



INTEGRATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN AZERBAIJAN AND RUSSIA: STRATEGIC DIMENSIONS, REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

INTEGRACIÓN DE LAS INSTITUCIONES DE EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR DE AZERBAIYÁN Y RUSIA: DIMENSIONES ESTRATÉGICAS, MARCOS NORMATIVOS Y PERSPECTIVAS DE DESARROLLO

Nushaba Yaver Guliyeva ^{1*}

E-mail: Nushaba.Guliyeva@au.edu.az

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7117-6394>

¹Head of Master Studies and Research Department at Azerbaijan University. Baku, Azerbaijan.

*Corresponding author

Suggested quotation (APA, seventh edition)

Guliyeva, N. Y. (2026). Integration of higher education institutions in Azerbaijan and Russia: strategic dimensions, regulatory frameworks and development prospects. *Universidad y Sociedad* 18(3). e5995.

ABSTRACT:

The integration of higher education systems in Azerbaijan and Russia is a phenomenon of singular relevance in the post-Soviet space, shaping dynamics of foreign policy, institutional development, and knowledge transfer. This article analyzes this integration from a multidimensional perspective that transcends the conventional diplomatic approach, incorporating analytical categories from the sociology of education, international political economy, and transnational governance studies. Through a systematic review of primary and secondary sources, the article examines the formal and informal mechanisms that structure bilateral academic cooperation, the institutional actors that sustain it, some incentives that drive it, and the tensions that condition it. It argues that higher education integration between the two countries cannot be understood solely as the result of intergovernmental agreements, but rather as a socially constructed process that responds to logics of identity, the labor market, student mobility, and soft power. The findings suggest that, despite regulatory advances, structural asymmetries persist that limit the full reciprocity of exchange and that consolidating this integration requires reforms in the systems of degree recognition, joint accreditation and shared financing.

Keywords: Higher education, Academic integration, Bilateral cooperation, Student mobility, Transnational governance.

RESUMEN:

La integración entre los sistemas de educación superior de Azerbaiyán y Rusia constituye un fenómeno de singular relevancia en el espacio postsoviético, que articula dinámicas de política exterior, construcción institucional y transferencia de conocimiento. Este artículo analiza dicha integración desde una perspectiva multidimensional que trasciende el enfoque diplomático convencional, incorporando categorías analíticas provenientes de la sociología de la educación, la economía política internacional y los estudios sobre gobernanza transnacional. A través de una revisión sistemática de fuentes primarias y secundarias, se examinan los mecanismos formales e informales que estructuran la cooperación académica bilateral, los actores institucionales que la sostienen, algunos incentivos que la dinamizan y las tensiones que la condicionan. Se argumenta que la integración educativa superior entre ambos países no puede comprenderse únicamente como resultado de acuerdos intergubernamentales, sino como un proceso socialmente construido que responde a lógicas de identidad, mercado laboral, movilidad estudiantil y poder blando. Los hallazgos sugieren que, pese a los avances normativos, persisten asimetrías estructurales que limitan la plena reciprocidad del intercambio y que la consolidación de esta integración requiere reformas en los sistemas de reconocimiento de títulos, acreditación conjunta y financiamiento compartido.

Palabras clave: Educación superior, Integración académica, Cooperación bilateral, Movilidad estudiantil, Gober-



INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global landscape, higher education has ceased to be an exclusively national domain, becoming instead a field of dispute, negotiation, and cooperation among states, international organizations, and non-governmental actors (Tran et al., 2023). At the same time globalization brings about intensive changes within the economic and public life of countries, generating new technologies in diverse fields and increasing the demand for qualified personnel, which consequently enhances the role and importance of education (Dai et al., 2024; Taiwo Onifade et al., 2021). This process of internationalization is neither uniform nor neutral: it reflects power dynamics, strategic interests, and civilizational projects that are particularly evident in regions that share a common history. In this sense, the post-Soviet space offers a privileged analytical laboratory for studying how two nations with shared institutional heritages but distinct, independent trajectories construct and reconstruct their ties in the realm of higher education (Oleksiyenko, 2023).

