A Comparative Study of the Mission of Higher Education Systems in England, Germany and Iran

Naser Shirbagi[1]
Farhad Saidi[2]
Azad Allahkarami[3](Corresponding author)

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This qualitative study employs a comparative approach based on George Bereday's model. To this end, Iran was examined alongside England and Germany, both of which are among the top twenty countries in higher education globally. The research strategy was based on the principle of diverse social systems leading to different educational outcomes. Data were collected through documentary (library-based) methods, including the review of relevant books and research studies. The collected data were described, interpreted, and analyzed in a tabular format. The findings indicate that all three countries focus on increasing the number of graduates, outsourcing educational activities to the private sector, aligning university programs with labor market needs, providing higher education for all, and reducing state intervention. The mission of universities in Iran is to enhance educational and research activities; in England, to promote academic freedom and a research-driven approach; and in Germany, to conduct applied research with an emphasis on entrepreneurship. The dominant model in England's higher education system is Oxbridge; in Germany, it is Humboldtian; while in Iran, no dominant model was identified. In Iran, national-level decision-making is delegated to bodies such as the Parliament, the Cabinet, and the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, whereas in Germany and England, it is assigned to government agencies and parliaments. It is recommended that Iranian higher education planners revise the system's mission with an emphasis on realism to improve quality, promote international academic exchanges, strengthen university-industry linkages, ensure institutional autonomy and depoliticization, and update curricula with an international outlook.

[1] Prof. Department of Education, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Kurdistan, Sanandaj, Iran, Email:nshirbagi@uok.ac.ir

[2] PhD. Student, Department of Higher Education, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. Email:www.farhad.saidi67@gmail.com

[3] Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, Farhangian University, Tehran, Iran. Email: a.allahkarami@cfu.ac.ir

1. Introduction

In contemporary policymaking worldwide, investing in human capital through knowledge enhancement, skills development, and effective education has become a central priority. Universities and higher education institutions (HEIs) are among the most valuable assets nations possess to achieve this objective (Zhuang & Liu, 2022; Leal Filho et al., 2022; Mei & Symaco, 2021). Consequently, fundamental questions regarding the mission, vision, and outcomes of higher education systems—and how to establish the foundations for their growth—have consistently been at the forefront of governmental and educational policy agendas (Marginson & Yang, 2022). In recent years, the higher education landscape in most countries has undergone significant transformations, marked by trends such as privatization, decentralization, internationalization, and intensified competition (Torkzadeh et al., 2019). Despite its quantitative expansion, Iran's higher education system has demonstrated lower effectiveness and efficiency in comparison to other nations. Evidence for this assertion can be found in the absence of its universities from the top tiers of prestigious global rankings (Abili & Babaei, 2018). Therefore, a comparative analysis of the missions of higher education systems in leading countries and that of Iran can be instrumental in identifying systemic challenges and formulating an effective roadmap for reform—a need underscored in national high-level policy documents (Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, 2010).

The primary challenge confronting Iran's higher education system is the absence of a clearly defined and targeted policy at the macro-level of governance. This necessitates a thorough examination of the experiences of successful nations in formulating clear missions and coherent policies. Some scholars contend that the historical mission of traditional universities—producing knowledge in the form of human capital, research, and scholarship—is now being fundamentally challenged (Mense et al., 2018). In this context, the findings of Olo, Correia, and Rego (2022) on the missions, models, and challenges of HEIs reveal that ten European countries (France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, and the United Kingdom) have advanced their higher education systems by articulating new missions. Their research identifies three critical missions for these systems: enhancing human capital and attracting highly skilled individuals, advancing scientific knowledge and innovative activities, and strengthening the linkage between research and business. In his study, Borsetto (2021) analyzed the mission and vision statements of 102 universities across 17 European countries, identifying shared themes of internationalization, pragmatism, ethical orientation, responsibility, and sustainability. The

research by Berghaeuser and Hoelscher (2020), titled "Reinventing the Third Mission of Higher Education in Germany: Political Frameworks and Universities' Reactions," concluded that technology transfer, lifelong learning, and social engagement constitute core university missions. Cortés-Sánchez (2017), after examining 338 university mission statements worldwide, noted that while these documents share common features, such as an emphasis on global influence, research, and teaching, they typically avoid quantitative and measurable goals. For instance, they lack specific numerical targets for student enrollment or publication output.

Further research by Kosmützky (2016) in a study titled "Mission Statements and the 'Organizational Actorhood' of German Universities" demonstrated that although mission statements might be introduced for symbolic reasons, they carry substantial and tangible consequences. Influenced by these defined missions, universities have transformed from organized institutions into organizational actors. The study also found that public universities tend to focus on individuals (students), whereas private universities concentrate on processes (teaching). In "Sameness and Difference: An Analysis of Institutional and Organizational Characteristics of Universities through Mission Statements," Kosmützky and Krücken (2015) argued that universities strategically use their mission statements to differentiate themselves from competing institutions. They do so by heavily emphasizing their unique institutional characteristics, such as historical and societal mandates, as well as their responses to the demands of the political and social environment. In his work, "Rethinking the Internationalisation Mission of Higher Education in the Asia-Pacific Region," Ng (2012) asserted that the internationalization of higher education contributes to economic and political competitiveness. His findings also indicate that policies promoting the commercialization and internationalization of higher education are strongly emphasized by policymakers in developing Asian economies, including India, China, Indonesia, and Malaysia. More recently, Singapore, Australia, Hong Kong, and Malaysia have also undertaken efforts to internationalize their HEIs, aiming to provide educational services to neighboring countries.

In the Iranian context, several related studies have been conducted. For example, Hasan Rezaei (2022), in a comparative study of higher education internationalization policies and strategies in Iran and selected countries (USA, UK, Australia, and Canada), found that these nations diverge in their primary objectives, which include "achieving high-quality education and research," "reaping economic benefits," "promoting cultural diversity and understanding," "attaining high standards and research power," and "engaging in knowledge diplomacy." However, similarities were identified in their adoption of strategies such as "participation in joint research projects" and

"faculty and student exchange programs." Ranayi Kordshuli and Alavi (2022) compared university governance models in France, Iran, Germany, and Italy. Their findings indicate a discernible trend of transition from a state-controlled model to an academic one, and subsequently toward a market-driven model, although the pace of this evolution varies across the countries studied. Moradi, Janavi, and Pakzad (2020) conducted research on the monitoring and evaluation of higher education in Iran based on high-level policy documents, revealing inconsistencies between some Ministry of Higher Education documents and other national strategic frameworks. In a comparative study, Khosravi, Fadavi, and Karimi (2020) examined the components of university autonomy in Iran, the UK, Australia, and China, concluding that there is minimal similarity between the components in Iran and those in the selected countries.

