

Educational Migration, Institutional Hierarchies, and the Emergence of Academic Alienation in Indian Higher Education

Pooja Jaiswal¹, Dr. Nadeem Luqman²

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Chandigarh University,
Mohali, Punjab, India.
(myselfpoojajaiswal1@gmail.com)

² Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Chandigarh University,
Mohali, Punjab, India.

Corresponding Author:

Pooja Jaiswal
Email: myselfpoojajaiswal1@gmail.com.

Abstract: The phenomenon of educational migration has come to represent a major characteristic in modern higher education in India, especially in the context of institutional stratification, competition in evaluation and growing inclusion. This essay discusses the idea of academic alienation, acquired compliance and the process of diminishing intrinsic motivation as linked consequences of these institutional organization arrangements. Basing on sociological studies of higher education and perspectives of motivation that pertain to the Self-Determination Theory; the research comes up with a conceptual framework that integrates performance-based academic cultures with the psychological experiences of learning involving students. It contends in its analysis that high levels of evaluative institutional cultures tend to promote strategic congruence and risk-averse academic behaviour even in high achieving students. Educational migration is another force that exacerbates these dynamics and introduces institutional pressure along with an increased family demand and investment and social mobility expectations. Instead of seeing disengagement as a personal shortcoming, the paper puts motivational decline in the political economy of higher education as a whole in the sense that the institutional structures contribute to the environment in which meaningful learning and intellectual work can be practiced

Keywords: academic alienation; educational migration; intrinsic motivation; institutional hierarchies; higher education governance; student engagement

Introduction

The last 20 years have seen the growth of higher education in India to be closely linked to a vast reorganization of the institutional environment. Because the size of the universities and colleges has expanded significantly, it has not spread out evenly. Rather, the industry has been differentiated more and more by prestige hierarchies, selective admissions, and differences in credential value. Indian policy studies indicate that massification is often accompanied by new stratification whereby a minor segment of the elite sector grows more reputational capital, research material, and symbolic power within the academic discipline (Tilak, 2015). In these situations, institutional status is a focal organizing factor that dictates the learning experiences of students, both in the access of opportunities and the sense of academic success..

India is not the only country with the dynamics of stratification. Comparative studies of the world higher education demonstrate that rankings, selectivity, and reputational pyramids are becoming more and more important in shaping the distribution of educational benefits (Marginson, 2016). In the Indian scenario, though, these forces are further compounded by the high level of competition on entrance examination and the scarcity of positions in the most desirable institutions. According to (Altbach, 2016), prestigious universities tend to be a symbolic opening to professional mobility and social status. Therefore, the value of academic paths is often measured by the status of the college one studies in as opposed to the actual value of education. Academic success thus is closely connected to quantifiable variables like test results, grade point averages and school affiliation.

In line with such structural changes has been a gradual rise in educational migration within the country. The increasing numbers of students are moving across districts, states, and language borders to attend schools that they seem to have better academic or career opportunities. Students' mobility studies are basically indicating that this kind of migration is usually driven by upward social mobility expectations, exposure to urban academic life, and the perceived benefits of being enrolled in well-ranked universities (King and Raghuram, 2013). The movement of Indian students also works as a decentralized indicator of the ways in which regional differences in educational infrastructure stimulate the desire of students in small towns and marginal areas to pursue educational opportunities in academic hubs (Kumar, 2019). Although this literature has made great contributions to the knowledge about student mobility, it has largely centered on structural factors which include labour market returns, institutional choice and the mobility in geographical terms (Pyoryshkova, 2022). There has been comparatively little focus on the psychological and experiential aspects of migration, especially the ways in which students explain their meanings and internalization of many institutional hierarchies after they have become a part of competitive academic settings.

These changes are also connected with the overall changes in the administration of higher education. Most countries have seen universities taking up more managerial and performance-based practices that relate to neoliberal form of governance Gérard and Lebeau (2023). Such practices lay emphasis on accountability, audit mechanism as well as quantifiable results as measures of institutional efficiency (Apple, 2004). These reforms in universities are frequently represented by systems of evaluation that favour measurable performance metrics, such as student test scores, publications metrics, and ranking of universities. According to Ball (2012), such an environment is a culture of performativity whereby the people in the institutions are supposed to constantly prove their productivity and quantifiable success. It is in these circumstances that learning could more and more be perceived as the generation of evaluational products instead of an investigative activity with knowledge.

Scholars have also maintained that cultures of performativity redefine the day-to-day life of students and teachers. According to Giroux (2014), a situation that occurs when education is subordinated to market-based logics and audit regimes is that the wider educational functions, including critical inquiry, intellectual curiosity, and democratic participation, are pushed to the periphery. Likewise, the academic studies of global performance-related academic cultures have suggested that competitive assessment systems can promote the growth of instrumental approaches to learning in which quantifiable results can be appreciated more than intellectual engagement (Marginson, 2016). In the institutions where competition is tough, the need to sustain the academic status can turn educational involvement into the endless comparison, assessment, and self-regulation.

In the context of psychological studies, scholarly issues arising in these settings can be understood in individual-level models. Stress and anxiety, lack of motivation, and coping challenges

Educational Migration, Institutional Hierarchies, and the Emergence of Academic Alienation in Indian Higher Education

are the personal issues that are often examined as the psychological concerns (Deb et al., 2015). Though all these views have helped to comprehend student well being, they can ignore the institutional and structural conditions that define such experiences. When the issue of academic distress is posed principally as an individual one, more general questions can go unasked regarding the ways competitive educational institutions create such strains (Fülöp et al., 2024). According to Giroux (2014), this trend also threatens to depoliticize the institutional relationships of power by making systemic dynamics appear as natural form of the academic life.

An academic alienation is a concept that is captured in a structural perspective. Based on a sociological debate of alienation and symbolic power, academic alienation can be considered as a state where students remain engaged in the educational practices without gaining a sense of independence, purpose or identification with the learning process. Instead of quitting any academic activity, alienated students tend to do what is expected by the institution, but they view learning as being imposed on them, and as a means to an end (Drake & Guhin, 2025). According to Mann (2001), this kind of participation involves a scenario where students are academically engaged but feel that their studies did not serve any intellectual purpose. These experiences are especially applicable in settings that define success in a very specific way in terms of quantifiable performance and institutional status.

Surveillance and normalization within the institutions also contribute to the way students adjust to them. Basing on the argument of Michel Foucault on disciplinary power, the educational institutions can be seen as the place where the principles of permanent observation, evaluation and assessment stimulate people to control their behaviour according to the expectations of the institution (Foucault, 1977). This relationship can support a culture of obedience and conformity in the competitive academic environment because learners will learn to conform to the judgement criteria that define academic advancement. These adaptive responses can over time restrict opportunities to intellectual experimentation, risk-taking or critical questioning, and strengthen the instrumental strategies of education.

Motivational processes are also closely related to these dynamics. According to psychological research, intrinsic motivation or the need to do something because it is interesting or satisfying is one of the elements that develop when people feel autonomy, competence, and meaningfulness in the learning settings (Deci and Ryan, 2000). The contexts of education that stress on constant comparison, surveillance, and extrinsic rewards can deteriorate such conditions due to the shift of focus on performance results and extrinsic confirmation. As soon as students start to be much more interested in grades, rankings, or institutional reputation, learning might be more and more perceived as a strategic process, which is conducted to satisfy external demand and not to be a personally valuable activity (Shuhidan et al., 2025). On the same note, studies have also shown that external incentives may at times lead to a crowding out effect on intrinsic motivation whereby people are motivated to explain their actions as reactions to external pressures and not as a reflection of internal interest (Benabou, and Tirole, 2003).

These pressures can be heightened in case of migrant students. Mobility in education often entails some serious financial expenditure and symbolic anticipations of families and communities. According to King and Raghuram (2013), migration to get education is usually associated with the potential of social mobility, which can raise the perceived intensity of academic achievement. In this case the academic performance is mixed up with moral expectations of performance and responsibility. Failure can consequently be felt not only as an academic loss but also as a figurative failure to the family who has spent a significant amount of resources, as well as hope, in the education process.

It is on this background that the current paper focuses on the interaction between educational migration and institutional hierarchies to facilitate the academic experiences of students in the Indian higher education. Instead of defining motivation, compliance, or alienation as individual psychological characteristics, the analysis places the phenomena in the context of the political economy of higher education in general. Institutional hierarchies are not merely considered as administrative forms but as social settings that shape the subjectivity and learning orientation of students. Educational migration can therefore be seen as a situation, which has exaggerated contact with competitive academic cultures, at the same time heightening symbolic and material interests of performance.

Framework and Methodological Positioning.

The article has a conceptual and analytical research design as it seeks to analyze the connection between educational migration, institutional stratification, and academic alienation to the Indian higher education. Instead of using the primary empirical data, the analysis combines the knowledge of interdisciplinary research in Political Economy, Educational Sociology, and Motivation Psychology.

