Global Perspective on Emerging Research Policies: Digital Transformation in Research and Higher Education

Ms Swaleha Nisa
Research Scholar, Shri Rawatpura Sarkar University Dhaneli
EMAIL- swalehanis@gmail.com

Introduction

Global research policies are increasingly focused on leveraging technologies like artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and big data to modernize how universities conduct science and educate students. Digital transformation in this sector acts as a strategic shift, fundamentally reconstructing how academic institutions create value, share knowledge, and remain competitive.

Global research councils are shifting mandates to require open access to publicly funded research. Policies increasingly demand that raw datasets be securely hosted, properly curated, and made publicly available to accelerate collaborative discoveries. The current stage of development of higher education is characterized by profound transformations due to the intensive spread of digital technologies, globalization of the educational space, and increasing requirements for the quality of educational services. Universities are increasingly seen not only as centers of knowledge but also as active participants in the digital society, able to quickly adapt to changes, generate innovations, and form new models of education, management, and academic interaction.

In this context, digital transformation is emerging as one of the key strategic vectors for the development of higher education institutions, which includes not only technical modernization but also changes in organizational culture, management practices, and educational paradigm. Digital transformation is understood as a systematic process of implementing digital technologies, automation tools, data analytics, and intelligent platforms aimed at increasing the efficiency, flexibility, and transparency of the university's activities. Its implementation involves a deep integration of technological, managerial, and pedagogical changes, which should take place within the framework of a coherent digital development strategy. At the same time, the success of this process largely depends on the ability of universities to develop digital maturity as an institutional characteristic of readiness for transformation based on managerial, infrastructural, cultural, and human resources factors.

Importance of problem

The topic “Global Perspective on Emerging Research Policies: Digital Transformation in Research and Higher Education” is important because digital technology is changing the way universities teach, conduct research, publish knowledge, and manage academic systems. Higher education institutions across the world are moving toward online learning platforms, artificial intelligence, digital libraries, open access research, learning analytics, virtual labs, and data-driven decision-making. Therefore, it is necessary to study how research policies are developing.

This problem is significant because digital transformation creates both opportunities and challenges. On one side, it improves access to education, supports international research collaboration, increases the speed of knowledge sharing, and makes learning more flexible. On the other side, it raises serious issues related to digital inequality, data privacy, academic integrity, cyber security, ethical use of artificial intelligence, and the quality of online education. Without proper research policies, digital transformation may benefit only well-funded institutions and leave behind students, teachers, and researchers from disadvantaged regions.

The problem is also important from a global perspective because countries are not transforming at the same speed. Developed countries often have better digital infrastructure, funding, and policy support, while many developing countries still struggle with internet access, digital literacy, and technological resources. This creates a digital divide in higher education and research. Studying this problem helps identify how international policies can promote fairness, inclusion, and equal participation in global knowledge production.

Another reason this topic is important is that research itself is becoming digital. Researchers now depend on digital databases, AI tools, online journals, research management software, open science platforms, and global academic networks. This requires new policies on research ethics, data sharing, plagiarism, intellectual property, digital authorship, and responsible AI use. If these policies are weak or unclear, the credibility and integrity of academic research may be affected.

Therefore, studying this problem is necessary to understand how digital transformation can be used in a fair, effective, and responsible way. It can help universities, governments, and research organizations develop better policies that support equal access, quality education, ethi