Mohammadizad, Azizi, and Salehi Omran (2019), in a comparative analysis of polytechnic higher education in Iran and selected countries, demonstrated that the development trajectory of this sector in Iran has been slow and protracted. The primary distinction between Iran and the comparator countries (USA, Canada, UK, and Japan) was identified as the Iranian higher education system's lack of responsiveness to labor market needs and the absence of robust linkages with industry. ZakerSalahi and Keykha (2019) found that the most significant shared goals of higher education across China, Germany, Iran, Japan, Russia, the UK, and the USA include increasing international exchanges, engaging the private sector, ensuring accessibility for all, and aligning with labor market demands. However, they noted the existence of different policy approaches to achieve these goals. In advanced nations like the USA, UK, and Japan, fostering a scientific and welfare ecosystem is considered paramount. The developing systems of China and Russia are increasingly prioritizing privatization and internationalization. Meanwhile, Germany is witnessing the onset of new modernizations, whereas in Iran, the focus of higher education policymakers has been on identifying and rectifying systemic deficiencies. Tarifi Hosseini (2012) undertook a comparative-historical study of Iranian higher education, focusing on the social, economic, political, and cultural transformations across the Qajar, Pahlavi, and Islamic Republic periods. The results of this research show that due to the profound impact of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the reconstruction of the higher education system has faced numerous challenges. Key among these are the lack of a suitable educational philosophy for rebuilding and revitalizing academic and curricular programs, particularly in the humanities; a shortage of experienced faculty in many disciplines; and a scarcity of appropriate educational resources in certain fields.

As the literature review indicates, international research has predominantly focused on the missions, models, and challenges of universities, while Iranian studies have concentrated on the

analysis of high-level policy documents and institutional strategic plans. This study, therefore, employs a comparative framework to analyze the similarities and differences in the missions of the higher education systems in the selected countries.

2. Research Method

This study is a qualitative comparative investigation. The strategy employed for country selection was based on the principle of "different social systems, different educational outcomes". Data were collected through a documentary analysis of scholarly articles retrieved from academic databases such as Scopus, ProQuest, Eric, Web of Science, Science Direct, and the Iranian databases Noormags, Magiran, and SID. The literature search was conducted using keywords related to the "higher education system," which yielded an initial pool of 218 articles. Following a meticulous screening of titles and abstracts, inclusion criteria were applied: publication period (2011–2022), thematic relevance, and language (English and Persian). This filtering process resulted in a final corpus of 42 articles selected for in-depth analysis. The findings were presented and analyzed according to the stages of George Bereday's comparative method.

3. Findings

A) Description

Iran

During the Qajar dynasty, universities were established as educational institutions to supply the human resources required by the state and to foster the nation's scientific and cultural development (Saffarheidari, 2023). An examination of the historical trajectory of Iran's higher education system reveals seven distinct periods:

- The Formative and Preparatory Period: From the Qajar era until the establishment of the University of Tehran in 1934.

- The Establishment of the Modern Higher Education System: From 1934 to 1947.

- The Period of Quantitative Growth and Expansion: From 1947 until the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

- The Suspension of the Higher Education System: The closure of universities and HEIs from 1980 to 1982, coinciding with the Cultural Revolution.

- The Period of Revival and Reconstruction: From 1981 to 1991.

- The Second Period of Quantitative Growth and Expansion: From 1991 to 2001.

- The Emergence of Qualitative Growth and Strategic Planning: From 2001 onward, aligned with the formulation of the country's 20-Year National Vision Document and the implementation of the Fourth National Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan (Talebi, Jahed & Sarikhani, 2020).

With the advent of the strategic planning era, the mission of Iranian universities became more clearly articulated. In this regard, an analysis of high-level policy documents indicates that these missions are structured around key themes such as human resource development, interaction with governmental organizations, competitiveness, knowledge management, and the optimal utilization of existing capacities (Abbasi Kasani, Abbasi Kasani & Bagheri, 2017). Broadly, the primary mission of the nation's universities can be summarized by three fundamental functions: teaching, research, and social services (within the framework of the entrepreneurial university) (Salimi, Parsa & Mehralizadeh, 2021).

An examination of national strategic frameworks, such as the National Scientific Document and the National Vision Document, reveals a strong emphasis on adherence to Islamic values in defining the missions of HEIs. This includes adherence to principles such as the sovereignty of an Islamic monotheistic worldview, justice-centeredness, ethics-centeredness, and the promotion of enabling science and technology that is in harmony with the environment (Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, 2010).

A concrete example of this emphasis on Islamic values can be observed in the strategic transformation document of one of Iran's leading institutions, Sharif University of Technology. Key values highlighted in its strategic plan include the promotion of academic ethics and Iranian-Islamic culture, excellence in education and human capital development, preeminence in science and technology, social effectiveness, and the enhancement of financial capacity (Sharif University of Technology, 2017). Furthermore, its mission statement explicitly emphasizes "expanding the frontiers of knowledge and contributing effectively to human capital development and the sustainable development of society through the education and training of the next generation of researchers, specialists, and industrial and economic leaders," as well as "developing and applying new sciences, knowledge, and technologies with a priority on meeting the nation's essential needs."

Another example is the University of Tehran, Iran's first modern university. Its motto is: "The University of Tehran, the Symbol of Iranian Higher Education; a Divine, Insightful, Developing, and

Vibrant University." Its mission statement further declares that the university, while "preserving the dignity of science and scholars and establishing justice, provides equal opportunities for the cultivation of the nation's scientific and technical talents" and strives to become "the leading comprehensive university in the Islamic world" (University of Tehran, 2011).

The vision and objectives document of Alzahra University, which exclusively admits female students, states: "This university is the symbol of higher education for women in the country, which, through modern and effective teaching, fundamental and problem-oriented research, and the provision of new technologies, seeks to collaborate with national and international institutions and leverage the expertise of its faculty and scholars to educate cultured and empowered women" (Alzahra University, 2020).