The conceptual framework combines the views of Self-Determination Theory with the focus on autonomy, competence, and relatedness as the basic psychology needs, and sociological conceptualizations of institutional stratification and symbolic power. The paper constructs an interpretive framework of structural inequalities within higher education and psychological processes through a narrative review of the existing literature on the topic of educational migration, institutional hierarchies, and student motivation in the context of the appearance of structural inequalities.

Placing academic alienation at the cross-road between institutional organization and motivation relations, the article develops a structural-psychological approach to the issue of student engagement. This viewpoint points to the fact that mobile nature in stratified education systems can be both an opportunity and a source of psychosocial strain that conditions the relationship of students to the process of learning and student involvement in academic life.

Educational Migration and Hierarchies of Institutions.

Mobility in education has become a characteristic attribute of Indian higher education. The growth of colleges and universities in the last three decades has enhanced access to the postsecondary education. But this expansion has been coupled with institutional differentiation where a somewhat limited number of universities, especially centrally-funded universities, established public universities, high-status private universities, and the like, are located in the top ranks of prestige and distribution of resources (Kumar et al., 2024). The Indian higher education system analyses indicate that massification has not erased the inequalities within the institutions but has restructured them with the new hierarchies of reputation, funding, and academic selectivity (Tilak, 2015). In international comparative studies of higher education governance, comparable findings have indicated that fast-growing systems tend to create stratified institutional space in which prestige and opportunity are disassociated (Varghese, 2018). In these kinds of places, mobility among students is closely associated with the perceived institutional hierarchy.

These institutional differences are reflected in the patterns of movement of students internally in India. Educational migration is also quite local, and is usually characterized by a flight of small towns or country districts into metropolitan centres of learning where the high-quality institutions are usually located (Bimali, 2025). Faculty disparity, structural inequality, as well as disparity in research capacity within a region are all major factors that contribute to these movements (Choudhury, 2016). Students

Educational Migration, Institutional Hierarchies, and the Emergence of Academic Alienation in Indian Higher Education

are often migrating to not just receive degrees but also to institutions with a symbolic reputation in the labour market in terms of their name, ranking and alumni network. On sociological perspectives of higher education, there is a focus on the institutional prestige as a measure of competence and distinction that influences how employers and society interpret credentials (Brown and Tannock, 2009). This symbolic hierarchy is a central force of student mobility in competitive education systems because people want to have access to an institution that is related to a higher reputational capital (Marginson, 2016).

Education and migration are hardly ever personal decisions. Education ambitions are entrenched in social mobility plans and outside the family expectations. Studies of the social aspiration emphasize on how families put aside a lot of economic and emotional effort into educational programs that are seen as offering upward mobility (Appadurai, 2004). Education in India has always been linked to social progress and career protection especially in first generation students who desire other opportunities beyond local labour markets (Ray, 2006). Ethnographic research on youth and their experience of educational progressions indicates that college education is often morally and symbolically charged to families that people view academic success as a communal achievement, rather than an individualized one (Jeffrey, Jeffrey, and Jeffrey, 2008). Educational migration is thus bound up in discourses of ambition, sacrifice and duty, and the sense of academic achievement becomes even more intense.

Getting into good institutions, though, also entails getting into highly controlled academic setups. The competitive universities are usually structured on the basis of rigorous evaluation, ongoing assessment and a lot of peer comparison (Hart & Rodgers, 2023). Sociologically, the environments may be interpreted as arenas where players struggle to attain various types of capital such as educational qualification, culture, and employment (Bourdieu, 1998). Students do not come with equal amounts of cultural and linguistic resources due to their prior school education and social backgrounds. Educated in under-resourced schools or using a non-english language may find it hard to adapt to the norms of implicit rules of elite academic settings. The institutional habitus concept can be used to elaborate these dynamics since it emphasizes how institutions of learning favor specific types of cultural competency, styles of communication, and orientations to academic disposition (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). The institutional hierarchies also act not just between universities but also within them and this influences the perception of belonging and legitimacy by students. The migrant students tend to be placed at a rather vague place: their acceptance in the prestigious institutions is of crucial importance, but their social and educational background can subject them to criticisms in terms of academic ability (Bunar & Juvonen, 2021). Studies of student experiences in Indian universities show that when living in a rural or non-metropolitan background, some of them tend to complain of increased self-monitoring and fear of negative appraisal in competitive campus settings (Subramanian, 2019). Research reports on the social disparity in postsecondary education also indicate that students with marginalized backgrounds might experience the need to constantly prove their competence to refute the stereotypes surrounding their performance (Thorat, Sabharwal, and Newman, 2016). The presence of merit lists, rankings, and examination results enhances these pressures by making academic performance a publicly visible sign of value.

Migration may further promote these processes since the students usually enter new institutional environments without social and cultural assets that help them integrate informally. Peer network access, mentoring, and informal advice regarding the expectations in an institution can have a great impact on academic adjustment (Morales et al., 2022). In cases where these support systems are a scarcity, formal assessment systems, including grades, attendance records and exam results, can be the

main measurement scale upon which students determine their position in the academic society. Studies of inequality in education also indicate that students who do not have the knowledge of the institution often use observable performance signs to reinforce their right to be in competitive education settings (Reay, Crozier, and Clayton, 2010). Consequently, the ambitions driving migration may be made more and more reliant on academic performance.

These pressures are enhanced by institutional prestige. The status of elite universities, in a sociological view, serves as a type of symbolic capital, which students aspire one day turn into professional and social movement (Bourdieu, 1986). The perceived value of this symbolic capital when migration is a matter of great financial and emotional input may increase the impact of academic failure. Low educational performance could thus not be merely seen as a temporary inconvenience rather as a menace to the larger project of social mobility which was the driving force of the migration itself. Critical questions on meritocratic talk indicate that these schemes tend to define the realization of success and failure as consequences of personal work and ignore the structural disparities that influence the options of education (Littler, 2018). This manner can support discourses of individual accountability in instances where the experience of students is influenced by disparities in access to cultural and social resources (Apple, 2013).

There is also institutional stratification, which impacts on every university pedagogical culture. According to studies on governing higher education, performance-based management practices have been on the rise in high ranking institutions that have focused on measurable results like grades, research productivity, graduate placement and institutional ranking (Ball, 2012). University anthropological researches also point to the rise in popularity of the audit cultures where evaluation metrics are made the primary tools of institutional control (Shore and Wright, 2015). Academic success, in these contexts, is commonly determined by quantifiable products, and educational engagement can be made to be focused on achieving assessment standards instead of having exploration studies.

Students who must deal with such contexts often do so in a strategic way to meet institutional demands. In the case of migrant students, this adaptive orientation may be heightened by the awareness of the fact that their educational process involves the significant investment in their lives and in the lives of their family (Ali et al., 2021). Academic activity can thus be oriented to the provision of assessment criteria and risk avoidance as opposed to intellectual inquisitiveness or experimentation. These reactions cannot be seen as mere unmotivation, but as manifestations of the ways in which institutional cultures influence the strategies with the help of which students strive to gain admission and popularity in competitive academic spheres.

Those who focus on the political economy of education say that universities not only pass on knowledge but also create subjectivities that conform to the larger economic and social demands (Giroux, 2014). Modern higher education is also promoting more and more self-regulation and performance management that reflect the demands in competitive labour markets (Brown, 2015). In this context, migrant students have a special status. Their enrollment in elite institutions reflects the dreams that are attached to educational mobility and at the same time they find themselves in places where performance demands and institutional inequalities are most pronounced.

Migration to another area in India is thus not just a simple geographical migration. It means that it is penetrated into institutional spaces that are organized in terms of unequal distributions of prestige, resources, and symbolic power. In this sense, migration turns out to be a process in which students experience and deal with the disciplinary logic of stratified academic systems. The knowledge of such

processes offers a basis in studying how academic alienation and acquired compliance might become not, as a matter of personal psychological deviation, but a systematic reaction to structural factors characterizing modern higher education.

Indian Higher Education Politics and Economics.

In order to comprehend the modern framework of Indian higher education comprehensively one must consider the overall political and economic changes that have transformed the industry in the last thirty years of the century. With the economic liberalization reforms associated with the start of the 1990s, the governance of higher education has begun to change to a mixed system of public provision alongside an increasing share of a privatized sector. Previous models were mostly based on the notion of higher education as a social good that is facilitated by the state. However, newer policy changes have brought market-based logics that affect institutional practices and priorities to a greater extent (Tilak, 2015). According to the scholars, these changes did not only get the funding pattern and access changed; they also transformed the institutional standards by which merit, achievement and educational value are established (Jayaram, 2007).

The increasing marketization of higher education has been one of the observable consequences of these changes. The rise of private universities, colleges that are self-financing, and the fee-based professional programs have exacerbated the competition among institutions in the context of the competition in access to students, resources, and reputational capital (Agarwal, 2009) (Zhang, 2025). Meanwhile, there is a growing fiscal strain on public universities which prompts them to implement market based approaches like raising revenues, branding and performance measurement (Tilak, 2018). Within this context, universities are progressively functioning both as intellectual communities and as organizations that turn into players in an educational marketplace.

