayezu A., 2022). TIG is a good opportunity for the convict of 1994 to show that they should be useful to the

community no matter what they did in the past, it is also a way of reconciliation with the victims' families and the society.

The third strategies conducted by the Government of Rwanda is the formation of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) as aimed avoiding the genocide recidivism. The commission has been created in March 1999 by a Parliamentarian law to promote unity and reconciliation among Rwandans in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. The aim of the NURC was facilitating with civic education, conflict management and peace building in Rwanda.

The fourth strategy of the Government of Rwanda is the Gacaca court. According to the Rwandan Education Board (Rwanda Education Board: REB, 2020):

> "The term Gacaca refers to a physical green space where people used to meet. It was especially used by elders in the community and individuals were well-known for their integrity and wisdom, to discuss and solve problems and conflicts within the community.

In the aftermath of the genocide, the Government of Rwanda imagined strategies in reconstituting the truth of what happened. Those strategies consisted not only in collecting the statistics on the victims of genocide, their names and their identifications, but also circumstances within which they were killed, location of bodies and names of offenders.

> "The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda spent a lot of time on data collection for witnesses, and hearing from survivors, offenders and bystanders for the sake of reconstituting the truth (Nsengimana, Celestin, 2010).

Justice and reconciliation process in Rwanda

Restorative justice functions as mechanism of reconciliation in post-genocide reconciliation, because during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, up to one million people were killed, and as many as 250,000 women were raped, leaving the population deeply traumatized and the country's infrastructure

decimated. The genocide sent shock waves through the international community. In response, Rwanda initiated a comprehensive justice and reconciliation process aimed at rebuilding the nation and fostering peaceful coexistence among its people (Burnet, J. E., 2008).

Gacaca courts as a Rwandan model of restorative justice

Etymologically, the word Gacaca means "on the grass", and refers to traditional Rwandan conflict resolution practices where community members would gather to discuss disputes. The system was adapted to address the massive backlog of genocide cases. Gacaca courts aimed to provide a platform for truth-telling, promote accountability, and foster community reconciliation. They sought to involve local populations in the judicial process, thereby enhancing community cohesion (Gatwa T. & Mbonyinkebe D. (ed)., 2019). Gacaca is a traditional conflict resolution system for neighbourhood disputes. By extension, it is the name given to new people's court charged in 2005 with ruling on cases arising from genocide. Practically, Gacaca is carried out by the board of trustees "Inyangamugayo" whom the main role is to pass judgment on the perpetrators of genocide crimes and other crimes against humanity in categories 2 and 3. Gacaca is a traditional community court system that aims at restoring the social fabric of society. With regard to the Post-genocide Rwanda, it provided a means for survivors to learn the truth about the death of their relatives and for perpetrators to confess their crimes and seek forgiveness from their victim's families, as well as their communities. Gacaca court reduced the hostility and gave space to solve the problems related to genocide in Rwanda (Twagirayezu A., 2022). The Gacaca courts were established to promote accountability, reconciliation, and community healing.

The Gacaca courts and their role in reintegration

Clark (2010) suggests that while the Gacaca courts were successful in promoting confession and fostering accountability, they were also sites of significant emotional and social friction. Many survivors felt that justice was not fully served, especially when perpetrators were able to minimize their guilt or evade more serious punishment. On the other hand, some perpetrators

claimed they had been coerced into participating in the violence and expressed remorse for their actions, but these expressions of contrition were not always perceived as genuine by survivors.

Despite these challenges, the Gacaca courts provided a space for survivors and perpetrators to engage with one another. For some, these encounters allowed survivors to gain a sense of closure and helped rebuild a sense of community through dialogue. However, for others, the reintegration of perpetrators into communities posed a significant barrier to healing. Many survivors expressed difficulty in forgiving those who had destroyed their lives, and living alongside perpetrators often exacerbated feelings of mistrust and anger. The complexity of these interactions underscores the emotional and social difficulties inherent in rebuilding communities after such horrific violence.