Finally, the 2025 vision statement of the Isfahan University of Technology emphasizes achieving "scientific and technological authority in Asia," attaining "excellence in educating graduates who are ethical, influential, and of a global standard," and making a significant "impact on the surrounding region to realize a knowledge-based society" (Isfahan University of Technology, 2020).

England

Universities in England are recognized as among the world's best in terms of facilities and teaching quality (Williams & Leahy, 2020). The prevailing ethos within the country's higher education system is one of scientific inquiry and a meritocratic culture. As higher education institutions and organizations in England place a strong emphasis on learning and leveraging scientific and professional expertise, they show a propensity for recruiting early-career talent. A report by England's Department for Education (2022) underscores the importance of integrating emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, virtual and augmented reality, and social robotics across all educational levels.

Within the universities of England, the higher education system strives to achieve several key objectives. These include social improvement, peace, sustainable development, social mobility, civic engagement, greater academic freedom, social cohesion and stability, the strengthening of democracy, social development, mental well-being, self-satisfaction, cognitive ability, life satisfaction, and physical health. In addition to these, an emphasis on environmental challenges has gained considerable attention in recent years (Shamugia, 2020).

The core mission and mandate of universities in England can be summarized as follows: excellence in research, teaching, and continuous assessment; advancing the university's scientific standing; creating a supportive environment for research initiatives; fostering a sense of responsibility among staff and students towards society with special attention to environmental

preservation; building a knowledge-based society; providing non-discriminatory access to university facilities for domestic and international students; ensuring academic freedom in inquiry and discourse; and creating a safe, stimulating, inspiring, and environmentally sustainable university. Key values also include freedom of thought and expression, non-discrimination in the provision of services, delivering appropriate educational services, and a commitment to staff welfare (Filippakou & Tapper, 2019).

In addition to the general principles noted across universities in England, the Russell Group universities have articulated a distinct set of missions. These include: leading research activities in Britain, securing the largest share of research funding for member universities, attracting the most talented students and staff, establishing a legal framework to advance the group's objectives and reduce government intervention, and identifying new methods of collaboration among members to optimally leverage the advantages of each member university. It should be noted that the Russell Group is an association of 24 leading research-intensive universities in Britain. These universities are renowned for their profound focus on research and high educational quality. By attracting substantial research funding and preeminent students and faculty, the group plays a pivotal role in Britain's economy and culture. Their primary goal is to strengthen Britain's position as a global hub for research and higher education (Russell Group, 2023).

Germany

The German university system took shape during the 19th century, profoundly influenced by the philosophy of the Enlightenment—particularly the writings of Immanuel Kant (Fallis, 2004). Within the German academic tradition, knowledge is conceived as the outcome of scientific inquiry, and the university is the designated locus for this research. The university is expected to be governed by reason and possess the freedom to conduct any form of investigation. Consequently, in the majority of German higher education institutions (HEIs), the principles of institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and self-governance are considered foundational. Universities are held responsible for upholding these principles with the same gravity as their mandates for teaching and credentialing. The production of knowledge and the advancement of research are thus considered core university missions, equal in importance to the function of teaching (Khakbaz, 2012).

The mottos and mission statements of several German universities reflect this ethos: "Thinking the Future" (RWTH Aachen University), "Truth, Justice, and Freedom" (Free University of Berlin), "Creating a Sustainable Future" (Brandenburg University of Technology), "Knowledge Builds Bridges" (TU Dresden), and "The Truth Will Set You Free" (University of Freiburg) (Hladchenko, 2013).

Germany is notable for its large-scale commitment to international students, offering a wide array of educational programs across various academic levels. The governance of higher education in Germany is decentralized; each federal state (*Land*) establishes its own legislation and regulations for the universities within its jurisdiction. The oldest university in Germany, Heidelberg University, was founded in 1386 and has produced more than 30 Nobel laureates to date (Ahmadpour & Mohamadi Naeni, 2020). The German university has been conceptualized as a space for the pursuit of truth, critical engagement with ideas, and the expression of freedom (Fulda & Missal, 2022).

B) Interpretation

Iran

The Iranian higher education system has historically been shaped by the prevailing social, economic, political, and cultural structures of each era (Shirbagi & Abdolahzadeh, 2020). Following its initial formation and subsequent development, the system emerged as a primary driver of social change, instigating profound transformations across various national sectors. However, the nascent development of Iran's higher education system was impeded by several critical factors. These included the prevalence of a tribal social structure and a perceived lack of need for specialized professions, widespread economic hardship, the dominance of traditionalist thought and resistance to modernization during the Qajar period, severe political turmoil and cultural conflicts, the heavy reliance of higher education institutions (HEIs) on state funding, and systemic gender inequality and discrimination against women (Koyagi, 2009; Tarifi Hosseini, 2012).

Over the past century, a common mission shared by many Iranian universities has encompassed several key objectives: enhancing institutional autonomy; improving regional and international standing; developing the digital sphere; increasing productivity; deepening religious values within institutions; cultivating multi-faceted human potential by integrating physical and spiritual well-being with intellectual pursuits; enhancing student vitality and participation in development programs; expanding into new academic fields and promoting interdisciplinary studies; aligning academic programs with labor market demands; continuously improving the quality of teaching and research; and promoting entrepreneurship, the commercialization of research, and the professional development of faculty and staff (Pour Atashi, 2021).

High-level policy documents of the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasize the adoption of research-oriented and problem-based approaches, primarily through the formation and strengthening of research clusters (Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, 2010; Sharif University of

Technology, 2017). Despite this emphasis, Iran has historically lacked a suitable mechanism for implementing quality assurance policies in higher education, and an effective national structure to coordinate and support the fulfillment of HEI missions has been absent (Moradi, Janavi, & Pakzad, 2020).

Nonetheless, some initiatives have been undertaken in this regard. Examples include the establishment of the Organization of Industrial Research in 1980 and the passage of the "Law for the Protection of Knowledge-Based Companies and the Commercialization of Innovations." These efforts have reportedly resulted in the signing of over 8,002 contracts with industry and society, valued at 1,953 billion Iranian tomans (Kheiry et al., 2021). In other words, the core mission of Iran's higher education system is for universities to intelligently address the emergent needs of society, meet global standards, and enhance quality (Sabouri Aghbolagh Rostam Khan et al., 2025). However, the realization of this mission is currently hindered by several significant obstacles: limited university-industry linkage (Salami & Shafiee, 2014); the prevalence of a defensive and purely results-oriented culture (Ashkbous et al., 2022); and an instrumentalist view of technology (Fardanesh, 2012).