Literature Review

Indian Studies

1. **Dey, B., & Panda, B. N(2025):-** In India, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 strongly advocates the incorporation of digital platforms and open learning systems to promote access, equity, quality, and learner-centered education. With specific reference to the objectives of NEP 2020, this review-based study examines the role of digital technologies in transforming teaching-learning practices and evaluation methods through SWAYAM online learning platform. Drawing upon existing research, and policy documents, the paper analyses how SWAYAM facilitates a transition from conventional classroom-based education to flexible digital learning ecosystems. .
2. **Kumar, U (2025):-** This study explores the transformation of higher education in India in the context of Vision 2047, focusing on the challenges, interventions, and strategic pathways necessary to build a globally competitive and inclusive education system. Using secondary data from national reports, policy documents, and scholarly studies, the research analyzes trends in enrolment, quality assurance, digitalization, and research productivity. The findings reveal that while initiatives such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 have initiated significant reforms, issues related to governance, employability, equity, and resource allocation persist. The study highlights the urgent need for policy coherence, institutional autonomy, and digital inclusion to ensure that higher education becomes a driver of innovation and sustainable development.
3. **Chakraborty Acharya, S (2025):** Digital application is an approach to teaching that uses technology to improve and speed up the learning process. It entails delivering instructional information, involving students, and fostering interactive learning experiences through digital technologies and resources. The study's importance stems from its capacity to provide valuable insights for evidence-based decision-making, policy development, and implementation tactics to achieve the goals delineated in NEP 2020 and cultivate a practical digital application in an educational environment. The study identified several stages of digital application in this article, the main initiatives related to digital application at the ODL higher education level, and the specific justifications for the results of these activities by NEP 2020 for Open & Distance Learning.
4. **Dhokare, S. G.(2023):** Systems in developing countries by enabling personalized learning, improving institutional governance, and accelerating research productivity. India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 explicitly foregrounds technology as a lever for improving access, quality, and equity in higher education, and proposes institutional mechanisms (e.g., the National Educational Technology Forum) that can facilitate AI adoption. However, meaningful integration of AI requires confronting persistent challenges in the Indian context digital infrastructure gaps, uneven faculty capacity, data governance deficits, and risks of algorithmic bias that can undermine equity and trust.
5. **Ahmad, S. (2020):** Higher education plays an important role to develop good and creative individuals and is viewed as a powerful means to build a knowledge - based society. It is the foundation for growth in productivity, income, and employment opportunities, which enhance the quality of life. The challenges currently before India higher education system are enhancing access and improving quality. Digital transformation has brought rapid changes in the very nature of the higher education landscape. Digital initiatives are very important and a boon for both increasing access and improving quality in higher education.

Foreign Studies

1. **Castro Benavides et al. (2020)-** In their systematic literature review on digital transformation in higher education institutions, state that digital transformation is still an emerging field and that many universities lack a holistic framework for managing it. Their study shows that institutions often adopt technology in separate areas such as administration, teaching, or research, but fail to integrate these into one coherent digital policy. This indicates that research policies must move beyond infrastructure and include leadership, digital competence, data governance, and long-term institutional planning.

2. **Neil Selwyn and Dragan Gašević (2020)-** provide a critical perspective on data fication in higher education. They argue that while learning analytics and digital data can improve decision-making, they also raise concerns about surveillance, privacy, academic freedom, and the reduction of education to measurable indicators. Similarly, Lesley Gourlay discusses how digital systems document and track academic life, creating new forms of institutional control. These views are important because emerging research policies must protect researchers and students from excessive monitoring while still supporting evidence-based improvement.

3. **Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019)-** Reviewed AI applications in higher education and found that much research focuses on technical systems, while the role of educators is often underrepresented. This is a major policy gap. If AI policies are designed only around automation, efficiency, and prediction, they may ignore teacher agency, student diversity, and academic judgment. UNESCO's 2023 guidance on generative AI in education and research therefore recommends human-centred regulation, capacity building, age-appropriate use, transparency, and protection of data rights.

4. **George Siemens'(2013):** work on learning analytics is also central to the discussion. Siemens explains that learning analytics has become a major field because universities increasingly use data to understand learning, personalize support, and improve institutional performance. However, the policy challenge is to ensure that analytics are transparent, ethical, and pedagogically meaningful. Digital transformation should not simply collect more data; it should use data responsibly to improve learning and research quality.

5. **Vassilios Peristeras,Ioannis Magnisalis, Thomais Gkrimpizi (2023)-** Identified major barriers to digital transformation in higher education. The study classified challenges into technological, organizational, strategic, cultural, and financial barriers. The research emphasized that lack of infrastructure, insufficient funding, and limited digital literacy are major obstacles for universities worldwide.

Statement of the problem

Global perspective on emerging research policies: Digital transformation in research and higher education

Objective

1. To examine the global perspectives on emerging research policies related to digital transformation in research.
2. To examine and focusing on how digital technologies are reshaping teaching, learning, research practices in higher education.

Hypothesis

1. There will be a significant difference on global perspective on emerging research policies related to digital transformation in research.
2. There will be a significant difference on how digital technologies are reshaping teaching, learning, research practices in higher education.