How restorative justice functions as a mechanism for reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda

Restorative justice in post-genocide Rwanda serves as a crucial mechanism for reconciliation by emphasizing dialogue, accountability, and community healing rather than punishment alone. This approach recognizes that crimes are not merely offenses against the state but violations of personal and communal relationships. According to Gatwa & Mbonyinkebe, in Rwanda, restorative justice has been operationalized through Community-Based Courts known as Gacaca Courts and the Abunzi Mediation Committees, which aimed to facilitate truth-telling and foster reconciliation among victims and perpetrators (Gatwa T. & Mbonyinkebe D. (ed)., 2019). With this regard, the post-genocide Rwandan government implemented the Gacaca court system as its primary mechanism for addressing accountability for the genocide. This approach was adopted after the government recognized that the formal criminal justice system lacked the capacity to handle the magnitude of cases and was inadequate for achieving Rwanda's transitional justice goals (Gahima, G., 2012).

These courts allowed for public hearings where individuals could share their experiences and grievances, promoting a collective understanding of the past and encouraging forgiveness among community members.

Another channel of Restorative Justice in Rwanda as mentioned by these big Rwandan Historians is Genocide Commemoration, where they argue that this period serves to promote reconciliation by reshaping a common identity (Gatwa T. & Mbonyinkebe D. (ed)., 2019). It plays a vital role in the reconciliation process by promoting collective memory, facilitating dialogue, educating future generations, supporting healing, and strengthening national identity. Through these mechanisms, commemoration helps to address the deep scars left by the genocide and paves the way for a more peaceful and unified society.

Efficacy of the Gacaca courts as a restorative justice in Rwanda

The Gacaca courts were adopted as an innovative mechanism to address Rwanda's need for a justice system capable of handling the vast number of crime cases. This approach, rooted in Rwandan cultural heritage, was introduced to manage the challenge posed by the overwhelming number of genocide suspects awaiting trial, which the conventional courts could not process within a reasonable timeframe. Additionally, the Gacaca courts aimed to promote peace, national unity, and reconciliation in a society marred by cycles of violence since 1959. Empowered to handle genocide cases, the Gacaca courts officially closed on 18 June 2012, after trying a total of 1,958,634 cases. Among these, 86% of suspects (1,681,648) were convicted, while 14.1% (277,066) were acquitted. Notably, 13.38% (225,012) of convicts opted for the guilty plea and confession procedure (Clark, 2010; MINIJUST, 2012).

These community-based courts allowed for public trials where victims could confront their perpetrators, and offenders could admit their guilt and seek forgiveness. This process not only provided a platform for storytelling and truth-telling but also encouraged communal participation, thereby rebuilding trust within communities (Gatwa T. & Mbonyinkebe D. (ed)., 2019, p. 96).

Similarly, Rwandans have considered Gacaca courts as a home-grown mechanism of transitional justice. The GoR launched the pilot phase on 18 June 2002, the Gacaca lay judges called "Inyangamugayo" literally "the honest person" or the "person of integrity". This process of collecting the data about Genocide took a period of two years (2002-2004). Thereafter, the Gacaca courts started judging the suspected genocide perpetrators (Nsengimana C., 2023).

The Gacaca courts had two main objectives: firstly, to document genocide by engaging genocide survivors, perpetrators, and other members of the community in the processes of data collection and validation. Secondly, to establish a home-grown judicial mechanism, not only to respond to the issue of a big number of more than one million suspected offenders who could not be judged by formal court in a reasonable time frame, but also to move from the retributive justice to the restorative justice trough truth telling, confession, justice, reparation and forgiveness (Nsengimana C., 2023).

At the beginning, the community didn't understand Gacaca court in the same way. Some considered it as retributive justice because it had sentences including punishment or life imprisonment, among many others.

Unity and reconciliation efforts in post-genocide Rwanda

Unity and reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda is more focused on the process of moving from past divided history to a shared present and future in Rwandan society. To achieve unity and reconciliation, some values and principles were introduced, for example, common identity for Rwandans, working towards common interest of the country, fight against genocide and its ideology, emphasis of rule of law governance and human right respect (NURC, 2005).