England

In England's higher education system, the focus is on scientific growth and the significant involvement of the private sector in financing educational costs. A documentary analysis of the University of Oxford highlights its core missions: delivering world-class and interdisciplinary education, ensuring equality of opportunity and inclusion, conducting world-class research, fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration, upholding academic freedom, preserving the university's democratic governance structure, and achieving transformative global impact (Braesemann & Marpe, 2023). Although its strategic plan does not explicitly articulate a set of 'values,' the university commits itself to creating a regional innovation ecosystem and fostering an entrepreneurial environment.

In England, university-industry collaboration has been a key driver for the growth of the research and development (R&D) sector, with innovation and the generation of novel ideas established as a primary objective for university-affiliated research centers. The defining characteristics of the higher education system in England include a strong commitment to academic freedom and research-led activities (the dominant "Oxbridge model"), robust social engagement and partnership (Office for National Statistics, 2019), a scientific and meritocratic organizational culture, and a problem-solving approach to technology and organizational resources (Rodriguez-Segura, 2020; Macfarlane & Erikson, 2021).

Germany

The organizational culture within German higher education is centered on the practical application of science, applied research, and the production of knowledge within the university (Andrijevskaja & Vadi, 2006; Koschatzky & Stahlecker, 2010). This academic context fosters a preference for continuous learning, the cultivation of scholarly identities, and the recruitment of early-career academics (Teichler, 2014). In line with other European Union member states, planners within the German higher education system place significant emphasis on the knowledge triangle of education, research, and innovation (Ressel, 2018). Reflecting this priority, the country invested €105 billion in research and development (R&D) in 2018, with 18% of this sum allocated to the higher education sector (Federal Ministry of Education and Research, 2020).

Although German universities for many years emphasized institutional alignment and a common mission (Kehm, 2013), a recent shift has granted them greater institutional autonomy to pursue diversification and formulate distinct missions tailored to specific needs (Berghaeuser & Hoelscher, 2020). Research by Mahdi et al. (2018) indicates that Germany has achieved considerable success regarding the efficiency of its investment in higher education, the reduction of graduate unemployment rates, and the acceleration of science and technology. Furthermore, the core elements of Germany's higher education funding system are the diversification of financing mechanisms and a focus on performance-based, rather than input-based, models.

The overall landscape of the German higher education system is distinguished by several key features: an emphasis on applied research and effective teaching (Jungblut & Jungblut, 2017); the prevailing Humboldtian model of education (Macfarlane & Erikson, 2021); strong university-industry linkages (Koschatzky & Stahlecker, 2010); a scientific and team-oriented organizational culture (Andrijevskaja & Vadi, 2006); a problem-solving approach to technology (Masino & Niño-Zarazúa, 2016). These characteristics collectively differentiate it from other higher education systems globally.

C) Juxtaposition

Based on the findings from the descriptive and interpretive phases of the analysis, it is evident that academics and policymakers in all three countries have focused on several common objectives: increasing graduate output, greater outsourcing of higher education activities to the private sector, aligning university curricula with the demands of the labor market, ensuring universal access to higher education, and diminishing the state's role in both a regulatory and financial capacity.

In line with the academic governance model prevalent in England and Germany, macro-level decision-making is predominantly vested in the academic community and professional university administrators. In Iran, however, the transition from a state-controlled to an academic model remains a contentious issue, as the government continues to play a pivotal and decisive role in higher education decision-making processes (Ranayi Kordshuli & Alavi, 2022). While all three countries emphasize teaching, research, and entrepreneurship to varying degrees, in Iran, there is a more pronounced focus on quantitative growth (e.g., graduate numbers and the quantity of universities) by both policymakers and the government, who often cite these metrics as indicators of development and progress. The number of universities in Iran (607) exceeds that of both Germany (465) and England (280). This is despite the fact that according to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024, Iran has only one university in the world's top 500, whereas Germany has 43 and England has 52 (Times Higher Education, 2023). In Germany, key areas of emphasis include managing increased international competition, accommodating a growing student population, enhancing federal government participation in funding research projects, focusing on the career prospects of graduates, developing specialized degree programs, and meeting the workforce demands of the labor market (OECD, 2019).

Among the recognized models of higher education (Napoleonic, Humboldtian, Oxbridge, and Market), the prevailing model in Germany is Humboldtian, in England it is Oxbridge, and in Iran, there is a lack of adherence to a single recognized model (Zakersalehi, 2017). The Humboldtian model, influenced by German Idealism—which views the human being as autonomous, agentic, and a catalyst for change—emphasizes research and academic freedom. The core features of this model are academic autonomy, academic freedom, and the university's leadership in cultural transformation. Moreover, research free from censorship and uninhibited by its potential outcomes or external authorities is a defining tenet of this model (Bongaerts, 2023). Wilhelm von Humboldt, for whom the model is named, considered the freedom of senior academics to pursue scientific research—without state interference—to be fundamental. He argued that the state itself should be the guarantor of the educational system's freedom. The foundational principles of the Humboldtian university concept include: institutional autonomy; the unity of teaching and research (*Einheit von Lehre und Forschung*); a scholarly life centered on research within the university; a holistic approach to education (*Bildung*); and finally, state protection of the university's freedom to promote the welfare of society and its citizens (Trang, 2023). It is noteworthy that German universities are identified with professional training, the holistic development of the individual, and research, rooted in the belief that the university is simultaneously a professional school, a cultural

center, and a research institution (Jaspers, 2016). The higher education system in England emphasizes social responsibility, cultural and technological literacy, the sanctity of the university, students' personal growth, transferable skills, group research, and problem-solving skills. The dominant model in this country is the Oxbridge model, a name derived from a portmanteau of England's two oldest and most prestigious universities, Oxford and Cambridge (Buckle, 2021). The cultural roots of this model can be found in Anglo-Saxon culture and character. In this model, university autonomy is strongly emphasized, accompanied by a unique funding system where the responsibility for accounting for public funds is delegated to the universities themselves (Palfreyman, and Tapper, 2012). English universities are renowned for their focus on the students' personal and moral development. The university in England is not seen as a place to change past traditions, but rather as a space for the cultivation of intellectual and cultural refinement (Mahouzi, 2018).