The institutional rankings and accreditation systems contribute greatly towards enhancing these competitive dynamics. The performance of institutions has been altered as the expansion of institutional and international ranking schemes have altered the process of institutional performance assessment and publicity (Rafique et al., 2023). National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) has become a powerful tool in India that has defined the institutional reputation and choice of students. Ranking systems are frequently justified by the need to be more transparent and accountable, but they also make comparison and competition between institutions become regular (Hazelkorn, 2015). According to anthropological accounts on governance in higher education, these mechanisms are one of the factors that lead to the development of audit cultures whereby institutional practices are becoming more inclined to be based on quantifiable performance measures instead of more educational objectives (Shore and Wright, 2015). Therefore, universities often build teaching, research and administrative strategies to conform to ranking criteria, often at the cost of pedagogical richness or contextuality.

Ranking systems contain a competitive logic, which is closely associated with the prevalence of entrances exams and credential-based regimes of evaluation (Rafique et al., 2023). The use of high-stakes entrance examinations serves the role of gatekeeping by controlling access to high status institutions. Even though such examinations are officially defined as objective and meritocratic mechanisms of distributing scarce opportunities, their results are frequently influenced by social inequalities of a larger scale, such as the difference in the quality of schooling, the access to coaching services, and linguistic inputs (Jeffrey et al., 2008). The sociological studies of education have highlighted that in such systems, people often establish new hierarchies by favoring the types of cultural capital that are congruent to the institutional conventions (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). There

is also empirical evidence of inequality in Indian universities which suggests that historically disadvantaged students tend to face structural disadvantages in the competitive academic setting (Thorat et al., 2016). By so doing, credential regimes can convert structural inequalities into the discourses of personal merit or ineptitude.

Meritocracy is thus at work not as an assessment practice but also as an ideology of institutional hierarchies. Critical scholars claim that meritocratic talk tends to hide social situations influencing the academic performance by portraying academic achievement as the logical outcome of talent and hard work (Apple, 2013). In Indian higher education, these discourses may make competition and academic pressure intense and depict unequal outcomes as a sign of the high-quality performance (Nambissan and Ball, 2016). It also then follows that students will be motivated to internalize responsibility of success or failure even in cases where the institutional conditions that affect evaluation are not evenly distributed.

These dynamics are further maintained by the institutionalization of standardization practices and audit practices. Modern universities are more and more subjects to regimes of accreditation reviews, outcome assessments and performance evaluations which govern academic activity. This is what Stephen J. Ball refers to as a culture of performativity whereby institutional actors have to prove to be productive by use of quantifiable indicators (Ball, 2012). In these settings, the faculty and students are supposed to deliver observable products, grades, completion rates, publications and placements, which can be tracked and compared across schools. The activity of education is thus brought close to managerial and bureaucratic logic.

Bourdieuian-wise, these institutions arrangements are viewed as the processes of social reproduction. Universities are seen as arenas where the reigning types of cultural and symbolic capital are known and rewarded and alternative types of knowledge or expression can be marginalized (Bourdieu, 1998). It is easy to overlook the social assumptions that are implicit in their standards, examinations and grading rules. Therefore, the hierarchies that exist in the institutions can be maintained even in the case of an increase in access to higher education.

Critical pedagogy provides one more perspective on which these changes can be understood. Other scholars, like Henry A. Giroux, suggest that neoliberal restructuring of higher education reinvents the role of university in terms of its contribution to economic competitiveness and labour market preparation (Giroux, 2014). Students are becoming more of consumers of educational services and as potential employees whose worth is in their productivity. This tendency is observed in the increasing focus on employability, skills training and relevance to the market in the design of the curriculum in India (Kumar, 2019). Although these priorities are a reaction to economic drivers, they can also limit the wider scope of educational objectives historically identified with universities and these include critical inquiry, ethical thinking and civil action.

Higher education political economy thus defines not only the institutional set ups, but also how students cognize themselves as learners. The competitive educational settings breed the feeling of self as a perpetual project of self-investment and optimization (Brown, 2015). Constant performance is expected to allow students to keep track of their performance, gain credentials, and become more employable. In this context, success is based on endless self-control, whereas failure is mostly viewed as the sign of personal insufficiency.

Elite educational credentials also increase the levels of these pressures in highly stratified systems, due to the symbolic meaning they hold. Since the privileged institutions have to be difficult to access, the perceived outcomes of academic failure become especially harsh (Simula & Scott, 2020). The focus on quantifiable results, grades, placements, and rankings, also causes further diversion of the

focus on the intrinsic worth of learning into the instrumental gains of educational success (Ball, 2012). In the long run, these circumstances can limit intellectual ventures or experimentation, promoting adherence to set standards of evaluation.

These political-economic processes are important in understanding the experiences that students go through in greater hierarchical higher education programs. The occurrence of phenomena like academic alienation, learned compliance, and the falling intrinsic motivation are not produced in a vacuum of the institutional settings. Instead, they are bred in educational settings that are designed rooted in competition, standardized and performance-based assessment (Worrell & Luo, 2024). By appreciating these structural factors, such an analysis can no longer rely on individualized reasons as to why students are getting distressed but rather focus on the structure of the institution that is informing how higher education is being conducted in present-day society.

Academic Alienation as an institutional Consequence.

Academic alienation has become a popular but unstudied aspect of student experience in modern higher education systems. The topics of student well-being often revolve around stress, burnout or disengagement. Alienation, on the other hand, indicates a more profound break in the relations between the learners and the educational process as such. This paper believes that academic alienation should be viewed as a habitual engagement with institutional conditions of high competition, constant assessment, and performance-driven academic regimes, as opposed to conceiving academic distress as merely a psychological effect of the previous.

Alienation is a notion developed in classical social theory. In his first works, Karl Marx explained alienation as the state where workers lose their control over objects and procedures of their labour which leads to the division between individuals and meaning of their activity (Marx, 1844/1978). In spite of its original application to industrial labour, the concept has been transferred to educational settings to explore how institutional structures can alienate learners to the intellectual reason why they are working (Apple, 2013). In universities, alienation can be created when educational involvement turns into more of an instrument, or is goal oriented and geared towards qualifications and extrinsic incentives (Buzzai et al., 2020).

Academic alienation is not a similar idea to stress, burnout, and disengagement. Stress can be described as a psychological pressure that develops under the influence of perceived demands and resources being below the perceived demands, whereas burnout is commonly described as an emotional exhaustion and loss of efficiency due to extended work in the demanding environment (Maslach and Leiter, 2016). On the contrary, disengagement is frequently characterized by withdrawal of behavior in learning activities. Alienation is another state: students can be active and productive in studying and feel less connected to the process of learning. According to Brown (2015), alienated students tend to still fulfil the expectations of the institution despite the activity being deprived of intrinsic meaning.

There are three dimensions of alienation that are especially pertinent in the sphere of higher education. The first is alienation in the learning process as intellectual exploration becomes subservient to completing tasks and performing assessment. Knowledge learning may be limited to the requirements of evaluation instead of curiosity-driven learning in such environments (Ball, 2012). The second dimension is alienation to self as a learner. Students can arrive to evaluate their performances not by their own intellectual interests or capabilities but by externally determined measures, e.g., grades, rankings, or comparison with others (Bourdieu, 1998). A third dimension is the loss of meaning that is involved in education itself. The process of learning can be reformulated into a strategic

investment or a requirement instead of a significant interaction with knowledge and ideas (Giroux, 2014).

The main role in this transformation is played by motivational processes. The Self-Determination Theory argues that when people perform activities because of interest and pleasure, and with the help of the experiences of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, intrinsic motivation is formed (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Schools that promote surveillance, evaluation, and external reinforcements can undermine these conditions because they are guided by focus on the measurable results. The motivation can change over time to externally controlled forms of engagement where motivation is motivated by rewards, coercion, or evading adverse outcomes (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Academic alienation thus does not only mean reduced motivation but a shift of motivational orientations to controlled ones.

The role of institutional dynamics on the production of these experiences is relevant. In the Bourdieusian lenses, universities develop appraisal standards that seem to be objective but in fact favor specific forms of cultural capital and academic disposition (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Learners with divergent educational backgrounds to these mainstream standards can be faced with the challenge of adjusting to the expectations of the institution. The repetition of evaluation can support the sense of inadequacy in students, making them develop protective mechanisms to keep their self-identity unrelated to academic results. The emotional detachment can, thus, serve as an individual means of maintaining self-esteem in the highly appraisal-based educational settings (Zeb et al., 2025).

The previous sociological studies of alienation give more information about the dynamics. Melvin Seeman has distinguished powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement as the key attributes of alienation experience (Seeman, 1959). The later studies conducted in the field of education have extended these ideas to the schooling settings revealing how bureaucratic systems, standardized curricula, and credential-focused systems can suppress the ability of students to feel agency to learn and even take ownership (Sidorkin, 2004). As the participation toward education turns out to be more instrumental in nature, students can still be involved behaviorally, but less intellectually (Case, 2008).