By establishing the NURC, the GoR aimed at including all Rwandans, despite their ethnic backgrounds. It conducted many activities likely the repatriation and integration of refugees, military integration and the demobilization and reintegration of the ex-combatants both economically and socially (Kanyana G., 2020).

Unity and reconciliation in Rwanda

The reconciliation process in Rwanda aims to reconstruct the Rwandan identity while balancing justice, truth, peace, and security. The Rwandan government has implemented various measures to ensure peaceful coexistence between perpetrators and victims. For instance, the Constitution guarantees equal rights for all citizens, and laws have been enacted to combat discrimination and divisive ideologies. The primary responsibility for overseeing reconciliation efforts lies with the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (Sasaki, 2009).

Key reconciliation initiatives include *Ingando*, a peace education program conducted in solidarity camps. Between 1999 and 2009, over 90,000 participants engaged in this program, which seeks to clarify Rwanda's history, combat division, foster patriotism, and address genocide ideology (Sasaki, 2009). Another initiative is *Itorero ry'Igihugu*, established in 2007, which aims to instill Rwandan values and train leaders dedicated to community development. From 2007 to 2009, 115,228 participants took part in *Itorero* programs (Sundberg & Sundberg, 2016). Additionally, national summits on topics such as justice, governance, human rights, security, and history have been held regularly since 2000 to support reconciliation efforts (Angelique, 2013).

Rwandan case: Interactions between survivors and perpetrators

After the 1994 genocide, Rwanda embarked on a challenging journey of reconciliation, where survivors and perpetrators were often compelled to live side by side, sometimes in the same neighbourhoods or villages. This proximity is a critical factor in understanding how post-genocide interactions unfold. Scholars have noted that, unlike many other post-genocide contexts, the Rwandan case is unique because survivors and perpetrators did not have the option of fleeing or segregating themselves into separate regions (Uvin, 2009). They were forced to coexist in a landscape marked by deep emotional scars, distrust, and the challenge of rebuilding a nation from the ground up.

The phenomenon of perpetrators living alongside survivors has created a complex dynamic in Rwanda, where the process of healing and reconciliation must occur within the very communities where violence took place. For example, as described by Clark (2010), the Gacaca courts were a local form of justice in which perpetrators were encouraged to confess their crimes before the community and seek forgiveness from survivors. These courts, while central to the national reconciliation agenda, were not without their difficulties. Many survivors struggled with the idea of facing those who had caused them immeasurable harm, and the act of forgiveness, especially when perpetrators remained in close proximity, was emotionally charged and fraught with tension.

— Victim-perpetrator relations: In post-genocide societies, the relationships between victims and perpetrators are often fraught with complexity, shaped by the personal, collective, and political dimensions of the violence that occurred. In Rwanda, the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi not only led to the systematic killing of more than one million people but also shattered familial, communal, and social bonds. The violence was perpetrated by individuals who, in many cases, were neighbours, co-workers, or even family members of the victims. These dynamics present a unique challenge for post-genocide reconciliation, where the restoration of relationships between victims and perpetrators is central to the process of societal healing. Over time, these relationships evolve, influenced by factors such as justice processes, individual and collective trauma, political frameworks, and social and psychological factors. Understanding the dynamics between victims and perpetrators requires a deep exploration of the emotional and social tensions that continue to characterize these relationships long after the violence. This section will explore how these relationships evolve over time, addressing the factors that influence trust-building, the complexity of forgiveness, and the long-term impact of trauma on both parties. Drawing on the work of scholars such as Des Forges (1999), Huyse (2008) and

others, the next section will provide a framework for understanding the ongoing struggles of reconciling these deeply divided groups.