In Iran, the French Napoleonic model was adopted, albeit incompletely. With the establishment of the University of Tehran in 1934, the first major steps were taken to borrow from this model. The University of Tehran and other early HEIs were formed under the complete supervision of the central government, educational planning was centralized, university management was delegated to the Ministry of Culture or Education, and academic autonomy was severely limited (Ministry of Culture & Higher Education, 1982). Furthermore, documents from the first Pahlavi era (the reign of Reza Shah) reveal that official state policy was centered on training human resources for government bureaus, aligning university programs with state needs, and full state financing of higher education (Rashtiani, 2018). The university system during this period thus followed the Napoleonic model, characterized by a highly centralized structure under direct state control.

In subsequent decades, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, influenced by European and American models, pressure mounted for greater university autonomy and faculty involvement in governance, although the state retained its decisive role. In recent years, with the introduction of the entrepreneurial university concept and the development of science and technology parks and incubators, a market-oriented university model is expanding within Iran's academic community. However, in practice, these changes have been implemented in a piecemeal fashion, lacking a clear, underlying philosophy or theory of a community-centric university (Samadi-Miarkolaei & Samadi-Miarkolaei, 2021). Table (1) summarizes the main components of the higher education system's mission in the countries under study.

Table 1: Juxtaposition of the Mission Components of Higher Education Systems in Selected Countries

Mission	Iran	United Kingdom	Germany
Overall Vision	Enhancing educational and research activities	Academic freedom and research-driven activities	Applied research and education
Dominant Model	No specific model	Oxbridge	Humboldtian
Connection with Industry and Society	Limited connection	Desirable social engagement and participation	Strong industry connection
Organizational Culture	Defensive and outcome-oriented culture	Scientific and success-oriented culture	Scientific and team-oriented culture
Technology	Instrumental Orientation	Problem-solving	Problem-solving

D) Comparison

Drawing upon the findings presented in the juxtaposition section, the similarities and differences among the three selected higher education systems can be systematically analyzed.

First, whereas the mission of Iranian universities tends to emphasize the effective management of teaching, the universities in the comparator countries define their primary mission as responding to global and local needs and cultivating successful human capital (Hüther & Krücken, 2018). It must be noted, however, that the university in Iran is a nascent institution and a product of modernity; its brief history is not comparable to the nine-hundred-year legacy of European universities (Zakersalehi, 2017). In Germany and England, scientific expansion occurred subsequent to multiple scientific revolutions, whereas in Iran, this process has not followed a continuous and logical temporal sequence (Ahmadpour & Mohamadi Naeni, 2020).

Second, the Oxbridge model in England and the Humboldtian model in Germany—as the two dominant higher education paradigms—are inherently elitist in nature. They prioritize the development of research-intensive and "core" universities. Within these models, value-neutral empirical sciences hold a key position, and scientific growth and progress take precedence over mass education. Improving research performance is considered more critical than mass student recruitment, and university governance is entrusted to a limited group of specialists and academic elites who constitute the institution's cultural authority (Macfarlane & Erikson, 2021). These characteristics are not yet observed as an established academic tradition in many Iranian universities.

Third, influenced by significant quantitative growth over the past four decades (i.e., an increase in the number of universities, students, and faculty), Iran's higher education system suffers from an overextension of its roles and faces unrealistic expectations. Universities have effectively transformed into multi-purpose institutions, shouldering responsibilities that extend far beyond their capacity and intrinsic mission (Zakersalehi, 2017).

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of Higher Education Mission Components in Iran, England, and Germany

Mission Component	Iran	England	Germany
Overall vision	★	★	★
Dominant model	✓	★	★
Linkage with industry and society	★	★	★
Organizational culture	✓	★	★
Technology	✓	★	★

An analysis of Table (2) indicates that beyond the existence of a general vision articulated in Iran's high-level higher education policy documents and the presence of mission statements in the charters of most universities, few substantive similarities exist between Iran and the other two countries. Whereas significant commonalities are observed between Germany and England, both in their articulated missions and their practical implementation, the Iranian university system does not adhere to a distinct or dominant model for defining its missions. Furthermore, while England and Germany share similarities across the three components of "university-community and industry linkage," "organizational culture," and "technology," the connection between the university and society and industry in the Iranian context is emphasized at a theoretical policy level; however, practical steps toward the realization of this mission have been slow to materialize. Moreover, although the integration of technology into the university and the research process is also stressed by Iranian policymakers, a cohesive and unified organizational culture is not prevalent across Iranian universities.

4. Conclusion

This study, employing a comparative approach based on Bereday's model, investigated the mission of higher education in Iran, Germany, and England. The findings indicate that while higher education policymakers in all three countries emphasize common objectives—such as expanding access, outsourcing to the private sector, aligning curricula with labor market demands, and reducing the state's role—the approaches to achieving these goals differ significantly. The comparison revealed that Germany and England exhibit similarities across three key components: "university-industry and community linkage," "organizational culture," and "technology." In contrast, the Iranian higher education system is primarily characterized by state centralism, an instrumentalist view of technology, and limited university-industry linkage. These findings are consistent with the research of Bozbaş and Alkın (2018) and Kanjo et al. (2022).

Another key finding is that a fundamental challenge for Iranian higher education is the burden of multiple, competing roles—a proliferation of missions that leads to fragmentation, a decline in quality, and reduced institutional efficacy. Specifically, the primary focus of policy and institutional missions in Iran is on the quantitative expansion of educational activities and increasing graduate output. In contrast, university missions in England are centered on academic freedom and research-led activities, while in Germany, they are focused on applied research and entrepreneurship. From the perspective of institutional models, Germany's higher education system remains reliant on the Humboldtian model and England's on the Oxbridge model. These paradigms are rooted in the specific historical and philosophical traditions of their societies and provide a clear framework for the university's mission. Iran, conversely, lacks a distinct indigenous model, instead following an incomplete hybrid of the French Napoleonic model and recent trends toward market-oriented universities.