The perspective on alienation as adaptive response instead of individual deficit helps in shunning the deficit-related interpretations of student experience. Emotional distance of learning in the high competitive environments might enable students to go through the continuous evaluation process without the psychological burden. Students are able to minimise the risks of experimentation or failure by reducing their involvement to activities necessary to achieve institutional success (McGuire, 2025). This meaning of alienation is an accommodation to institutional realities negotiated and not the denial of education itself.

Performance oriented academic cultures also support these dynamics. With universities beginning to gauge success based on metrics like completion rates, graduate placement, and institutional rankings, it is likely that pedagogical approaches will emphasize efficiency and predictability at the expense of exploratory learning (Shore and Wright, 2015). Students in such regimes quickly learn that when one meets evaluation standards, they are more likely to receive more certain rewards rather than taking intellectual risks. Conformity is thus a logical approach to manoeuvring institutional demands.

The interpretation of academic alienation as an institutional product relocates the analytical emphasis in examining failure on an individual level to the structural forces that define educational involvement. As competition, surveillance, and performance are continually reinforced in the learning environments, motivation orientations can eventually be externalized. Alienation therefore does not come as a result of absence of student motivation but as a result of institutional structures that redefines the concept of educational interaction.

Educational Migration, Institutional Hierarchies, and the Emergence of Academic Alienation in Indian Higher Education

The identification of these structural dynamics offers a basis on which we can study the way academic alienation can relate to other processes like migration, compliance, and motivational change. These institutional pressures can be acute in the case of migrant students who are getting into competitive academic settings with high personal and family demands. This discussion summarizes these dynamics in order to explore the interaction of institutional hierarchies and student mobility in developing the experience of students in modern higher education systems.

Gained Compliance and Performance-Oriented Academic Cultures.

In the modern system of higher education in which hierarchical governance systems and heightened accountability systems have become established, the student adaptation can be seen to be in the form of what possibly can be referred to as gained or learnt compliance. Compliance is not an act of mere obedience to authority, but it evolves over time as a result of exposure to institutional pressures that induce conformity, strategic silence, and efficiency in the process (Raaper, 2015) (Kirsch & Spreckelsen, 2023). Gradually, students learn behavioural standards that favor predictability and institutional conformity to intellectual risk-taking and critical thinking. Compliance is thus a psychological adjustment to ordered evaluative situations and not a passive conformity to authority.

The generation of compliance is strongly interconnected with the mechanisms of institutional surveillance instilled in the contemporary educational frameworks. Based on the analysis of Michel Foucault, universities may be viewed as the spaces where visibility is being regulated in turn (Foucault, 1977). The monitoring of attendance, assessment on a continuous basis, the use of online learning environments and ranking systems make student performance constantly monitored and comparable. Within these settings, discipline is not as enforced as it is internalized with institutional norms. Learners develop to control their behaviour in the anticipation of assessment and internalise the external demands into self imposed standards that they use to shape their engagement in the academic life. The assessment regimes help to stabilise such behavioural patterns. Fixed testing, high-stakes testings, and performance standards characterize the narrow paths to success, which indicate what types of involvement can be rewarded and what punishments may be applied. Education Research Studies indicate that evaluative frameworks like these give high value to measurable outcomes and the reputation of the institution and from this viewpoint, tend to discourage the experimentation or intellectual deviation that could threaten to compromise measurable outcomes. Performance cultures, according to Stephen J. Ball, reorganize education spaces around performance measures that remake the institutional interests as well as redefine the behaviour of individuals (Ball, 2012). In these circumstances, conformity is an expedient approach to operating systems that favor foreseeability and measurable success.

The externally observed behaviours that may seem like disengagement when observed i.e. quietness in the classroom or unwillingness to disagree with ideas, may thus be viewed as the strategic response instead of indifference. Students tend to be industrious in doing assigned work and at the same time fail to provide the views that may interfere with the evaluative processes. This behaviour aspect is comparable to the idea of habitus by Pierre Bourdieu that talks of how people internalize dispositions that help them act within specific social fields (Bourdieu, 1998). By engaging with institutional structures through repetition, students come to entrench tacit knowledge about the forms of participation that are deemed to be safe, productive, or risky in an academic setting.

These procedures are also affirmed by the so-called hidden curriculum according to educational theorists. In addition to official learning outcomes and formal syllabi, universities do pass on informal messages regarding power, authority, and legitimate types of agency as exercised by students. The

initial interpretations of schooling emphasized the ways in which institutional habits train students to talk and not to talk and to show competence and reduce vulnerability (Jackson, 1968; Giroux and Penna, 1979). In more hierarchical and competitive systems of higher education, mastering this invisible curriculum is a valuable asset towards academic success.

These dynamics are heightened by performance-based academic cultures which redefine education as a series of marks. The focus on grades, rankings, placements, and accumulation of credentials promotes the use of instrumental methods of learning where outcomes gain more primacy than intellectual inquiry. According to the critical scholarship on neoliberal changes in education, these systems define success in which a productivity that can be measured and an institutional competitiveness are features instead of enlightened inquiry or production of knowledge (Brown, 2015). In such settings, the interpretation of compliance is usually taken as professionalism and a challenge to institutional practices can be taken as inefficiency or risk.

The latter are affective pressures that also lead to compliance consolidation. In hierarchical systems of higher education in which the economic and social ramifications of not meeting institutional requirements can be immense, the perceived cost of not doing so, can be enormous. Students with career paths that are tightly connected with the social mobility or family investment can become especially sensitive to the danger of experimentation or opposition. The studies on the issue of class inequalities in education state that these pressures often stimulate the adoption of the strategies, which can be explained by the intention to reduce the exposure to failure or the assessment of performance (Reay et al., 2010). Consequently, the predictability and conformity in strategy can slowly take over intellectual exploration.

There is a need, therefore, to differentiate between compliance and actual study. Engagement normally entails inquisitiveness, personal motivation and effective involvement in the learning activities. Compliance on the other hand is about the enforcement of institutional expectations without having to internalize the intellectual values that come with education. Students can go to lectures, do their homework and pass good tests without engaging psychologically with the extra meaning of academic investigations. This difference can be used to understand how students who are succeeding by institutional measures can also be at the same time undergoing some form of academic alienation.

The nuanced effect of compliance is that it normalizes. The alternative forms of participation can become inapplicable or even impossible as the institutional norms are being internalized over time. Foucaultian concept of power works best when it dictates the parameters of what people assume they can and cannot do within a particular institutional environment (Foucault, 1977). Conformity of behaviour is then redefined in terms of discipline, professionalism, or maturity, and the means of curbing intellectual autonomy in particular are obscured.

Simultaneously, compliance cannot be understood as a lack only. Compliance is a survival mechanism in the academic systems of many students who face competitive conditions especially in stratified systems. Keeping the institution legible, i.e. seeming trusted, disciplined, and risk-averse, can be a precondition of academic advancement and subsequent success. Studies on Indian higher education also reveal that high competition levels and institutional hierarchies precondition the way students cope with the level of academic risk and evaluation pressure (Tilak, 2015).

However, the formalization of compliance has extensive consequences to both critical and democratic roles of higher education. Once success is marked by the capacity to maneuver performance metrics as the main marker of success, universities can give forth graduates who are capable of functioning within the established systems but less ready to challenge or change them. Henry A. Giroux and other scholars caution that these conditions will undermine the critical and emancipatory nature

of higher education traditionally linked with higher education (Giroux, 2014).

In this view of it, the problem of domain in which compliance is acquired should not be interpreted as a psychological inadequacy in any individual, but rather as a structural product of the learning context organized around monitoring, testing, and accountability of performance. Passivity or disengagement behaviours can instead be long term ecclesial adaptation to the academic cultures that support conformity and punish intellectual risk. This dynamic is crucial to the insight on how academic alienation becomes reproductive in life in a university.

Intrinsic Motivation Decrease amongst the Migrant Students.

The importance of intrinsic motivation as a key pillar of significant learning, intellectual interest, and prolonged commitment to academic endeavor is a well-established fact. Self-Determination Theory provides one of the most persuasive models of motivation functioning in the field of education in terms of educational psychology (Guay, 2021). The theory was created by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan and it states that intrinsically motivated learning will arise, provided that three basic psychological needs are met: autonomy, competency, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2017). When those needs are met the students will feel that learning is self directed and intellectually significant. Nonetheless, institutional contexts that are characterised by surveillance, high competition, and performance based appraisal often roll back these motivational premises. In the case of students who transfer educational settings, such institutional circumstances can greatly re-define the motivational orientations which originally inspired their search of higher education.