The importance of human capital has placed the development of new generations at the forefront as one of the most pressing issues of the modern era. The emergence of competitive production sectors and the rapid advancement of smart technologies generate a constant need for intellectual human resources. Under market economy conditions, educational modernization and adaptation to contemporary economic mechanisms acquire special relevance and create professional mobility within the framework of new social orders (Nagorna et al., 2022). Thus, human beings must position themselves as lifelong learners, as continuing education represents not only a right but also a natural necessity linked to both subsistence and personal development (Huka et al., 2024; Rawas, 2024).

Azerbaijan and Russia share more than two centuries of common history, which left a profound mark on the architecture of their respective educational systems: curricula, pedagogical methodologies, conceptions of the relationship between scientific knowledge and the state, and academic socialization networks that persist to this day. However, Azerbaijani independence in 1991 ushered in an era of identity reconfiguration and redefinition of national priorities in which education occupies a central place. Understanding how this shared legacy has been managed, what forms its continuity has taken, and to what extent it has been reinterpreted or superseded is the fundamental problem that guides this work.

It is recognized that in recent decades, global higher education has undergone profound transformations in volume, scope, and complexity. The internationalization of higher education is understood as a process that fosters cooperation and integration between institutions and their counterparts in other countries, promoting student and faculty mobility, knowledge exchange, and the harmonization of

standards (Börzel & Spannagel, 2025). Within this framework, cooperation between Azerbaijan and Russia stands out due to its historical roots and cultural similarities and the interest of both governments in strengthening educational ties (Yavar, 2024). This process is part of a broader movement of academic internationalization and transnational cooperation, but what makes it unique is that Azerbaijani-Russian integration simultaneously encompasses several levels: the political-legislative level, through intergovernmental agreements; the institutional level, through university networks and forums; and the academic-curricular level, with joint programs and degree recognition (Nasirli & Nakhiyev, 2021).

Existing literature on Azerbaijani-Russian bilateral relations has prioritized geopolitical and economic analysis (especially regarding the energy sector) relegating the study of educational cooperation as an independent variable of foreign policy to a secondary role. This analytical bias, understandable given the weight of oil in the Azerbaijani economy and its centrality in the relationship with Moscow (Jabbarova et al., 2026), implies a systematic underestimation of the role that higher education integration plays as a vector of influence, trust-building, and network development. According to Kazimli (2023), the Azerbaijani higher education system is undergoing “accelerated reform” with the aim of integrating into the international arena, making “the regulation of the legal framework of great importance” for achieving these objectives. These regulatory efforts facilitate the development of a shared educational space between the two countries and, at the same time, align curricula with global criteria.

At the institutional level, specific cooperation initiatives stand out. Forums and meetings of university presidents and ministers have been held, such as the Russia-Azerbaijan Science and Education Forum, which brought together dozens of representatives from universities in both countries to discuss direct links between higher education institutions and scientific centers. The Azerbaijan-Russia Association of Higher Education Institutions was established as an expression of a structured commitment to collaboration (Kerimli, 2024). Even at the university level, visits by high-level delegations are being promoted: in November 2024, an Azerbaijani delegation toured important Russian campuses (such as that of Saint Petersburg State University) to explore areas of cooperation and exchange academic expertise (Huseynova, 2024). The hypothesis guiding this article is that the integration of higher education institutions between Azerbaijan and Russia constitutes a long-term strategic process that operates on multiple simultaneous levels: state, institutional, and individual, and that its full understanding requires moving beyond purely diplomatist approaches to incorporate analytical categories from the sociology of education and transnational governance studies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a historical-structural approach to analyze the integration of higher education institutions between Azerbaijan and Russia. Documentary analysis was the primary research method, focusing on bilateral regulatory frameworks such as intergovernmental agreements, ministerial cooperation plans, and institutional partnership documents produced since Azerbaijan's independence in 1991. These primary sources were systematically examined alongside a critical review of specialized academic literature in the sociology of education, post-Soviet studies, and international relations. Secondary sources were selected through a structured search in academic databases including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, prioritizing peer-reviewed publications from the last decade while retaining foundational works essential for historical contextualization.