Governance differences are also stark. In Iran, macro-level higher education decisions are predominantly made by supra-sectoral bodies such as the Parliament, the Cabinet, and the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, a structure that challenges both university autonomy and policy coherence. While government and legislative bodies are involved in Germany and England, the policymaking process is largely guided by specialized mechanisms, university participation, and professional bodies.

One of the most significant differences between the Iranian system and those of Germany and England is its tendency to set idealistic objectives for higher education that are disconnected from the nation's social realities. In most Iranian universities, the teaching dimension overshadows the research dimension, developmental planning lacks coherence and foresight, and many institutions operate without clearly defined, documented plans. This situation has led to a persistent misalignment between the stated and latent objectives of universities. Consequently, concerning the three fundamental functions of higher education—the production, transformation, and dissemination of knowledge—the Iranian system has overwhelmingly focused on "knowledge transmission" through quantitative expansion and increased student admission, distancing itself from the two key policies of "knowledge production" and the "application of science in society." Furthermore, the prevalence of a defensive culture and inefficient hierarchies act as serious impediments to reform (Farasatkhah & Maniee, 2023). In addition, university-industry linkage in Iran has failed to take a sustainable and effective form, and a large portion of academic research still lacks practical utility.

Based on the research findings, for Iranian universities to move beyond mission fragmentation and unrealistic expectations, they must redefine their role within the higher education system. As a first step, the mission of universities should be concentrated on two core functions: a) enhancing the quality of teaching and training specialized human capital aligned with the needs of society and the labor market,

and b) producing knowledge and innovation through scientific and applied research. This focus can alleviate the excessive burden of expectations and increase university efficacy. To achieve this objective, several policy actions are recommended: strengthening academic autonomy and reducing external interventions, diversifying financial resources, promoting structured collaborations with industry and society, and expanding international scientific engagement. Additionally, curriculum reform with an international perspective, professional and apolitical monitoring and evaluation, and the protection of academic freedom are essential prerequisites for realizing this new mission.

Ultimately, this study suggests that the future of higher education in Iran depends on a transition from the "state-controlled, multi-purpose university" toward a "university focused on teaching and research with a clear social function." Such a fundamental transition can not only enhance the quality of education and research but also pave the way for increasing the social and economic impact of Iranian universities, bringing them into alignment with global trends.

References

Abbasi Kasani H, Abbasi Kasani S, Bagheri P. A. (2017). Comparative Study of Strategic Programs of Universities affiliated to the Ministry of Science and Medical Sciences Universities in Terms of viewpoints, Missions and Values. *Development Strategies in Medical Education,* 4 (1) :51-67. [In Persian]

Abili, K., and Babaei, M. M. (2018). Understanding higher education on the Asian continent with a systems approach: Based on studies conducted on the higher education systems of Japan, Malaysia, and Iran, *Educational Studies , 6*(1), 63–85. [In Persian]

Ahmadpour, A. and Mohamadi naeni, M. (2020). A comparative study of the higher education system of Iran and Germany, N*ew Approach in Children's Education*, *2*(3), 41-52. doi: 10.22034/naes.2020.240288.1048. [In Persian]

Alzahra University. (2020). *Vision and macro goals document of Alzahra University*. Retrieved from https://www.alzahra.ac.ir/Dorsapax/userfiles/Sub70/files/sanad99final.pdf [In Persian]

Andrijevskaja, J., and Vadi, M. (2006). Measuring organizational culture in Germany. *National and International Aspects of Organizational Culture*, 24(10), 224–247. https://ideas.repec.org/h/mtk/fechap/24-10.html

Ashkbous, S., Darayi, M., and Pourhosseini, E. (2022). Presenting a Model of Organizational Culture in Lorestan University of Medical Sciences. *Sociology of Education*, *7*(2), 76-88. https://jedusocio.com/index.php/se/article/view/223[In Persian]

Berghaeuser, H., and Hoelscher, M. (2020). Reinventing the third mission of higher education in Germany: Political frameworks and universities' reactions. *Tertiary Education and Management, 26*(1), 57–76. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11233-019-09030-3

Bongaerts, J. C. (2022). The Humboldtian model of higher education and its significance for the European University on responsible consumption and production. *BHM Berg-Und Hüttenmännische Monatshefte*, *167*(10), 500-507, available at : https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00501-022-01280-w

Borsetto, E. (2021). *European business schools: A content analysis of mission, vision and values* , Working Paper No. 1, Department of Management, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3794394

Bozbaş, G., and Alkın, R. C. (2018). Comparing Germany and the UK's local approaches on international education: Historical/sociological aspects. OPUS , *International Journal of Society Researches*, 9(16), available at : https://doi.org/10.26466/opus.480704

Braesemann, F., and Marpe, M. (2023). How to foster innovation in the social sciences? Qualitative evidence from focus group workshops at Oxford University. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2309.06875*. https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2309.06875

Buckle, J. (2021). A comprehensive guide to 21st century skills. *Panorama Education*. Retrieved from https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/comprehensive-guide-21st–century-skills

Cortés-Sánchez, J (2017). *Mission and Vision Statements of Universities Worldwide: A Content Analysis. Documentos,* De Investigación, Facultad de Administración, No. 152, Available at: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3051361 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3051361

Department for Education. (2022). Future opportunities for education technology in England. Available at : https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-opportunities-for-education technology-in-england

Department for Education. (2022). *Future opportunities for education technology in England.* Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1080930/Future_opportunities_for_education_technology_in_England_June_2022.pdf

Fallis, G. (2004). *The Mission of the University. Toronto: York University*. Available at: https://cou.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/COU-George-Fallis-The-Mission-of-the-University.pdf.

Farasatkhah, M. and Maniee, R. (2023). Organizational culture and leadership effectiveness at the university managerial level; GLOBE national survey in Iran. *Research and Planning in Higher Education*, *26*(1), 149-175. [In Persian]

Fardanesh, H. (2012). *Theoretical Foundations of Educational Technology.* Tehran: SAMT. [In Persian]

Federal Ministry of Education and Research.(2020). *Education and Research in Figures*. Available at: https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/en/home/home_node.html.