Self-Determination Theory differentiates intrinsic motivation which is motivated by curiosity or interest and extrinsic motivation which is motivated by rewards, pressure or external judgement (Guay, 2021). Despite the fact that extrinsic motivations can at times be internalised, studies show that the highly regulated settings tend to produce some form of controlled motivation as opposed to engagement that is autonomous (Deci, Koestner, and Ryan, 1999). The modern day universities are paying more attention to quantifiable results like grades, rankings, placements and prestige of the institutions. With the making of assessive measures central in academic success, the definition of being involved in higher learning institution is slowly turning to a scale of performance management instead of an intellectual exploration (Spence, 2018). These dynamics are especially important when it comes to migrant students whose educational paths are often referred to as being associated with the prospects of social mobility and family investment.

The psychological requirement of autonomy, which is the sense of volition and ownership over the learning process, is usually limited by the highly standardised academic frameworks. Prescriptive curricula, strict evaluation mechanisms and strictly controlled academic schedules allow little room to intellectual experimentation or self exploration (Cullen & Oppenheimer, 2024). Researchers who seek to understand how motivation works in institutions have noted that these conditions affect the sense of ownership of students of learning activities (Benabou and Tirole, 2003; Ball, 2012). Caution can be a logical course of action to migrant students who have to go through the darkness of the other institutional cultures. The process of developing academic legitimacy needs to show reliability and adherence to institutional demands and this may slowly turn learning into an inquiry process into learning into a calculated move to cope with evaluation.

Another key factor of the Self-Determination Theory, the need of competence, is also influenced by hierarchical learning settings. Competence is most preferably practiced as a feeling of mastery and effectiveness in the learning activities (Kharroubi & ElMediouni, 2024). Competence in stratified systems of higher education is often determined by comparative indicators like rankings and norm-

referenced grading, however. With the global reputation economy growing in universities, comparative assessment has been heightened both between institutions and between students. Ellen Hazelkorn claims that the cultures of global rankings have promoted the emphasis of universities on indicators of performance in a competitive academic context that are quantifiable, thus contributing to the strengthening of the competitive academic cultures (Hazelkorn, 2015). In the case of migrant students who have to adjust to new language, cultural or instructional standards at the same time, these comparative frames may result in a continued sense of confusion about whether they are sufficient or fit. According to the research on achievement goal orientations, such contexts in most cases promote performance-avoidance methods, where students tend to grasp performance avoiding methods as opposed to developing a deeper cognition (Elliot and Murayama, 2008).

The third psychological need is relatedness which is the sense of belonging and meaningful relationship in social environments. Educational migration often interferes with the support systems, such as family and known peer groups and local cultures (Brandt & Hagge, 2020). In competitive universities, the informal hierarchies, which are founded upon the basis of academic reputation, language skills, or social economic status, may also further complicate the relational integration. According to sociological studies of higher learning, it has always been observed that students who feel to be peripheral to the institutional cultures find it difficult to establish supportive academic relationships (Reay et al., 2010). Belonging is no longer certain, and motivation can continue but grow weak and is more based on an obligation or expectation than on intellectual community.

In this situation, academic performance indicators tend to gain a symbolic significance. There is a gradual shift of grades and rankings and test results being not just a measure of success, but also personal value and social validity. Opponents of the performance-driven educational systems state that overreliance on quantitative indicators involves a redefinition of the motivational environment by focusing on the quantifiable outputs rather than the reflective learning (Kohn, 1999; Brown, 2015). Academic performance may have a particularly strong emotional weight among migrant learners whose academic careers are often related to strong family cost and career desire. Loss is hard to analyze as a natural part of intellectual growth.

There is no need to assume that motivation in such situations is lost but its nature is transformed. Academic study becomes more and more influenced by anxiety, risk aversion and strategic compliance with institutional demands. The empirical studies based on the Self-Determination Theory confirm that controlled types of motivation, which are motivated by pressure or obligation or contingent upon self-worth, are also connected with worse well-being, lower creativity, and more frequent use of surface learning strategies (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Significantly, the motivational changes cannot be reflected as individual shortcomings. Instead, they indicate the resolution between the ambitions of students and institutional contexts that are organized around the unceasing assessment.

According to recent scholarship, motivation is becoming more and more emphasised as not an individual psychological characteristic, but a phenomenon that is influenced by institutional contexts and social relations. The motivational orientations that students have developed throughout their school lives are affected both by pedagogical practices and assessment regimes and, in general, by governance structures (Niemiec and Ryan, 2009). School systems that do not promote autonomy, competency and relatedness as foundations of educational system are likely to result in a loss of internal drive. The position of migrant students in such dynamics is often a very sensitive one since mobility in education is a mixture of high aspirations and structural vulnerability.

Interpreting motivational erosion as a systems process hence changes the focus of analysis to deficit-based accounts of student disengagement. Rather, it brings out the role of institutional

arrangement in the quality and meaning of academic participation. According to critical scholars of the study of modern higher education, the market-driven university system is becoming more dependent on market-style self-discipline that is maintained by pressure and no longer genuine intellectual activity (Giroux, 2014; Brown, 2015). In these settings, the deterioration of the intrinsic drive in migrant students portrays more general changes in the ways universities structure learning, significance of knowledge, and their perception of academic achievement.

The identification of these dynamics is crucial to reconsidering the concept of higher education not just as a credential producing system but also as a field of psychological inclusion and intellectual growth. Although the idea of educational migration is often hailed as the avenue to the reinforced opportunity, it can thus enhance tensions between institutional hierarchies, motivation pressure and the subjectivity of students. The next section discusses the fact that mobility, in turn, intensifies these dynamics and contributes to the experience of academic alienation in modern higher education systems.

Migration: As a Psychological Pressure Amplifier.

Migration of education is widely studied as a demographic or mobility process. But in stratified higher education systems it is also a psychological magnifier, aggravating the impacts of institutional hierarchies and high-performance based academic cultures. Academic competitive landscapes have been found to influence all students, yet the experiences of those who migrate to obtain education are usually exposed to such frameworks in circumstances of increased symbolic, financial, and emotional expenditure (Demange et al., 2020). Migration amplifies the effects of institutional design in this way, turning everyday practices of academic assessment into experiences constituted within larger social expectations.

The decisions to migrate in the quest to obtain education in the Indian context are hardly ever made individually. They are often entrenched within the group family approaches of attaining social mobility, especially among the rural or non-metropolitan students (Mathew, 2024). According to sociological studies of the youth aspirations in India, educational mobility is largely entangled with family demands, economic investment, and progress stories (Jeffrey et al., 2008; Desai and Kulkarni, 2008). In a bid to help students join quality institutions, families tend to spend a lot of resources, including financial in savings, emotional dedication, and social capital. Because of this, migrant students fail to achieve academic success as an individual goal; their lines of study path are connected to the symbolic task of achieving the group aspirations (Jamil & Atta, 2025). Such moralisation of education achievement changes the psychological experience of academic achievement. Failure to honour family sacrifice may be viewed as the setbacks, which otherwise could be treated as normal elements in the learning process (V. Kumar & Kumar, 2024). The ethnographic work on educational paths in India can help to understand how learners often attribute the lack of academic success to the feelings of guilt, anxiety, and fear of failing their family (Radhakrishnan, 2011; Thapan, 2014). These emotional processes may reinforce adherence to institutional processes, and thereby increase risk-averse behaviour.

These dynamics are further worsened by economic pressures. Migration in education often entails a large amount of money investment such as the school fees, the cost of accommodation, and the cost of preparation/coaching to the school or the exams to enter. Savings, borrowing or reallocation of limited family resources facilitate such investments in most homes. Higher education in India, as noted by Jandhyala B. G. Tilak, has since taken on a new role as a big investment to a family seeking upward mobility (Tilak, 2015). In this context, education is not an intellectual pursuit but a stake high

endeavour, which is supposed to have concrete payoffs. This means that students tend to value achievements like grades, placement and professional qualifications rather than exploratory learning that seems to be unpredictable and risky.

Symbolic expectations of making it into prestigious institutions are also another source of pressure to this. The process of admission to very reputable universities is often considered as an indicator of quality and brilliance and social mobility in families and societies (Robert et al., 2024). Analysis of education market in the world with sociological perspectives has pointed out that educational credentials act as strong status indicators in the competitive labour markets (Brown and Tannock, 2009). In the case of migrant students, such a symbolic meaning may lead to some sort of grade-identity confusion, where performance gains such an importance that it is closely related both to individual identity and family pride.

Migration is also changing the social and emotional climate within which students study. Geographic mobility normally entails the loss of familiar cultural milieu and known support systems. Students need to go through new linguistic situations, new institutional cultures and peer cultures that are competing at the same time (Ferreira & Borges, 2022). The findings of research on inequality in higher education propose that when an individual feels culturally marginal in elite academic spaces, there are usually challenges that face his or her efforts to forge positive social relationships (Reay et al., 2010). In case of limitedness of such relational resources the psychological buffers that would otherwise help in alleviating academic stress are less available.