— The complexities of forgiveness and reconciliation: Forgiveness is one of the most difficult and contentious aspects of victim-perpetrator relations in post-genocide societies. Scholars have long debated whether forgiveness is possible, or even desirable, in the context of large-scale atrocities like genocide. In Rwanda, forgiveness has been framed as both a personal and collective necessity for national healing, but it is not a simple or universal process. According to Des Forges (1999), some survivors found it difficult or impossible to forgive the perpetrators of the genocide, especially those who had murdered family members or neighbours. In some cases, the idea of forgiveness was seen as a moral imperative, both for individuals and for the nation, but the emotional reality of this was far more complicated. Huyse (2008) discusses how the discourse of forgiveness was promoted by the Rwandan government as part of the broader reconciliation agenda but acknowledges that forgiveness is not a straightforward emotional or ethical act. While the state and international actors framed forgiveness as part of the healing process, in practice, many survivors felt that forgiveness would mean dismissing their pain and trauma, which they were not prepared to do. For perpetrators, seeking forgiveness was similarly complex. Some expressed genuine remorse, while others resisted fully acknowledging their guilt. Thus, the moral and psychological challenges involved in forgiveness and reconciliation persist long after the formal justice processes have ended.

Restorative justice in Rwanda: The role of the Gacaca courts

In the context of Rwanda's post-genocide recovery, the Gacaca court system represented an innovative application of restorative justice, based on traditional Rwandan community-based dispute resolution practices.

Established in 2001, Gacaca courts were designed to address the overwhelming number of genocide-related cases in a society where the formal judicial system was unable to cope with the scale of the violence. The Gacaca courts allowed local communities to take a central role in the justice process, with community members serving as judges and witnesses, focusing on both the truth and reconciliation processes (Clark, 2010).

The Gacaca system's core objectives were to uncover the truth about the genocide, foster accountability through confession, and promote reconciliation between perpetrators and victims. Offenders who confessed their crimes and demonstrated remorse were often given reduced sentences or allowed to reintegrate into society (Nzabonimpa, 2014). This system was seen to bring justice closer to the people, allowing for wide participation in the process of healing and rebuilding a divided society (Huyse, 2008).

Restorative justice beyond Rwanda: lessons and limitations

Rwanda's Gacaca courts are not the only example of restorative justice in post-conflict societies. Other countries, such as South Africa and Sierra Leone, have implemented similar approaches to transitional justice, with varying degrees of success.

— South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC): In South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provided amnesty to perpetrators who fully confessed their involvement in human rights violations during the apartheid era. Van der Merwe (2009) notes that the TRC's combination of restorative justice (in its focus on truth-telling and reconciliation) and retributive justice (through public accountability and the potential for prosecutions) presented a nuanced approach to post-apartheid healing. However, critics argue that the TRC's emphasis on forgiveness and the granting of amnesty left many victims feeling that justice was not fully served (Mamdani, 2002). Like Gacaca, the TRC sought to balance truth, justice, and reconciliation, but it also struggled

with ensuring that perpetrators were held accountable for their actions.

Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) followed a similar model to South Africa's, combining restorative justice with the pursuit of accountability. Pring (2006) highlights that, in Sierra Leone, the TRC's process helped to expose the realities of the civil war and allowed for public testimonies from both victims and perpetrators. However, as Mamdani (2002) points out, the TRC in Sierra Leone struggled to navigate the political dynamics of post-conflict governance, and many perpetrators, especially those involved in the RUF insurgency, were not fully held accountable for their actions. This underscores a key limitation of restorative justice processes: they often face challenges in ensuring full accountability for all perpetrators, particularly in cases of systematic violence or where political interests intervene.

Lessons and limitations:

From the experiences of Rwanda, South Africa, and Sierra Leone, several key lessons can be drawn:

— The Need for a Balanced Approach: Restorative justice processes that prioritize reconciliation and healing must also consider the need for accountability. Both the Gacaca courts and the TRC faced challenges in balancing these goals, with critics arguing that too much emphasis on forgiveness could compromise justice (Van der Merwe, 2009).