Filippakou, O., and Tapper, T. (2019). *The Significance of Mission Groups for the Structure of English Higher Education and the Demise of the 1994 Group*. In Ourania Filippakou and Ted

Tapper, Creating the Future? The 1960s New English Universities. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Fulda, A., and Missal, D. (2022). Mitigating threats to academic freedom in Germany: the role of the state, universities, learned societies and China. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, *26*(10), 1803-1821. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2021.1989412

Hasan Rezaei, J. (2022). A comparative study of policies and strategies for internationalizing Iran's higher education with selected countries. *Public Policy Journal, 8*(1), 181–194. [In Persian]

Hladchenko, M. (2013). Mission statement-a component of the strategic management of university (on example of German universities). *New Educational Review*, *31*(1), 229-240. DOI: 10.15804/tner.13.31.1.20

Hüther, O., and Krücken, G. (2018). *Higher Education in Germany--Recent Developments in an International Perspective* , 49, Cham: Springer International Publishing, DOI:10.1007/978-3-319-61479-3

Isfahan University of Technology. (2020). *Strategic delivery plan of Isfahan University of Technology.* Retrieved from https://strategic.iut.ac.ir/sites/strategic/files/u123/iut_strategic_plan_report_951204_01pdf [In Persian]

Jaspers, K. (1946). *The idea of the University* , translated by M. Parsa & M. Parsa, 2016). Tehran: Qoqnoos, [In Persian].

Jungblut, J., and Jungblut, M. (2017). All different? All equal? differentiation of universities' mission statements and excellence initiatives in Germany. *Science and Public Policy*, *44*(4), 535-545.

Kanjo, K. A. , Haqhani, M. , Abolghasimi, M. , Ghahramani, M. and Nazari Hashemi, S. R. (2022). A Comparative Study of Higher Education Development in Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey. *Iranian Journal of Comparative Education*, *5*(4), 2164-2182. doi: 10.22034/ijce.2022.326825.1386. [In Persian]

Kehm, B. M. (2013). To Be or Not to Be? The Impacts of the Excellence Initiative on the German System of Higher Education. In C. J. Shin and M. B. Kehm (Eds.), *Institutionalization of World-Class University in Global Competition* , Dordrecht: Springer

Khakbaz, A. S. (2012). Comparative Study of the Cultural Experience of University Teacher Training in Iran and Germany. *Strategy for Culture*, *5*(17-18), 7-25. [In Persian]

Kheiry, Z., Pourabbasi, A., Heydarzadeh, A., Afshari, B., and Givarian, H. (2021). A comparative study of industry–university collaboration model to develop intersectoral collaboration in medical education in selected countries. *Medicine and Cultivation, 30*(1), 66–89. https://sid.ir/paper/963453/en. [In Persian]

khosravi, M. , fadavi, M. and karimi, F. (2020). A Comparative Study of the Components of autonomy University in Iran with the Countries of England, Australia, China. *Journal of Research in Educational Systems*, *14*, 323-349. [In Persian]

Kosmützky, A. (2016). Mission statements and the transformation of German universities into organizational actors. *Recherches Sociologiques et anthropologiques*, *47*(47-1), 41-66, DOI: 10.4000/rsa.1594

Koschatzky, K., and Stahlecker, T. (2010). *The changing role of universities in the German research system: engagement in regional networks, clusters and beyond* (No. R2/2010). Arbeitspapiere Unternehmen und Region.

Kosmützky, A., and Krücken, G. (2015). Sameness and Difference: Analyzing Institutional and Organizational Specificities of Universities through Mission Statements. *International Studies of Management and Organization*, *45*(2), 137–149. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48541777

Koyagi, M. (2009). Modern education in Iran during the Qajar and Pahlavi periods. *History Compass, 7*(1), 107–118. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2008.00561.x

Leal Filho, W., Caughman, L., Pimenta Dinis, M. A., Frankenberger, F., Azul, A. M., and Salvia, A. L. (2022). Towards symbiotic approaches between universities, sustainable development, and cities. *Scientific Reports*, *12*(1), 1-8.

Liyanage, C. L., Villalba-Romero, F., and Carmichael, A. (2024). Fairness in Higher Education Research and Innovation Funding in the UK. *Trends in Higher Education*, *3*(4), 1031-1052. https://doi.org/10.3390/higheredu3040060

Macfarlane, B., and Erikson, M. G. (2021). The right to teach at university: a Humboldtian perspective. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *53*(11), 1136-1147.

Mahdi, M., Hosseini Davarani, S. M., and Firoozabadi, M. (2018). Financing mechanisms of higher education: Case study of universities in Germany. *Financial Analysis Journal, 2*(1), 2–10. [In Persian]

Mahouzi, R. (2018). The philosophical idea of the university and the necessity of attention to it in delineating university ethics. *Culture Leaf Journal, 2*(2), 78–87. [In Persian]

Marginson, S., and Yang, L. (2022). Individual and collective outcomes of higher education: A comparison of Anglo-American and Chinese approaches. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, *20*(1), 1-31.

Masino, S., and Niño-Zarazúa, M. (2016). What works to improve the quality of student learning indeveloping countries? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 48, 53-65.https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2015.11.012.

Mei, W. and Symaco, L. P. (2021). Higher education for development: The Role of University Towns in China. *SAGE Open* 11(3), 215824402110465.

Mense, E. G., Lemoine, P., Garretson, C. J., and Richardson, M. D. (2018). The development of global higher education in a world of transformation. *Journal of Education and Development, 2*(3), 47. https://doi.org/10.20849/jed.v2i3.529

Ministry of Culture & Higher Education, (1982). *History of Iranian Higher Education Institutions*, Tehran: Ministry of Culture & Higher Education Publishing, P. 46. [In Persian]

Mohammadizad, S. , Azizi, N. and Salehi Omran, E. (2019). Comparative Analysis of Iranian Polytechnic Higher Education with Selected Countries. *Iranian Journal of Comparative Education*, *2*(4), 496-517. doi: 10.22034/ijce.2020.105007. [In Persian]

Moradi, S. , Janavi, E. and pakzad, M. (2020). Monitoring and evaluation the situation of Iran in higher education based on national policy documents. *Rahyaft*, *30*(2), 1-19. doi: 10.22034/rahyaft.2020.13808. [In Persian]

Ng, S. W. (2012). Rethinking the mission of internationalization of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 42(3), 439-459.

OECD. (2019). *Education at a Glance: OECD indicators.* Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2019_CN_CHN.pdf

Office for National Statistics.(2019). *Gross domestic expenditure on research and development*. UK. available from: https://www.ons.gov.uk/.