The analysis was complemented by institutional case studies that examined specific cooperative initiatives, including university partnership agreements, academic exchange programs, and joint educational forums between both countries. Data processing involved thematic categorization of the documentary evidence, grouping findings according to three analytical levels: state and legislative, institutional, and academic-curricular (Nasirli & Nakhiyev, 2021). This multilevel structure allowed continuities and ruptures in bilateral educational cooperation to be identified systematically, as well as the structural factors conditioning its future trajectory. Given the nature of this work as a review and analytical study, no empirical fieldwork or statistical procedures were applied; instead, the rigor of the study was ensured through source triangulation and transparent referencing of all materials consulted.

RESULTS-DISCUSSION

Educational integration as a form of soft power

The concept of educational integration has been approached from diverse disciplinary traditions that emphasize different aspects of the phenomenon. From the perspective of international relations theory, integration in higher education is framed within debates on complex interdependence (Keohane & Nye, 2012) and studies on international regimes, understood as sets of principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which the expectations of actors converge. From this perspective, educational integration involves the creation of coordination mechanisms that go beyond the simple juxtaposition of national systems, implying increasing degrees of normative harmonization, mutual recognition of credentials, and the mobility of people and knowledge (Vazquez & Mancilla, 2025).

The sociology of education, for its part, has offered a more critical perspective on the phenomenon, warning of the

risks that internationalization may reproduce pre-existing hierarchies among educational systems and perpetuate epistemic dependencies. From this perspective, not all forms of educational cooperation equate to integration in the fullest sense: asymmetrical relationships can exist in which one partner exports models, curricula, and standards while the other adopts them uncritically (Bamberger & Morris, 2024). This distinction is particularly relevant to the Azerbaijani-Russian case, given the difference in size, resources, and academic tradition between the two systems.

From the perspective of international political economy, higher education integration is analyzed as a process that responds both to market incentives (demand for internationally recognized degrees, pressure for the development of qualified human capital) and to state positioning strategies. In this sense, cooperation in higher education is not immune to the logic of global competition for talent, investment, and scientific recognition. For Azerbaijan, a country that has undergone rapid economic transformations since independence, integration into educational spaces with a longer academic tradition represents an opportunity to accelerate the training of its technical and scientific personnel. For Russia, the projection of its university system onto the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) constitutes a strategic component of its soft power policy in the region.

The concept of soft power, coined by Joseph Nye (1990) to describe a state's ability to influence others through cultural, ideological, and institutional attraction (as opposed to military or economic coercion) has found one of its most effective and lasting vectors in the educational sphere. The influence of a university system on international students fosters personal connections, cultural affinities, and professional networks that extend beyond the academic experience and, in the long term, create audiences receptive to the values and interests of the host country.

In the post-Soviet context, Russia has deployed a systematic educational soft power strategy that includes offering government scholarships to students from CIS countries, maintaining institutions for teaching the Russian language, fostering networks of alumni from Soviet and Russian universities, and promoting academic standards that maintain continuity with the Soviet pedagogical tradition (Morgan, 2025). This strategy is not without its tensions, especially in countries like Azerbaijan, where the nation-building process has also involved a redefinition of cultural and identity references that, in some respects, diverge from the Soviet-Russian legacy.

However, it would be a mistake to interpret the Azerbaijani-Russian educational relationship solely from the perspective of Russian influence on Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's agency in this process is significant: the country has actively

used educational cooperation with Russia to project its own international image, promote the study of Azerbaijani language and culture in Russian institutions, and negotiate reciprocal terms that reflect its growing influence on the regional stage. This dynamic of shared agency, in which no single actor has a monopoly on the initiative, is a defining characteristic of bilateral educational integration that any rigorous analysis must incorporate.

Historical foundations and institutional transformations

To understand the current architecture of Azerbaijani-Russian educational cooperation, it is essential to recognize that both university systems share a common genealogy: the Soviet model of higher education. This model was characterized by strong curricular centralization, a close link between the university and the planned needs of the national economy, the predominance of an encyclopedic conception of scientific knowledge, and remarkable homogeneity in degree standards that facilitated the equivalence of diplomas among the republics of the Soviet Union. The dissolution of the USSR in 1991 did not immediately erase these structural legacies; on the contrary, many of them continued to operate as implicit frameworks of reference in the educational reform processes undertaken by the newly independent states (Isakhanli & Pashayeva, 2018).