Variable:

- **Independent variable-** Digital Transformation
- **Dependent variable -** Higher Education

Research methodology

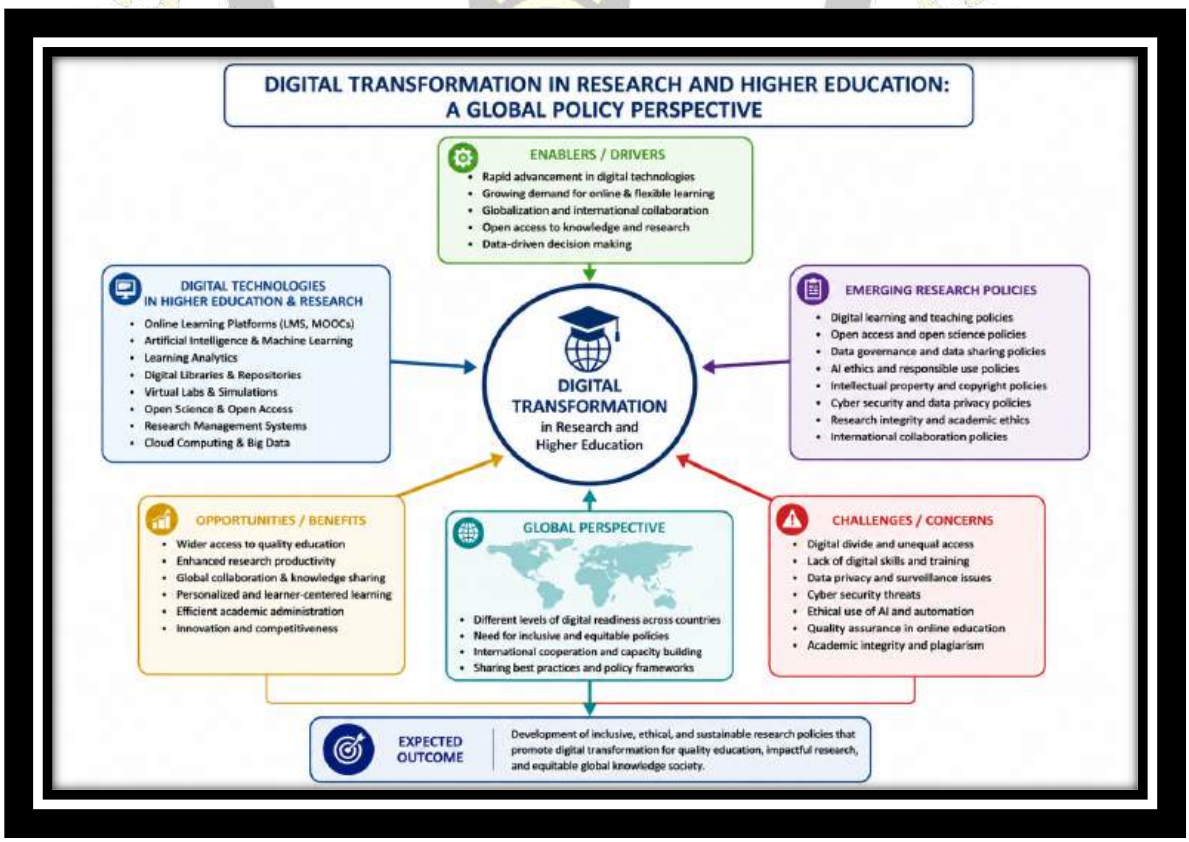
The study will use a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the global perspective on emerging research policies related to digital transformation in research and higher education. This research will be based on a qualitative approach, supported by secondary data. It will analyze existing policies, reports, research papers, institutional strategies, and global frameworks related to digital transformation in higher education and research.. The present study is based on a descriptive and qualitative research design. The study aims to examine the emerging research policies related to digital transformation in higher education and research systems across different countries. It focuses on understanding global trends, opportunities, challenges, and policy developments associated with digital technologies in education and research.

Nature of the Study

This research is primarily a review-based and exploratory study. It investigates existing literature, reports, policy documents, journal articles, and international studies related to digital transformation in higher education and research policies.

The collected data will be analyzed using content analysis and comparative analysis .Key themes such as digital learning, research innovation, artificial intelligence, open access, digital infrastructure, online collaboration, and policy challenges will be examined.