Olo, D., Correia, L., and Rego, M. D. C. (2022). (Mis) match between higher education supply and labour market needs: evidence from Portugal. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*, *12*(3), 496-518. https://doi.org/10.1108/HESWBL-02-2021-0032

Pour Atashi, M. (2021). *Strategic university planning: An analysis of selected strategic plan documents from universities worldwide and in Iran*. Collection of Specialized Higher Education Reports, Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, No. 21,[In Persian]

Ranayi Kordshuli, H., and Alavi, S. M. (2022). Comparison of university governance models in selected countries. *Iranian Journal of Higher Education, 14*(1), 91–113, [In Persian]

Rashtiani, G. (2018). *Documents on the history of higher education in Iran* , Tehran: Institute for Research and Planning in Higher Education[In Persian]

Ressel W.(2018). *Cooperation between Universities and Society, Business and Industry in Research and Innovation*. 2018 Japanese-German Symposium. Tokyo, available at : https://www.janu.jp/eng/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20180426-jpde-presentation6.pdf

Rodriguez-Segura, D. (2020). *Educational Technology in Developing Countries: A Systematic Review*, Working Paper No. 72; EdPolicyWorks Working Paper, University of Virginia. https://curry.virginia.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/epw/72_Edtech_in_Developing_Countries.pdf

Russell Group. (2023). Our Mission. Retrieved from https://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/who-we-are

Sabouri Aghbolagh Rostam Khan, T., Changiz, T., Mirzazadeh, A., van Zanten, M., and Yamani, N. (2025). The experience of 10 years of institutional and program accreditation in Iran with an emphasis on the strengths and implementation challenges: A qualitative study. *BMC Medical Education, 25,* 218. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-025-06738-2

Saffarheidari, H. (2023). The Logic Behind Educational Policy Formation as a Vehicle for Establishing Dominance: An Examination of Higher Education Policy in Iran. *Foundations of Education*, *12*(2), 36-55. doi: 10.22067/fedu.2023.75504.1139. [In Persian]

Salami, S. R. and shafiee, M. (2014). Influence of levels and types of relationship with the University's on innovative performance in Fars Science and Technology Park companies. *Technology Development Management*, *2*(3), 111-136. doi: 10.22104/jtdm.2015.183. [In Persian]

Salimi S, Parsa A, Mehralizadeh Y. (2021). The attitude of university faculty members about the functions of the university, *Iranian Higher Education*, 13 (1) :1-20 URL: http://ihej.ir/article-1-1666-fa.html. [In Persian].

Samadi-Miarkolaei, H., and Samadi-Miarkolaei, H. (2021). On the way to entrepreneurial university; Entrepreneurial University from theory to practice. *Industry and University*, 13(47), 149-150. https://dorl.net/dor/20.1001.1.27170446.1399.13.47.12.4

Shamugia, Z.(2020). Strategic Planning in British Higher Education Institutions: Qualitative Analysis. International *Journal of Applied Business and International Management*. 5(2). 34-62.

Sharif University of Technology. (2017). *Strategic transformation document of Sharif University of Technology* , (Document No. 60-506296). Tehran: Sharif University of Technology, [In Persian]

Shirbagi, N. and Abdolahzadeh, N. (2020). Analysis of Educational Policy-Making Discourse in Iranian Higher Education System. *Iranian Journal of Public Policy*, *6*(2), 179-200. doi: 10.22059/jppolicy.2020.77619

Sterling, S. (2010). *Sustainability education: Perspectives and practice across higher education*. Taylor and Francis.

Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. (2010). *Comprehensive scientific map of the country* Tehran: Secretariat of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. Retrieved from https://irimc.org/Portals/0/PDF/ScientificMap.pdf, [In Persian].

Talebi, F., Jahed, H. A., and Sarikhani, N. (2021). Designing a research quality improvement model in Iranian higher education system. *Ethics and Islamic Education, 11*(42), 145–158. https://doi.org/20.1001.1.23833279.1399.11.42.6.7. [In Persian]

Palfreyman, D. and Tapper, T. (2012). *Structuring Mass Higher Education: The Role of Elite Institutions*, Routledge.

Tarifi Hosseini, H. (2012). *A comparative and analytical examination of the historical evolution of higher education in Iran, emphasizing social, economic, political, and cultural transformations in the Qajar, Pahlavi, and Islamic Revolution periods*. Tehran : Secretariat of the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution. [In Persian]

Teichler, U. (2014). Higher Education Systems and Quantitative-Structural, Higher Education Policy: Differentiation, the Bologna Process, the Excellence Initiative, and their Consequences.

Münster: Waxmann, available at : https://www.waxmann.com/buecher/Hochschulsysteme-und-quantitativ-strukturelle-Hochschulpolitik

Times Higher Education. (2023). *World University Rankings 2024*. Retrieved from https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2024/world-ranking

Torkzadeh, J., Abdosharifi, F., Abbasi, A., and Salimi, G. (2019). Organizational environment management in higher education institutions with a complex adaptive systems approach: Practical implications for managing medical education institutions. *Research in Medical Education,* 11(3), 71–83. [In Persian]

Trang, D. (2023). Humboldt's philosophy of university education and implication for autonomous education in Vietnam today. *Perspectives of Science and Education*, (2 (62), 549-561.

University of Tehran. (2011). *University of Tehran vision document in the horizon of 2025.* Retrieved from https://ut.ac.ir/file/download/page/1566885614-.pdf [In Persian]

Williams, R., and Leahy, A. (2020). Ranking of National Higher Education Systems 2020. University of Melbourne. https://universitas21. com/sites/default/files/2020-04/U21_Rankings% 20Report_0320_Final_LR% 20Single. pdf.

ZakerSalahi, G., and Keykha, A. (2019). A Comparative Study in Higher Education Goals of Certain Countries. *Iranian Journal of Comparative Education*, 2(3), 346-361.

Zakersalehi, G. (2017). Iranian University and the Function & Identity Conflict: Seeking the Lost Model. *Foundations of Education*, *7*(1), 27-46. doi: 10.22067/fedu.v7i1.65181. [In Persian].

Zhuang, T. and Liu, B. (2022). Sustaining Higher Education Quality by Building an Educational Innovation Ecosystem in China—Policies, Implementations and Effects. *Sustainability,* 14.13. 7568. DOI:10.3390/su14137568