In the case of Azerbaijan, the inherited higher education system comprised a network of university institutions whose orientation, methodology, and standards essentially reflected the Soviet paradigm. The transition to a market economy and integration into international organizations such as the Council of Europe generated pressure to reform the education system in a direction that progressively incorporated references to the European Higher Education Area. However, this process of selective Europeanization did not imply a break with Russian tradition: in many areas (from postgraduate structure to academic assessment practices) the influence of Russian university models remained palpable, both for historical reasons and due to the presence of a faculty trained in Soviet or Russian institutions.

This dual heritage (Soviet in origin, bifurcated in its post-independence evolution) is one of the most unique characteristics of the Azerbaijani higher education system and explains why cooperation with Russia has not been perceived as the adoption of an external model, but rather as the continuation and reworking of a shared tradition. But at the same time, this can create specific tensions when it comes to harmonizing that tradition with the requirements of the Bologna Process (European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process, 2026), which Azerbaijan formally joined in 2005, committing to the adoption of the three-cycle system (Bachelor's, Master's, PhD) and the European credit transfer system.

But in general terms, the period between Azerbaijani independence and the first decade of the 21st century can be characterized as a phase of gradual normalization of bilateral educational relations, marked by the construction of a legal infrastructure that replaced the automatic coordination mechanisms characteristic of the Soviet era. This normalization took place in a complex political context: the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its aftermath generated tensions that at times affected relations with Moscow, but education proved to be a relatively resilient domain to political turbulence, serving as a channel for maintaining ties even during periods of diplomatic estrangement. The legal framework for bilateral educational cooperation was built through a series of treaties, agreements, and protocols covering areas as diverse as the recognition of academic degrees, the circulation of scientific publications, faculty and student exchanges, and collaboration on joint research projects. A characteristic feature of this architecture is its multi-level structure: alongside major intergovernmental agreements, there exists a dense network of inter-university agreements that, in many cases, precede or outpace the pace of official diplomacy.

From the Azerbaijani perspective, the educational reforms since independence have also responded to a logic of strategic diversification, as while maintaining and deepening ties with Russia, cooperative relationships were also developed with Turkey, the countries of the European Union, and the United States. This policy of multiple openings has not responded to a logic of replacing Russian influence, but to a diversified international insertion strategy that has allowed Azerbaijan to negotiate its relations with Moscow with greater room for maneuver, including in the educational field.

Integration mechanisms: actors, structures and dynamics

While educational integration between Azerbaijan and Russia is based on a state-level legal framework, it is the universities that act as the driving force behind the process. This shift in leadership from the state to academic institutions reflects a global trend in the internationalization of higher education, in which universities have gained increasing autonomy to establish their own international cooperation networks (de Wit & Altbach, 2021). In the Azerbaijani-Russian bilateral context, this phenomenon takes on a particular dimension, as some academic institutions act as true hubs for educational integration, performing functions that go beyond mere academic training to include cultural mediation, the building of transnational professional networks, and the development of shared interpretive frameworks regarding their shared history and identity.

Among the Azerbaijani institutional actors with the greatest impact on the educational integration process with Russia are several universities that have developed organic links

with leading Russian academic institutions. These ties take diverse forms: dual degree programs, faculty and student exchange agreements, joint research projects funded by bilateral grants, and participation in academic networks that transcend the bilateral framework to become integrated into broader regional structures such as the Eurasian Universities Union (EURAS) (Slobodchikoff & Aleprete, 2021). The variety of these mechanisms reflects the maturity achieved by bilateral academic cooperation, which has evolved from the simple student exchanges of the early post-independence decades to more complex forms of institutional integration.

On the Russian side, several top-ranked universities have established privileged ties with the Azerbaijani university system. Moscow's most established academic institutions maintain cooperation agreements that include joint supervision of doctoral dissertations, the organization of bilateral conferences and seminars, and the joint publication of scientific journals. These relationships are not symmetrical in terms of resources and research capacity, but neither do they reflect a simple subordination of the Azerbaijani pole to the Russian one once the rich Azerbaijani humanistic tradition, especially in the fields of philology, history and oriental studies, gives it a position of interlocutor with its own recognized contributions.