— Local vs. National Contexts: The effectiveness of restorative justice mechanisms may depend on the social and political context in which they are implemented. While Gacaca succeeded in Rwanda, it may not be as suitable in contexts where deep ethnic or political divisions persist, as seen in Sierra Leone.

— The Risk of Impunity: One of the main limitations of restorative justice is the potential for impunity. In both Rwanda and South

Africa, critics argued that perpetrators could evade full accountability by confessing and participating in the process of reconciliation (Pring, 2006; Mamdani, 2002).

In conclusion, while restorative justice offers valuable tools for post-conflict societies to heal and rebuild, its implementation must be carefully tailored to the specific needs of each society. Rwanda's Gacaca courts, like other transitional justice mechanisms, reveal both the promise and the ethical dilemmas inherent in balancing justice and reconciliation in societies emerging from periods of mass violence.

4. Ethical Implications for Healing and Restoration of Relationships

The ethical implications of restorative justice in Rwanda are profound, particularly regarding healing and the restoration of relationships. By prioritizing forgiveness and reconciliation, Restorative justice encourages victims to confront their trauma and seek closure. For instance, survivors noted that forgiveness allowed to move beyond hatred and grief, ultimately leading to a sense of freedom and peace (EVER Rwanda, 2022). This transformative process highlights the ethical dimension of restorative justice, which seeks not only to address the harm caused by genocide but also to rebuild the social fabric of communities torn apart by violence.

Moreover, restorative justice fosters a sense of collective responsibility and community solidarity, which is vital for long-term peace in Rwanda. The Rwandan government has promoted a national identity that transcends ethnic divisions, encouraging citizens to identify as 'Rwandans' rather than Hutus or Tutsis. This shift is supported by policies that prohibit ethnic distinctions in public discourse, aiming to cultivate unity and prevent the resurgence of division (EVER Rwanda, 2022). However, some researchers argue that this enforced unity can lead to a suppression of individual narratives and dissent, raising ethical concerns about the authenticity of reconciliation efforts and the potential for repressive peace.

In addition to promoting healing among survivors, restorative justice also addresses the psychological needs of perpetrators. Many individuals convicted of genocide experience significant post-traumatic stress and guilt, complicating their reintegration into society. Programs aimed at fostering recovery capital —such as social, cultural, and human resources— are essential for helping these individuals navigate their trauma and contribute positively to their communities (Frontiers). An example here is *Umucyo Nyanza*, a cooperative mentored by Prof. Kazuyuki Sasaki that brings together Genocide survivors and wives of those who did genocide. They argue that at the beginning it was even very hard to face one another. They were put together to plant and grow flowers. As they were taught that flowers cannot grow when their planters have hatred and unhappiness in them, they began to forgive one another and heal through this motivation of growing flowers. They now testify that they visit one another at home and became good friends. This dual focus on both victims and perpetrators underscores the ethical commitment of restorative justice to holistic healing and the restoration of relationships, emphasizing that reconciliation is a shared responsibility (Sasaki, K., 2009).

5. Challenges of the restorative justice in Rwanda

While Gacaca courts provided a means for justice, they also raised ethical concerns. Critics argue that the emphasis on community involvement sometimes led to mob justice and a lack of legal protections for defendants. Moreover, the pressure on victims to forgive their perpetrators can be ethically problematic, as it may overshadow the individual's need for justice and accountability. Thus, while Gacaca courts aimed to facilitate reconciliation, they also highlighted the complexities of balancing justice and forgiveness (Gatwa T. & Mbonyinkebe D. (ed)., 2019, p. 96). In Rwanda, Community-based projects and collaborative livelihood programs have been shown to significantly improve social cohesion among survivors and perpetrators through initiatives that reinforce social capital (Verduin, F., et al., 2014).

Notwithstanding the favourable outcomes associated with restorative justice in Rwanda, a number of challenges remain. One significant concern is the stigma attached to being a perpetrator of the genocide. Many individuals are subjected to social ostracism and discrimination, which impede their reintegration into communities. This stigma not only affects those directly involved but also impedes the broader reconciliation process, perpetuating divisions and hindering the development of trust.