Such conflicting pressures enhance the institutional forces, which were mentioned earlier in the paper. Such mechanisms as surveillance, continuous assessment, and competitive benchmarking are not applied in psychologically neutral environments. Instead, they relate with increased stakes of migrant students. Migration and institutional hierarchy are thus multiplicative as opposed to being additive. Any academic stress that students may be adequately coping with within local support systems turns out to be quite more decisive on the part of those whose schooling experience is deeply connected to family dreams and social connections.

Narrowing of learning behaviour is one of the results of this amplification. Migrant students can avoid courses that seem academically risky, repressed intellectual interests that are not subject to formal evaluation criteria or focused on the methods that yield the maximum predictable performance. These tendencies cannot be seen as the absence of curiosity or intellectual activity. Instead, they are practical adjustments to the conditions in which the perceived effects of scholastic failure are unusually high.

In terms of motivation, migration can thus hasten the process of transitioning away of intrinsically motivated forms of participation to externally controlled participation. Evaluation-based and accountability-based motivation is already promoted in performance-oriented institutional cultures. Since these are compounded with the responsibilities and the worries that come with educational mobility, the crowding-out effect on intrinsic motivation will be even stronger. Schooling might be more and more taken as a means of keeping social and economic security than as a field where the intellect could be utilized.

Notably, the idea of migration as a stressor does not mean that migrant students are more susceptible or less competent per se. Rather, the notion focuses on the way institutional arrangements intersect with the sociocultural backgrounds with the resultant creation of predictable psychological impacts. Migration does not produce alienation in itself, but gathers both institutional power and individual investment in the same experience, and makes their interaction more severe.

Educational Migration, Institutional Hierarchies, and the Emergence of Academic Alienation in Indian Higher Education

The view has a more general implication on issues of access and equity in higher education. Discussions of policy tend to conceptualize educational migration as the sign of an opportunity and mobility expansion. Access is however not enough to have meaningful inclusion. Students can also get into superior institutions and at the same time operate in a system that is made up of continuous assessment, fear of failure and the need to perform. In these circumstances, he or she may be engaging in higher education by being in a state of strategic compliance as opposed to intellectual engagement.

The concept of migration as a psychological amplifier is thus a bridge between structural accounts of higher education on the one hand and the experiences of students in the context of academic institutions on the other. It points out that institutional hierarchies are mostly experienced most by individuals who join them via avenues that are influenced by aspiration, sacrifice, and movement. It is critical to identify these dynamics in order to rethink the idea of higher education as a field of opportunity as well as one where institutional power is not evenly distributed and internalised.

Higher Education Governance Implications.

The implications of the arguments presented in this paper have significant implications on the management of the current higher education systems that are becoming highly influenced by the use of performance measures, institutional competitiveness, and market-driven policy frameworks. Instead of coming up with the proposal of very specific programmatic interventions or individual-level solutions, the analysis indicates that governance arrangements themselves can lead to the generation of academic alienation and learned compliance, as well as, to the loss of intrinsic motivation. These relations can be especially noticeable in the experience of migrating students seeking educational opportunities and facing the institutional hierarchies in the circumstances of increased symbolic and material investment.

In most national systems such as India, managerial and performance-based models have been gradually integrated into higher education governance factors and; this has emphasised on those measurable indicators of institutional success. Universities are being evaluated by way of ranking systems and accreditation regimes and audit cultures and outcome funding systems. Researchers and commentators discussing these trends state that by giving a greater value to quantifiable outcomes, including completion rates, employability, and research output, these structures have redefined institutional purposes by focusing less on the overall education aims (Ball, 2012; Shore and Wright, 2015). Though these mechanisms are commonly approved in terms of accountability and quality assurance, they at the same time restrict the set of criteria by means of which educational value can be recognised institutionally.

Relative invisibility of student subjectivity to the structures of governance is one of the effects of this orientation. Universities do not just impart knowledge, they also define the attitude of students towards learning, authority and agency to be exercised over learning. Governance forms that are structured in and around surveillance, standardisation and performance measures are likely to reward predictability and procedural adherence and discourage intellectual risk-taking and epistemic experimentation. The outcome can be groups of students who fulfill the expectations placed on them by an institution based on formal measures and are in a psychological state of being unattached to learning as a serious intellectual endeavor.

Such conditions do not just impact at individual levels in the long run. Once compliance and alienation have become normalised in academic settings, universities are faced with the risk of graduating students who are well trained on how to go about negotiating with the institution but ill equipped to make their own judgements, engage in ethical contemplation or imaginative exploration.

It is not new that scholars operating in the traditions of critical pedagogy have been warning about the fact that market-based reforms have the potential to turn universities into institutions of knowledge production and democratic practice into institutions that are more about the accumulation of credentials. Henry A. Giroux maintains that these changes pose a threat of undermining the critical and emancipatory roles that had traditionally been attributed to higher education (Giroux, 2014).

In terms of governance, the developments create concerns of sustainability of the high performative academic cultures. The production of knowledge, especially in complex or uncertain knowledge domains, can be dependent on intellectual risk-taking, trial and error, and long term intrinsic involvement. They are not always easy to uphold in the communities where the academic performance is mostly evaluated by predefined factors and constant assessment. Organizations might attain efficiency in the short term in the achievement of performance goals and simultaneously erode the epistemic environments within which creativity and critical scholarship are fostered and innovative research pursued.

Such tensions are especially apparent to educational migration. As it was stated above, migrant students often face institutional regulations in conditions of being subjected to the heightened symbolic, financial, and moral strain. Models of governance that hypothetically presume a homogeneous student population can fail to take into account disproportionate experience of policies in different social locations. Access-oriented reforms have increased higher education participation, but there has been little debate on governance issues that concern the psychological settings in which higher education participation occurs. This means that inclusion could be partial: students are allowed entry into institutions but they remain having limited epistemic belonging in institutions.

These remarks indicate that the governance strategies based on the narratives of individual resilience and employability, or even grit, might be inadequate. Although these discourses can help students acquire coping skills, they also expose the students to the danger of passing the burden of structural pressures to an individual level. Critiques of the discourse of therapeutic and resilience based education observes that by making distress seem to be a personal shortcoming, the institutional structures that produce disengagement are obscured in the first place (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009). A more thoughtful style of governance would thus necessitate universities to assess the nature of how policy structures, evaluation mechanisms, and institutional orders influence the inspirational orientations and intellectual cultures of students.

This reflection should not mean not taking accountability or assessment structures all. Instead, it prompts one to re-think the kinds of learning that are acknowledged, rewarded and encouraged in the modern governance systems. Studies that have been conducted on motivation theory have always proven that motivation is never an independent psychological feature rather it is a phenomenon that is greatly influenced by the social and institutional context (Deci and Ryan, 2000). The priority of measures of performance but neglect of the psychological states of learning would be a policy that weakens the modalities of engagement that they are attempting to enhance.

This review helps to enlarge more general critical debates that governance models based solely on market efficiency and metric-based notions of academic excellence should be rethought. This problem is especially relevant in the context of the countries where an increase in access using educational migration has been observed, and the competition and institutional stratification have increased at the same time. Governance reforms can unwillingly reproduce subtle inequalities, though opportunities of participation are increased, without consideration of the psychological aspects of academic life.

The conceptualization of academic alienation and motivational erosion as the products of institutional design changes the topic of the policy debate. Instead of raising the question how the students can adjust more efficiently towards the existing systems, the question, raised more deeply is how the governance structures themselves influence the terms, according to which the learning occurs. This question must be answered in order to have a conversation on access, equity, and inclusion be greater than an entry into tertiary education and to more substantive intellectual engagement in tertiary education.

Research Limitations and Future Directions.

The article is conceptual and analytical in nature and thus does not rely on primary empirical data. Although the orientation will result in a wider theoretical synthesis of the existing literature on educational migration, institutional hierarchies, and student motivation, it will not provide the possibility to empirically test the relations which will be suggested in the analysis. Such arguments established herein should then be interpreted as a theoretically informed construct that must be empirically validated.

The future study may utilize both the qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate the experience of the structural conditions identified in this paper among students who migrate to obtain higher education in India. Empirical research on the impact of institutional environments on psychological outcomes would be conducted by survey-based studies of student wellbeing, belongingness and academic motivation, especially studies based on theoretical frameworks like Self-Determination Theory. The potential outcomes of such research are systematic evidence to the extent performance-based academic cultures influence the experiences of engagement, autonomy, academic identity in students.

Comparative studies on the various institutions would also contribute to the study of the ways of institutional stratification that structures the student experiences. Comparative studies examining elite universities, state universities and private colleges may shed light on how differences in governance systems, prestige hierarchy and distribution of resources affect the development of academic alienation and compliance. Such comparisons would be especially useful in the Indian case where higher education has been growing fast with a lot of institutional dispersion.