Specifically, student mobility is one of the most direct indicators of the degree of integration between higher education systems, and at the same time one of its most powerful drivers of deepening that integration. When an Azerbaijani student studies at a Russian university (or vice versa) is not merely a transfer of academic knowledge that occurs but a process of socialization into cultural norms, values, and practices also takes place, which can have lasting effects on the individual's attitudes and social networks. On an aggregate scale, student mobility generates reservoirs of transnational social capital that facilitate future cooperation in multiple fields, including scientific, business, and diplomatic. In this regard, the analysis of student mobility flows between Azerbaijan and Russia reveals interesting patterns.

In quantitative terms, Russia has historically been the main destination for Azerbaijani students who choose to study abroad, a situation that reflects both geographical and cultural proximity and the existence of established networks of information and support for mobility. However, the motivations for this mobility are not uniform because alongside students attracted by the academic quality of certain Russian institutions (especially in fields such as medicine, engineering, and the exact sciences) there is also a segment motivated primarily by economic considerations, given that the cost of living and tuition in many Russian cities is competitive compared to other international options available to Azerbaijani students. Mobility in the opposite direction—Russian students in Azerbaijan—is

quantitatively smaller but qualitatively significant, particularly in the fields of Caucasus studies, Oriental studies, and Turkology. This quantitative asymmetry reflects broader structural asymmetries between the two educational systems, and overcoming them gradually remains one of the challenges of bilateral integration. To achieve this, it would be necessary not only to expand the range of academic programs taught in English at Azerbaijani universities (which has already experienced remarkable growth in recent years) but also to develop active strategies for attracting foreign students, including scholarship programs, support services, and international recognition of Azerbaijani degrees.

Challenges and future perspectives for the continuous integration of higher education.

Despite the progress described in the preceding sections, the integration of the higher education systems of Azerbaijan and Russia faces structural challenges of varying magnitudes that must be addressed. The first, and perhaps most fundamental, of these is the persistence of asymmetries between the two systems, which hinder full reciprocity in exchange. These asymmetries manifest themselves in areas such as differences in available research resources, international recognition of degrees awarded, access to international scientific databases, and the ability to attract foreign academic talent. The mutual recognition of academic degrees is one of the most palpable elements, and where progress, while real, remains insufficient. Bilateral regulatory frameworks establish principles of mutual recognition that, in theory, should facilitate the validation of diplomas; however, in practice, administrative procedures are frequently complex and slow, generating uncertainty among students and academic institutions. This situation is a recognized element that discourages mobility and limits the true scope of educational integration, reducing in practice what appears on paper to be a space for the free flow of knowledge and people (de Wit & Altbach, 2021).

Joint accreditation of academic programs (that is, the recognition by quality assurance agencies of both countries of programs offered jointly (Carvalho et al., 2023)) represents a boundary that has not yet been systematically crossed in the Azerbaijani-Russian bilateral context. This approach, which has achieved considerable development in the European Higher Education Area, would overcome the limitations of retrospective degree recognition, generating from the very design of the programs a guarantee of equivalence and quality recognized by both systems. Its implementation would, however, require a level of coordination between national accreditation agencies that is currently lacking, as well as a sustained political will from both parties to invest in the development of common quality assurance mechanisms.

On the other hand, the digital transformation of higher education, dramatically accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has opened new possibilities for educational integration between Azerbaijan and Russia that warrant specific consideration. Distance education and virtual learning environments eliminate or significantly reduce some of the logistical barriers that have historically limited academic cooperation, such as geographical distance, travel costs, the complexity of visa processes, and accommodation restrictions. At the same time, they create new opportunities for designing joint academic programs in which students and faculty from both countries can participate synchronously or asynchronously without the need for physical travel (Nazyrova et al., 2025). However, it is important to recognize that the potential of digitalization for educational integration is not limited to teaching. In the field of scientific research, digital platforms can facilitate collaboration between research groups from both countries, the organization of online seminars and conferences, and access to information. These possibilities are especially relevant in the context of the gap in access to academic resources that separates smaller or less well-funded institutions from large universities with the capacity to subscribe to high-cost international platforms.