Therefore, while restorative justice is a valuable approach, it must be integrated into a comprehensive strategy that encompasses systemic reforms aimed at addressing inequalities (Van Ness, 1993, pp. 251-276).

The challenge of rebuilding relationships between victims and perpetrators

Rebuilding relationships between victims and perpetrators is a multifaceted challenge. In Rwanda, this process has been described as a journey that involves reconciliation at both the personal and collective levels (Clark, 2010). While some survivors were able to forgive and rebuild relationships, others remained entrenched in their trauma, unable or unwilling to forgive those who had committed atrocities against them (Mamdani, 2001). The Gacaca courts, which served as community-based judicial system, played a role in facilitating dialogue between perpetrators and victims, but they were not without their own challenges and limitations (Nzabonimpa, 2014).

The reconciliation process, therefore, cannot be understood solely as a top-down political process or a legal one; it involves complex emotional and psychological factors that affect individuals and communities in deeply personal ways. Scholars such as Huyse (2008) highlight the importance of integrating social healing into the broader process of justice and reconciliation, arguing that without the restoration of personal relationships and the rebuilding of trust at the community level, true national reconciliation remains elusive.

6. Conclusion

Restorative justice in post-genocide Rwanda functions as a vital mechanism for reconciliation by fostering dialogue, promoting forgiveness, and rebuilding community ties. Its ethical implications are significant, as it not only facilitates individual healing but also encourages a collective commitment to peace and unity. However, the challenges of balancing collective identity with individual narratives remain a critical consideration in the ongoing process of reconciliation.

7. References

Brown, B., & Baker, S. (2020). The social capitals of recovery in mental health. *Health*, London, 1997, 24(4), 384–402. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363459318800160 .

Burnet, J. E. 2008. The Injustice of Local Justice: Truth, Reconciliation, and Revenge in Rwanda, *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, Article 4. Available at: https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/gsp/vol3/iss2/4

Clark, P. 2010. *The Gacaca Courts, Post-genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice without Lawyers* (Vol. 4). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, S., & O'Rourke, D. 2011. The Gacaca Courts and the Politics of Reconciliation in Rwanda. *International Journal of Transitional Justice*, 5(2), 219-236.

Dallaire, R. 2004. *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda.* Toronto, Canada: Carroll & Graf Publishers.

Gahima, G. 2012. *Transitional Justice in Rwanda: Accountability for Atrocity*, London: Routledge, 1st Ed. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203075159

Gatwa T. & Mbonyinkebe D. (ed). 2019. *Home Grown Solutions: A Legacy to Generations in Africa.* Geneva: Globethics Publications, vol. 1 and 2, Globethics Library: http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/170405; http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/170457

Huyse, L. 2008. Justice After Transition: On the Choices Successor Regimes Make. *The European Journal of International Law,* 19(3), 575-598.

Johnstone, G., & Van Ness, D. (Eds.). 2006. *Handbook of Restorative Justice*. London: Imprint Willan, 1st Ed. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781843926191

Kanyana G. 2020. *The Role of Perpetrators's Wives in the Process of Reconciliation in Post-genocide Rwanda.* Dissertation. Protestant University of Rwanda. Huye Library, Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS), Rwanda. [Unpublished manuscript].

Mutamba, J. and Izabiliza, J. (Dir.) 2005. *The Role of Women in Reconciliation and Peace Building in Rwanda*, Kigali: Republic of Rwanda, The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC).

Nsengimana C. 2023. *Genocide Commemoration and Reconciliation in Rwanda: From a Liturgical Ritual Perspective.* Netherlands: Institute for ritual and liturgical studies, Doctoral Dissertation. Protestant Theological University, Centre for religion and heritage, University of Groningen.

Nyinawumuntu, A. 2013. *Avega Agahozo Women Association on Reconciliation and Peace Building among Genocide Victims in Rwanda.* Master thesis in conflict resolution. Kampala International University. College of Humanities and Social Science.