The lower center section explains that countries experience digital transformation differently. Developed countries generally have stronger infrastructure and better policy support, while developing countries often face limitations in internet access, funding, and technological resources. Therefore, international cooperation and inclusive policies are necessary to reduce global inequalities in higher education and research.



Resaerch Gap

Lack of Global Comparative Perspective

Most existing studies focus on a single country or a specific institutional context, especially developed nations. Very limited research compares how different countries are developing research policies related to digital transformation. There is a lack of comparative understanding between developed and developing countries regarding digital readiness, policy implementation, and research infrastructure.

The reviewed literature shows that although digital transformation in higher education is widely discussed, there is still insufficient research on global research policies, ethical governance, digital inclusion, and comparative international perspectives. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill these gaps by analyzing emerging research policies and their impact on digital transformation in research and higher education from a global perspective

Discussion

The present study highlights that digital transformation has become a major force influencing research and higher education across the world. The review of literature and identified research gaps reveal that although many countries and institutions are adopting digital technologies, the development of research policies related to digital transformation remains uneven and incomplete. Existing studies mainly focus on technological innovation, online learning systems, and digital platforms, but comparatively less attention has been given to policy frameworks, ethical governance, and global inclusiveness.

The findings indicate that developed countries are progressing rapidly in areas such as artificial intelligence, open science, learning analytics, cloud computing, and digital research infrastructure due to better financial resources, policy support, and technological readiness. In contrast, many developing countries continue to face challenges related to poor internet connectivity, lack of digital literacy, inadequate infrastructure, and limited institutional support. This unequal development creates a significant digital divide in global higher education and research systems.

The literature also shows that most studies examine digital transformation from a technological perspective rather than from a policy and human-centered perspective. Important issues such as data privacy, cyber security, ethical use of AI, academic integrity, surveillance, and intellectual property rights are still underexplored. The study reveals that emerging research policies must not only support innovation and digital expansion but also ensure fairness, transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness.

Another important discussion emerging from the research gap is the lack of integrated approaches in existing studies. Many researchers focus separately on teaching, administration, or research practices, whereas digital transformation actually affects the entire academic ecosystem. Therefore, universities require holistic digital strategies that combine governance, pedagogy, research management, and institutional leadership.

Findings

- The study found that digital transformation is significantly changing the structure and functioning of higher education and research systems across the world. Universities are increasingly adopting technologies such as artificial intelligence, online learning platforms, cloud computing, learning analytics, digital libraries, and virtual research systems.
- The findings reveal that emerging research policies are becoming more focused on open access, digital governance, research collaboration, data sharing, and the ethical use of technology in education and research.
- The study found that developed countries have stronger digital infrastructure, better funding, and more advanced policy frameworks, which help them implement digital transformation more effectively in higher education institutions.

- It was observed that developing countries continue to face major barriers such as poor internet connectivity, lack of digital literacy, insufficient technological resources, and limited policy implementation, which create inequalities in global education and research systems.
- The findings indicate that digital transformation improves access to education, increases flexibility in learning, promotes international collaboration, and enhances research productivity through faster communication and knowledge sharing.

Conclusion

The study on **"Global Perspective on Emerging Research Policies: Digital Transformation in Research and Higher Education"** concludes that digital transformation has become a major driving force in reshaping global higher education and research systems. The rapid growth of technologies such as artificial intelligence, online learning platforms, cloud computing, learning analytics, digital libraries, and open science has significantly changed the way universities teach, conduct research, manage academic activities, and share knowledge.

The study highlights that digital transformation offers several opportunities, including increased access to education, flexible learning environments, faster knowledge dissemination, improved research collaboration, and enhanced institutional efficiency. It also supports innovation and global academic connectivity, making higher education more responsive to the demands of the digital age.

However, the study also reveals that digital transformation creates serious challenges related to digital inequality, lack of infrastructure, cyber security, data privacy, ethical use of artificial intelligence, academic integrity, and unequal access to technological resources. These issues are more visible in developing countries where institutions often face limitations in funding, digital literacy, and policy implementation.

The findings further indicate that emerging research policies are still evolving and require stronger international cooperation and institutional support. Effective policies must focus not only on technological advancement but also on inclusiveness, ethics, transparency, sustainability, and human-centered development. Universities and governments must ensure that digital transformation benefits all learners and researchers equally rather than increasing existing inequalities.

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