



REVISITING THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM IN A POLYTECHNIC CONTEXT: EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Maria Puspa Sari^{1*}

¹Politeknik Akamigas Palembang, Indonesia

E-mail: mariapuspasari@pap.ac.id¹

Accepted:
14 July 2026

Published:
15 July 2026

Corresponding Author:
Maria Puspa Sari

Email Corresponding:
mariapuspasari@pap.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to evaluate the English curriculum in four study programs in the college. The research was a qualitative-quantitative descriptive study with the elements of data and method triangulation, and it employed two questionnaires for lecturers and students. The findings revealed that all programs provided English with ESP and TOEFL preparation materials. English was given 3 up to 4 credits in each study program and taught for 2 semesters only mostly in the first and fifth semesters. Even though the current English curriculum applied already met the needs of learners, it still needed further enrichment to keep learners updated with the knowledge in their field. Both learners and lecturers also expected to have English subject portion more than what they had. This study offers a novel contribution by evaluating an ESP-based English curriculum in a polytechnic context through the combined perspectives of students, lecturers, and academic program heads. The findings provide practical implications for curriculum improvement, particularly the need to extend English instruction, enrich field-specific materials, and involve English lecturers in curriculum planning to enhance students' academic preparation and future professional readiness

Keywords: Curriculum evaluation; English for Specific Purposes (ESP); perception; polytechnic; recommendation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The absence of a nationally standardized English curriculum for non-English majors in Indonesian higher education grants universities considerable autonomy to design English programs that align with their institutional goals and disciplinary needs. Although this flexibility enables contextualized curriculum development, it also results in substantial variation in curriculum design, implementation, and learning outcomes across universities and even among departments within the same institution.

Despite the growing recognition among Indonesian students that English proficiency is essential for academic advancement and career competitiveness, the country's performance on the English Proficiency Index (EPI) has remained relatively low compared with neighboring countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Indonesia's ranking declined from 51st in 2018 to 61st in 2019 and further to 74th in 2020 (Education First, 2020). In most Indonesian higher education institutions, English is offered for only one compulsory semester, with the

Vol 9, No 2 (2026): ESTEEM

duration and content determined by individual institutional policies. Consequently, many students pursue additional English instruction through private language courses because they perceive that the formal curriculum does not sufficiently support the development of practical communicative competence.

Curriculum evaluation has become an increasingly significant area of educational research because it provides evidence for determining whether existing curricula effectively address learners' needs and achieve intended learning outcomes. The substantial body of curriculum evaluation studies conducted worldwide reflects the continuous need for curriculum improvement regardless of educational context. Suer (2022) argues that English curriculum evaluation remains a central concern for language education researchers, resulting in the application of various evaluation frameworks across different settings. Likewise, Qodir, Baehaqi, and Miftah (2016) emphasize that a well-designed English curriculum serves as the foundation for developing appropriate teaching materials and effective instructional practices. Previous studies conducted across primary, secondary, and tertiary education have consistently identified several aspects requiring improvement, including instructional strategies, curriculum content, learning materials, educational policies, and students' motivation (Al-Jardani, 2012; Ormeci, 2009; Sakkir et al., 2021; Supriani et al., 2019).

Building upon these concerns, the present study seeks to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the English curriculum implemented in a vocational higher education institution by integrating both theoretical analysis and empirical

evidence derived from lecturers' and students' perspectives. Rather than merely describing the existing curriculum, the study aims to identify its strengths and limitations and to formulate practical recommendations for curriculum enhancement to better accomplish institutional learning objectives.

Within the institution under investigation, English is a compulsory subject for all first-semester students. One study program extends English instruction into the second semester, whereas the remaining programs offer an additional English-related course in the fifth semester focusing primarily on TOEFL preparation. Since the institution's establishment, the English curriculum has undergone several revisions; however, these modifications were implemented without systematic evaluation due to the absence of a dedicated evaluation mechanism. Since 2016, the institutional language center has assumed responsibility for English language instruction and introduced several improvements, including curriculum revision, the development of program-specific teaching materials, and the implementation of supplementary English language courses.

After approximately five years of implementation, the existing curriculum required a systematic evaluation to determine its effectiveness and identify areas requiring refinement. Accordingly, this study was designed to examine the implementation of the current English curriculum, investigate lecturers' instructional approaches, explore lecturers' and students' perceptions of the curriculum, and formulate evidence-based recommendations for future curriculum development. The findings are expected to provide valuable empirical evidence for the

Vol 9, No 2 (2026): ESTEEM

language center and serve as a strategic reference in proposing curriculum improvements to the institutional leadership, thereby supporting the continuous enhancement of English language education within the institution.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive design using qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the English curriculum implemented at a private vocational college in Palembang. This investigation focused on English curriculum, teaching approaches the lecturers, students' and lecturers' perception and recommendations for future improvement. 190 students and 10 content and English lecturers involved in the study by filling the questionnaires through Google Form.