Nzabonimpa, F. 2014. The Role of Gacaca Courts in Post-Genocide Rwanda: Achievements and Challenges. *Rwanda Journal of Social Sciences*, 12(1), 45-60.

Restorative Justice, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation in Post-genocide Rwanda. Website, EVER Rwanda. 2022. Retrieved from https://www.everrwanda.com/essays/2237dt79z9zobmej20pwpf5i1yj2th

Rwanda Education Board: REB. 2020. *History, Senior 4: Student's Book.* Kigali: Rwanda Basic Education Board.

Sasaki, K. 2009. *Beyond Dichotomies. The Quest for Justice and Reconciliation and the Politics of National Identity Building in Post-genocide Rwanda*. Doctoral dissertation in Peace Studies. Tokyo: University of Bradford. http://hdl.handle.net/10454/4891

Schaal, S., et al. 2012. Psychological Impact of the Genocide in Rwanda: A Study of Rwandans' Psychosocial Health. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, 6(1), 1-10.

Sundberg, M. (2016). Itorero Today and Yesterday: Making and Remaking Rwanda. In: *Training for Model Citizenship*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-58422-9_2

Twagirayezu A. 2022. *The Contribution of Social Reintegration of Ex-convict of 1994 Genocide against Tutsi in Prevention of its Recidivism. The Case of Rukira Sect, Ngoma District.* Dissertation. Huye: Protestant University of Rwanda Library record.

United Nations. 2007. Statute of the International Tribunal for Rwanda, Office of Legal Affairs (OLA), https://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/ictr_ef.pdf

United Nations. 2014. *The Justice and Reconciliation Process in Rwanda.* Kigali: Department of Public Information.

Van der Merwe, H. 2009. Restorative Justice in South Africa: A Critical Analysis of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 53(2), 189-206.

Van Ness, D. W. 1993. New Wine and Old Wineskins: Four Challenges of Restorative Justice, 4 *Criminal Law Forum*, 251–276

Verduin, F., et al. 2014. Social Capital and Community Development in Rwanda. *Rwanda Journal of Social Science*, 1(1), 1-20.

8. Short biography

Rev. Jonas Musengimana is a dedicated pastor in the Presbyterian Church and a PhD student specializing in the history of Christianity. He serves as a lecturer of applied Christian ethics at the Protestant University of Rwanda. He holds a Master's degree in Ethics and Leadership from the Protestant University of Rwanda, a Master's degree in Public Health from Kampala University, and has completed a professional course in Improving Global Health Equity from Harvard University (online).

With a strong academic focus, Rev. Musengimana is researching John Calvin's leadership model and its historical contribution to church self-sufficiency, particularly in the context of the Presbyterian Church in Rwanda. His broader interests include Restorative justice, eco-theology, sustainable development, and the ethical implications of digitalization in education. Actively involved in community and academic discussions, he contributes to advancing theological reflections and practical applications in African societies

Email: jmusenge@gmail.com

Copyright & License

The authors of the articles submitted to the Publisher of JEHE (Globethics Publications), as owners of all the rights to their work retain the copyright but transfer to the Publisher publication rights about their work under a CC license. The authors declare and certify that the publication of the work does not infringe law, or violate rights or claims of third parties. If illustrations appear in the work, the author guarantees that they have the right to publish them and transfers to the Publisher this right to reproduce them under the aforementioned conditions.

Journal articles of Globethics Publications are published under the open Creative Commons License Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0), which guarantees the rights of licensor and allows free use and re-use to the licensees (the readers) who can: 1) Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format 2) Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material provided appropriate credit is given and similar license is used in case of such adaptations. Content should not be used for commercial purposes.

ISSN

2813-4370 (Print)
2813-4389 (Online)

***

05//2024

journal of ethics
in higher education

ETHICS IN OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

Articles:

Cover image: GreatBergens (Александр Колесник)

ISSN
2813-4370 (Print)
2813-4389 (Online)

Globethics