Longitudinal research designs would also add value to the same field by exploring how motivational orientations change with time as the students advance through the various stages of their academic careers. Those studies might be investigating the coping strategies or resilience types or adaptive coping in response to the structural and psychosocial demands of a higher education setting by students. Combining the institutional analysis and student experience can guide future studies to establish a more detailed view of how educational migration can interact with motivation, belonging, and academic participation.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed academic alienation, acquired compliance and the loss of intrinsic motivation not as an independent psychological challenge in individual students but as patterned reactions to the current institutional design in higher education. The analysis uses the context of student experiences in the larger political economy of Indian higher education to redefine disengagement and motivation decrease as structural reactions to performance-based academic cultures, as opposed to individual deficiencies in resilience or adaptability. One of the main contributions of the work is the conceptualisation of the academic alienation as an outcome of the institutional design. Learning in a

ranking-based, standardised assessment, and highly competitive meritocratic environment is successively externalised in measurable products at the expense of being subjective in the form of an exploratory intellectual process. In such conditions, alienation may become a logical psychological reaction to the systems in which performance optimisation is important, but curiosity and inquiry are not. Students are not merely learning disciplinary knowledge but are learning the ways of negotiating authority, assessment and danger in hierarchical school systems. Learned compliance provides a valuable framework towards how students manage to fit into these settings. A number of academically high achievers exhibit a lot of discipline, diligence and attainment and at the same time restrain the ability to ask questions or experiment intellectually. Compliance hence cannot be taken to mean disengagement. Rather, it is usually an expression of a strategic re-positioning of motivation to institutional survival in performance-based academic regimes. The appreciation of this difference questions the assumption that academic performance is a sufficient measure of significant involvement in the process of learning. It is also shown in the analysis that educational migration increases these dynamics. Migration does not, in itself, generate alienation or motivational erosion but increases the pressure already in place in institutions, in effect, focusing it in addition to increasing symbolic, financial and familial expectations. The migrating students often participate in hierarchical academic settings with the burden of shared goals and high-level investment into education. In these settings, the achievement of academic success turns into a moral issue, whereas failure might have broader implications than just the personal academic pathways. These dynamics indicate that the conceptualisation of access to higher education must have limitations of only using institutional entry. Although the migration of education can broaden the opportunities to be involved, the accessibility without the psychological inclusion can create the inequality that is raised in less obvious ways. Students can be admitted to good schools and colleges and still be estranged to learning as an inherently significant process and go through the academic life with approaches that are influenced by compulsion and the fear of failure as well as strategic conformity. This form of thinking also prompts rethink of the conceptualisation of success and motivation in the contemporary higher education. The cultures of most institutions often reward efficiency, perseverance, and quantifiable productivity and little regard the experiential and intellectual aspects of learning. Motivation is commonly represented as a personal trait that should be developed, but not as a process that is determined by the organization of institutions. In the same way, the performance indicators can usually be used to assess the learning outcomes whereas little attention is given to the qualitative experience of learning. This analysis can be expanded in future studies by examining how academic alienation and compliance come about in the interrelationship between institutional power, social mobility, and student subject formation. Longitudinal and qualitative research can be especially useful in studying how motivational orientations of migrant students change in normal course of their academic life in various academic settings. The cross-institutional comparison between types of institutions and across different regions in India could also shed more light on how the hierarchical structures are not evenly dispersed throughout the higher education system. On a larger scale, the results would encourage the scholars and policy makers to consider the psychological costs involved in the current governance models of higher education. When performance indicators are emphasised at the expense of meaningful interaction within the institutional cultures, this will create the danger of graduates who are academically successful and intellectually vacant. To overcome this paradox, it is necessary to put the analytical focus on institutional responsibility, not just on the ways students can adjust to the existing systems but also on how the institutional organization creates the learning possibilities. After all, the issue of academic alienation, compliance, and motivational erosion can be explained only through an integrated approach that interrelates institutional structures and the subjectivities of students. Placing educational practices in the political economy of higher education brings to view the ways in which

aspirations of mobility, merit and excellence are mediated through institutional structures that define the conditions of engagement in academic life. It is imperative to understand these dynamics in case universities can continue to be not only the places of opportunities but also the places that can offer true intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and productive learning.

References

- Ali, S., Sarker, M. F. H., Islam, M. S., Islam, M. K., & Mahmud, R. A. (2021). Pursuing higher education: adaptation challenges and coping strategies of rural students at urban universities in Bangladesh. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 27(2), 91–106. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11233-021-09067-3>
- Appadurai, A. (2004). The capacity to aspire: Culture and the terms of recognition. In V. Rao & M. Walton (Eds.), *Culture and public action* (pp. 59–84). Stanford University Press.
- Agarwal, P. (2009). Indian Higher Education: Envisioning the future. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9788132104094>
- APA PsycNet. (n.d.). <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2017-04680-000>
- Apple, M., & Apple, M. W. (2004). Ideology and Curriculum. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203487563>
- Apple, M. W. (2013). Can Education Change Society?
- Ball, S. J. (2012). Performativity, Commodification and Commitment: An I-Spy Guide to the Neoliberal University. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 60(1), 17–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2011.650940>
- Barrett, R. J. (2014). Appropriately Indian: gender and culture in a new transnational class. *South Asian Diaspora*, 7(1), 65–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19438192.2014.922300>
- Bimali, G. (2025). Situation of internal migration and its effect on education. *Pranayan प्रणयन*, 25(7), 7–16. <https://doi.org/10.3126/pranayan.v25i7.77914>
- Benabou, R., & Tirole, J. (2003). Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 70(3), 489–520. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-937x.00253>
- Brandt, J., & Hagge, K. S. (2020). Education and social support: do migrants benefit as much as natives? *Comparative Migration Studies*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-020-00199-w>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Practical reason: On the theory of action*. Stanford University Press.
- Tilak, J. B. G. (2015). Private higher education in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50(40), 32–38. <https://www.epw.in/journal/2014/40/perspectives/private-higher-education-india.html>
- Blocked by Caste. (n.d.). Sukhdeo Thorat, Katherine S. Neuman - Oxford University Press. <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/blocked-by-caste-9780198081692?cc=in&lang=en&>
- Brown, P. (2003a). *The Opportunity Trap: Education and Employment in a Global Economy*.
- Brown, P. (2003b). The opportunity trap: education and employment in a global economy. *European Educational Research Journal*, 2(1), 141–179. <https://doi.org/10.2304/eeerj.2003.2.1.4>
- Bunar, N., & Juvonen, P. (2021). ‘Not (yet) ready for the mainstream’ – newly arrived migrant students in a separate educational program. *Journal of Education Policy*, 37(6), 986–1008. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2021.1947527>
- Buzzai, C., Sorrenti, L., Tripiciano, F., Orecchio, S., & Filippello, P. (2020). School alienation and academic achievement: The role of learned helplessness and mastery orientation. *School Psychology*, 36(1), 17–23. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000413>
- Can education change society? (n.d.). Routledge & CRC Press. <https://www.routledge.com/Can-Education-Change-Society/Apple/p/book/9780415875332>
- Case, J. (2007). Alienation and engagement: exploring students’ experiences of studying engineering. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12(1), 119–133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510601102354>

Client Challenge. (n.d.). <https://www.scribd.com/document/564921070/Ajantha-Subramanian-Introduction-The-Caste-of-Merit>

Cullen, S., & Oppenheimer, D. (2024). Choosing to learn: The importance of student autonomy in higher education. *Science Advances*, 10(29), eado6759. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.ado6759>

Deci, E. L., Koestner, R., & Ryan, R. M. (1999). A meta-analytic review of experiments examining the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(6), 627–668. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.125.6.627>

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “What” and “Why” of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1104_01

Degrees Without Freedom? | Stanford University Press. (n.d.). Stanford University Press. <https://www.sup.org/books/asian-studies/degrees-without-freedom>

Desai, S., & Kulkarni, V. (2008a). Changing educational inequalities in india in the context of affirmative action. *Demography*, 45(2), 245–270. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.0.0001>

Desai, S., & Kulkarni, V. (2008b). Changing educational inequalities in india in the context of affirmative action. *Demography*, 45(2), 245–270. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.0.0001>

Demange, G., Fenge, R., & Uebelmesser, S. (2020). Competition in the quality of higher education: the impact of student mobility. *International Tax and Public Finance*, 27(5), 1224–1263. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10797-020-09595-5>

Drake, S. J., & Guhin, J. (2025). The Achievement Narrative and Alienation in School: a typology of academic disconnection. *Sociology of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00380407251381695>

Elliot, A. J., & Murayama, K. (2008). On the measurement of achievement goals: Critique, illustration, and application. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(3), 613–628. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.100.3.613>

Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage.