Yet, it would be naive to assume that digitalization alone solves the challenges of educational integration or that its effects are necessarily equalizing. The technological infrastructures available in different regions of both countries are heterogeneous, and the digital skills of teachers and students vary considerably depending on the institutional context (Matsieli & Mutula, 2024). Furthermore, online education does not entirely replace the socialization and networking functions of in-person learning. The added value of physical mobility, both for individuals and for integration between systems, cannot be fully captured by screen-mediated interactions. Therefore, the most promising strategy is complementarity between in-person and online modalities, leveraging the specific strengths of each according to the concrete objectives of each cooperation program.

Conclusions

The integration of higher education institutions in Azerbaijan and Russia is a multidimensional process that cannot be reduced to its diplomatic or regulatory components, however relevant these may be. It is a complex social phenomenon, driven by actors with heterogeneous interests and conditioned by historical legacies, evolving identities, and pressures from a rapidly changing international environment. The analysis developed in this article has sought to capture this complexity by adopting a perspective that integrates theoretical tools from different disciplines and levels of analysis.

The main findings of this work can be summarized in three propositions. The first is that the Soviet structural legacy continues to be a primary explanatory factor for understanding the current architecture of bilateral educational cooperation, but that its influence is not static; rather, it has been reinterpreted, negotiated, and transformed by actors on both sides over three decades of independent trajectories. The second proposition is that educational integration between Azerbaijan and Russia operates simultaneously as an instrument of foreign policy, as a space for identity construction, and as a mechanism for human capital development, and that understanding its dynamics requires keeping this multiplicity of functions in mind. The third proposition is that, despite the normative and institutional advances achieved, structural asymmetries persist that limit the full reciprocity of the exchange, and that overcoming them requires reforms in specific areas such as the recognition of degrees, joint accreditation, and shared funding of research. From the perspective of the implications for public policy, we emphasize that decision-makers in both countries should consider higher education integration as a

long-term strategic investment whose return cannot be measured solely in terms of mobility flows or signed agreements, but also in the joint innovation capacities it generates. Furthermore, deepening this integration on more equitable and reciprocal foundations can significantly contribute to the stability and prosperity of the region, as well as to the capacity of both countries to address the global challenges of the 21st century. We believe that future research should delve deeper into the perspectives of the students and academics participating in bilateral exchange programs, whose testimonies and lived experiences are essential for contrasting and enriching the macro-institutional analyses that have predominated in the existing literature. Similarly, comparative analysis with other cases of educational integration in the post-Soviet space (such as those developed between Russia and Kazakhstan, for example) could provide valuable contextual elements to identify what is specific to the Azerbaijani case and what reflects broader regional dynamics.