Ferreira, A. V. S., & Borges, L. M. (2022). INTERCULTURAL METAMORPHOSES: THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF LATIN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IMMIGRANTS. *Educação Em Revista*, 38. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0102-469825665t>

Fülöp, M., Varga, B. A., & Sebestyén, N. (2024). Competitive and non-competitive school climate and students' well-being. *Learning and Instruction*, 95, 102036. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2024.102036>

Gérard, E., & Lebeau, Y. (2023). Trajectories within international academic mobility: a renewed perspective on the dynamics and hierarchies of the global higher education field. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 100, 102780. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2023.102780>

Giroux, H. A., & Penna, A. N. (1979). Social education in the classroom: The dynamics of the Hidden curriculum. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 7(1), 21–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.1979.10506048>

Global Education Inc.: *New policy Networks and the Neoliberal Imaginary*. (n.d.). Routledge & CRC Press. <https://www.routledge.com/Global-Education-Inc-New-Policy-Networks-and-the-Neoliberal-Imaginary/Ball/p/book/9780415684101>

Green, B. N., Johnson, C. D., & Adams, A. (2006). Writing narrative literature reviews for peer-reviewed journals: secrets of the trade. *Journal of Chiropractic Medicine*, 5(3), 101–117. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0899-3467\(07\)60142-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0899-3467(07)60142-6)

Guay, F. (2021). Applying Self-Determination Theory to Education: regulations types, psychological needs, and autonomy supporting Behaviors. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 37(1), 75–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08295735211055355>

Hart, P. F., & Rodgers, W. (2023). Competition, competitiveness, and competitive advantage in higher education institutions: a systematic literature review. *Studies in Higher Education*, 49(11), 2153–2177. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2023.2293926>

Hazelkorn, E. (2015). Rankings and the reshaping of higher education. In Palgrave Macmillan UK eBooks. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137446671>

Ilie, S., & Rose, P. (2016). Is equal access to higher education in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa achievable by 2030? *Higher Education*, 72(4), 435–455. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-016-0039-3>

Jackson, P. W. (1968). *Life in classrooms*. New York Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. - References - Scientific Research

Educational Migration, Institutional Hierarchies,
and the Emergence of Academic Alienation in
Indian Higher Education

Publishing. (n.d.). <https://www.scrip.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=954323>

Jandhyala, B. G., Tilak. (2015). How inclusive is higher education in India? In *Social Change* (Vols. 45–2, pp. 185–223). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049085715574178>

Jayaram, N. (2004) Higher Education in India Massification and change. in Altback, P.G. and Toro, U., Eds., *Asian Universities*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland. - References - Scientific Research Publishing. (n.d.). <https://www.scrip.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=2670591>

Jamil, A., & Atta, M. A. (2025). AAssociative Relation of the Family's Monthly Household Income with Students' Academic Success. *Open Access Organization and Management Review*, 3(2), 31–42. [https://doi.org/10.59644/oagmr.3\(2\).167](https://doi.org/10.59644/oagmr.3(2).167)

Kharroubi, S., & ElMediouni, A. (2024). Conceptual Review: Cultivating Learner Autonomy Through Self-Directed Learning & Self-Regulated Learning: A Socio-Constructivist Exploration. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 6(2), 276–296. <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v6i2.1649>

King, R., & Raghuram, P. (2012). International Student Migration: Mapping the Field and New Research Agendas. *Population Space and Place*, 19(2), 127–137. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.1746>

Kirsch, J., & Spreckelsen, C. (2023). Caution with competitive gamification in medical education: unexpected results of a randomised cross-over study. *BMC Medical Education*, 23(1), 259. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-023-04258-5>

Kumar, B., Singh, G., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Nanda, S. (2024). Using structural equation model (SEM) to analyse global student mobility programs in higher education in India. *International Journal of Systems Assurance Engineering and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13198-024-02541-2>

Kumar, V., & Kumar, K. (2024). EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PARENTAL PRESSURE IN SHAPING ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN MUZAFFARPUR DISTRICT BIHAR. *ShodhKosh Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.6241>

Kumar, K. (2021). *The Routledge Handbook of Education in India*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003030362>

Kumar, V. (2014). *Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education System in India*.

Littler, J. (2017). *Against Meritocracy: Culture, Power and Myths of Mobility*. Routledge.

Mann, S. J. (2001). Alternative Perspectives on the Student Experience: Alienation and engagement. *Studies in Higher Education*, 26(1), 7–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070020030689>

Marginson, S. (2016). *Higher Education and the Common Good*. Melbourne University Press.

Marx, K., Jr. & Progress Publishers. (1977). Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844. In *Progress Publishers [Book]*. Progress Publishers. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/epm/epm.pdf> (Original work published 1844)

Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: recent research and its implications for psychiatry. *World Psychiatry*, 15(2), 103–111. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311>

Mathew, L. (2024). Merit and permission: gender, education and migration in western India. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 51(5), 1413–1430. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2024.2337036>

McGuire, M. (2025). Impact of Competition-Based Learning on student engagement and performance. *International Journal of Construction Education and Research*, 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15578771.2025.2512348>

Morales, J. F., Kim, J., & Fong, E. (2022). Peer effects on the educational outcomes of immigrant youth: heterogeneity by generation and school context. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 48(17), 4166–4190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2022.2107498>

Niemiec, C. P., & Ryan, R. M. (2009). Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the classroom. *Theory and Research in Education*, 7(2), 133–144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878509104318>

Pascoe, M. C., Hetrick, S. E., & Parker, A. G. (2019). The impact of stress on students in secondary school and higher education. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 25(1), 104–112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1596823>

Private higher education in India. (2014, September 30). *Economic and Political Weekly*. <https://www.epw.in/journal/2014/40/perspectives/private-higher-education-india.html>

Punished by Rewards – (Book). (n.d.). Alfie Kohn. <https://www.alfiekohn.org/punished-rewards/>

- Pyoryshkova, S. A. (2022). Psychological support of academic mobility among students of higher education. *Psychological-Pedagogical Journal GAUDEAMUS*, 2, 88–96. <https://doi.org/10.20310/1810-231x-2022-21-2-88-96>
- Raaper, R. (2015). Academic perceptions of higher education assessment processes in neoliberal academia. *Critical Studies in Education*, 57(2), 175–190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2015.1019901>
- Rafique, T., Awan, M. U., Shafiq, M., & Mahmood, K. (2023). Exploring the role of ranking systems towards university performance improvement: A focus group-based study. *Heliyon*, 9(10), e20904. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e20904>
- Ramchand, M., Sawhney, S., & Sharma, P. (2025). *Knowledge, Curriculum and Learning: Knowing Why We Teach, What We Teach and How We Learn*. Taylor & Francis.
- Reay, D., Crozier, G., & Clayton, J. (2009). 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(1), 107–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920902878925>
- Robert, K., Deters, J., & Leydens, J. (2024). The Prestige Game: Making Visible the Mental Health Effects of Institutional Prestige Seeking on Underrepresented STEM Students. *American Society for Engineering Education*. <https://doi.org/10.18260/1-2--48128>
- Ryan, R., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness*. Guilford Publications.
- Seeman, M. (1959). On the meaning of alienation. *American Sociological Review*, 24(6), 783. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2088565>
- Shore, C., & Wright, S. (2015). Governing by numbers: audit culture, rankings and the new world order. *Social Anthropology*, 23(1), 22–28. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12098>
- Shuhidan, S. M., Dangi, M. R. M., & Noor, R. M. (2025). Students' Perceptions on Extrinsic Motivation Strategies to Enhance learning experience and Fostering Academic excellence: A Qualitative study. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, IX(III), 3985–3999. <https://doi.org/10.47772/ijriss.2025.90300317>
- Sidorkin, A. M. (2004). In the Event of Learning: Alienation and Participative Thinking in Education. *Educational Theory*, 54(3), 251–262. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0013-2004.2004.00018.x>
- Simula, B., & Scott, T. (2020). The impact of pressures to produce on knowledge production and evaluation in the modern academy. *Social Sciences*, 9(5), 64. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci9050064>
- Spence, C. (2018). 'Judgement' versus 'metrics' in higher education management. *Higher Education*, 77(5), 761–775. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-018-0300-z>
- Thapan, M. (2014). *Ethnographies of schooling in Contemporary India*. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9789351508069>
- The dangerous rise of therapeutic education. (n.d.). Routledge & CRC Press. <https://www.routledge.com/The-Dangerous-Rise-of-Therapeutic-Education/Ecclestone-Hayes/p/book/9780367001667>
- Tholen, G. (2024). *The Role of Neoliberalism in the Marketisation of Higher Education*. Springer Nature.
- Worrell, F. C., & Luo, H. (2024). Competitive orientations in academically talented youth: Associations with psychosocial and school-related variables. *Learning and Instruction*, 95, 102038. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2024.102038>
- Varghese, N. V. (2020). Internationalisation and Cross-Border Mobility in Indian Higher Education. *International Journal of African Higher Education*, 7(2).
- Zeb, I., Khan, A., & Yan, Z. (2025). Exploring the influence of core self-evaluation on students' academic self-efficacy: a qualitative study considering anxiety and interpersonal responses. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 17(1), 526–541. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jarhe-07-2024-0343>
- Zhang, J. (2025). Cross-National comparison and theoretical reflection on higher education marketization policies in the context of globalization. *Journal of Sociology and Education*, 1(9). <https://doi.org/10.63887/jse.2025.1.9.6..>