REFERENCES

- Bamberger, A., & Morris, P. (2024). Critical perspectives on internationalization in higher education: Commercialization, global citizenship, or postcolonial imperialism? *Critical Studies in Education*, 65(2), 128–146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2023.2233572>
- Börzel, T. A., & Spannagel, J. (2025). The globalization of academic freedom. *Global Constitutionalism*, 14(1), 73–95. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S204538172400008X>
- Carvalho, N., Rosa, M. J., & Amaral, A. (2023). Cross-Border Higher Education and Quality Assurance. Results from a Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 27(5), 695–718. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10283153221076900>
- Dai, J., Ahmed, Z., Alvarado, R., & Ahmad, M. (2024). Assessing the nexus between human capital, green energy, and load capacity factor: Policymaking for achieving sustainable development goals. *Gondwana Research*, 129, 452–464. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gr.2023.04.009>
- De Wit, H., & Altbach, P. G. (2021). Internationalization in higher education: Global trends and recommendations for its future. *Policy Reviews in Higher Education*, 5(1), 28–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322969.2020.1820898>
- European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process. (2026). *Azerbaijan*. <https://ehea.info/page-azerbaijan>
- Huka, B. R., Ximenes, A. A., & Haan, V. A. (2024). Lifelong education policies in Europe and Latin America. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 19(3), 389–391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17454999241269008>
- Huseynova, N. (2024). *Azerbaijan, Russia discuss cooperation prospects between universities*. Caliber.Az. <https://caliber.az/en/post/azerbaijan-russia-discuss-cooperation-prospects-between-universities>
- Isakhanli, H., & Pashayeva, A. (2018). Higher Education Transformation, Institutional Diversity and Typology of Higher Education Institutions in Azerbaijan. In J. Huisman, A. Smolentseva, & I. Froumin (Eds.), *25 Years of Transformations of Higher Education Systems in Post-Soviet Countries: Reform and Continuity* (pp. 97–121). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-52980-6_4
- Jabbarova, A., Ashurbayli-Huseynova, N., Akbarova, S., Orucova, M., & Celik, L. (2026). Oil- and Gas-Rich Azerbaijan's Economic Diversification: Analysis of Global Experiences and Prospects for Application. *International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy*, 16(2), 275–285. <https://doi.org/10.32479/ijeep.22200>
- Kazimli, K. F. E. (2023). On the normative legal framework in the field of higher education in Azerbaijan since the period of independence. *Universidad y Sociedad*, 15(6), 121–126. <https://rus.ucf.edu.cu/index.php/rus/article/view/4129>
- Keohane, R. O., & Nye, J. S. (2012). *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (4th ed.). Pearson. <https://is.cuni.cz/studium/predmety/index.php?do=download&did=231748&kod=JPM033>
- Kerimli, Y. (2024). *Moscow hosts Russia-Azerbaijan Science and Education Forum*. Apa.Az. <https://en.apa.az/science-and-education/moscow-hosts-russia-azerbaijan-science-and-education-forum-449407>
- Matsieli, M., & Mutula, S. (2024). COVID-19 and Digital Transformation in Higher Education Institutions: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Access to Quality Education. *Education Sciences*, 14(8). <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14080819>
- Morgan, W. J. (2025). Soft power, public diplomacy, and modernity in China and Russia. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 66(2), 279–285. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2023.2225069>
- Nagorna, G., Moskalenko, A., Horina, O., Honcharuk, O., & Demchuk, L. (2022). Modernization of Education During the Pandemic Conditions for Effective Education on a Distance Basis. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education*, 14(1), 449–458. <https://doi.org/10.9756/INT-JECSE/V14I1.221056>
- Nasirli, T., & Nakhiyev, A. (2021). “*Azerbaijan-Russia Roadmap for Cooperation in Science, Innovation and Education*” signed between ANAS and RAS. Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. <https://science.gov.az/en/news/open/18932>
- Nazyrova, A., Miłosz, M., Bekmanova, G., Omarbekova, A., Aimicheva, G., & Kadyr, Y. (2025). The Digital Transformation of Higher Education in the Context of an AI-Driven Future. *Sustainability*, 17(22). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17229927>
- Nye, J. S. (with Internet Archive). (1990). *Bound to lead: The changing nature of American power*. New York: Basic Books. <http://archive.org/details/boundtolead-00jose>

- Oleksiyenko, A. V. (2023). Geopolitical agendas and internationalization of post-soviet higher education: Discursive dilemmas in the realm of the prestige economy. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 102, 102857. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedu-dev.2023.102857>
- Rawas, S. (2024). ChatGPT: Empowering lifelong learning in the digital age of higher education. *Education and Information Technologies*, 29(6), 6895–6908. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-12114-8>
- Slobodchikoff, M. O., & Aleprete, M. E. (2021). The Impact of Russian-led Eurasian Integration on the International Relations of the Post-Soviet Space. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 73(5), 913–927. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2020.1785398>
- Taiwo Onifade, S., Gyamfi, B. A., Haouas, I., & Bekun, F. V. (2021). Re-examining the roles of economic globalization and natural resources consequences on environmental degradation in E7 economies: Are human capital and urbanization essential components? *Resources Policy*, 74, 102435. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2021.102435>
- Tran, L. T., Jung, J., Unangst, L., & Marshall, S. (2023). New developments in internationalisation of higher education. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 42(5), 1033–1041. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2023.2216062>
- Vazquez, L. K., & Mancilla, C. (2025). The Evolving Landscape of Internationalization of Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Decade of Bibliometric Evidence. *Sage Open*, 15(4), 21582440251387053. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440251387053>
- Yavar, N. G. (2024). Russia and Azerbaijan: Aspects of cooperation in the field of education. *Revista Conrado*, 20(96), 602–609. <https://conrado.ucf.edu.cu/index.php/conrado/article/view/3621>

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

Author Contributions under the CRediT Taxonomy:

Autor	Roles
Guliyeva Nushaba Yaver	Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project Administration, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing.

Universidad & Sociedad publica sus artículos bajo una licencia Creative Commons <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.es>