Data were collected through document analysis and questionnaires. Document analysis was conducted by reviewing English syllabi (RPS) and learning materials used across four different study programs. This is to examine the curriculum structure, content and alignment with the institutional standard. The lecturer's questionnaire had ten statements with 5-point Likert-scale items and five open ended. On the other hand, the students' questionnaire had also ten statements with 5-point Likert-scale items and an optional comment section.

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage), whereas qualitative data from document analysis and open-ended responses were examined descriptively to identify emerging themes related to curriculum strengths and areas for improvement.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were collected through observation and questionnaires. Observation

focused on analyzing the English curriculum design in each study program by reviewing eight syllabi (Rencana Pembelajaran Semester/RPS) from eight English subjects. Each syllabus included information such as credits, lecturer name, objectives, indicators, materials, learning methods, and evaluation, all of which met the college standards. However, lesson plans were not included.

Two questionnaires were used for different participants. The lecturer questionnaire, given to two English lecturers, four heads, and four secretaries of study programs, consisted of ten Likert-scale items and five open-ended questions. The student questionnaire included ten Likert-scale items and an optional comment section. Out of 564 students, 190 (about 30% of the population) responded, representing four study programs: Oil and Gas Laboratory Analysis, Oil and Gas Processing, Oil and Gas Exploration and Production, and Coal Mining Engineering. Participants were from semesters 1, 3, and 5.

Findings from observation showed that all study programs had autonomy in determining when English was taught. Three programs offered English in the first and fifth semesters, while Coal Mining Engineering taught it in the first and second semesters. English courses included English for specific fields and TOEFL preparation, with 15 sessions per semester. Curriculum evaluations were conducted every five years; however, English received limited attention compared to engineering subjects, and English lecturers were not involved in decision-making. This gap emphasized the need for curriculum recommendations and better coordination with the language unit.

The Current English Curriculum

Every study program had English with Semester Learning Plan or Rencana Pembelajaran Semester (RPS). This

Vol 9, No 2 (2026): ESTEEM

document made by the English lecturers before the semester started and they must present it to their students in the first meeting of the semester. Each study program also

has their own English outcomes. Here are what the researchers found from the observation and analysis of the current English curriculum in each study program.

Table 1. The Current English subject in different programs

Study programs	Subject Name	Semester	Credit
Lab analysis Engineering	English 1	First	2 credits
	English 2	Fifth	2 credits
Processing Engineering	English	First	2 credits
	TOEFL Preparation	Fifth	2 credits
Exploration and production Engineering	English	First Fifth	2 credits
	TOEFL Preparation (Practicum)		1 credit
Coal Mining Engineering	English	First	2 credits
	English for Mining	Second	2 credits

The name of English subjects across study programs are mostly the same, English and TOEFL Preparation. Only Coal Mining Engineering program use English for Mining for the second English subject in the second program. Also, two programs, Exploration and production Engineering and Processing Engineering. English class allocation was once a week with 100 minutes/meeting or 50 minutes/credit.

The materials for grammar were similar across the program, such as numbers, present, past and future simple, math operations, telling time, etc. While vocabulary varied across the programs depending on their discipline-related lexical terms. For lab analysis, students learned jobs in oil laboratory industry, laboratory equipment, personal protective equipment in laboratory, safety signs and notices, asking for permissions and help, laboratory safety induction, emergencies and reporting an

accident and how to read chemical reactions and equations. Then, processing engineering students learned pipeline system in refinery, chemical reactions, types of fuel, etc. Exploration and production engineering program covered oil rig,

offshore, onshore, jobs on oil rig, well completion, types of rigs, etc. Finally, English for coal mining engineering covered coal mining process, heavy equipment in surface and underground mining, rehabilitation, overburden removal, etc.

Learning approach

Learning approaches were also mostly the same across the programs. From the syllabi, the methods included interactive method, task-based learning, project-based learning, etc. Lecturers also apply student-centered learning experience where students are given most time to speak rather than just listening to their lecturers.

In the two questionnaires of this study, questionnaire for lecturer and student, opinion about the method of learning in English learning was also questioned. In the student questionnaire, Item 7 asked if the learning method in their English classes was interactive and various. More than 25% of participants chose 'strongly agree' and more than 50% of the participants chose 'agree'. 15% of the students chose 'neutral' and less than 2% chose 'disagree'. Also, the lecturers admitted that the method of learning in their programs were already

Vol 9, No 2 (2026): ESTEEM

various and innovative. That the learning was designed student-centered learning could be seen from the RPS design which enable students to have more practice with their classmates both in pair and in group. Learners were also given various drill and assignments such as role play, monologue, project, etc.

Thus, this study proved that the learning approach applied by the lecturers in the classes was innovative and various. The method of learning applied in each instruction was adapted to the materials and learning objectives. However, students also

suggested the lecturers to add filler or ice breaker such as games in the middle of the class.

Students' and lecturers' perception

Overall, both lecturers/management and students expressed generally positive perceptions of the English curriculum, materials, and teaching practices. Most respondents agreed that the syllabus and learning materials met institutional standards, aligned with learning outcomes, and were relevant to students' study programs. Here is the results of the questionnaire.

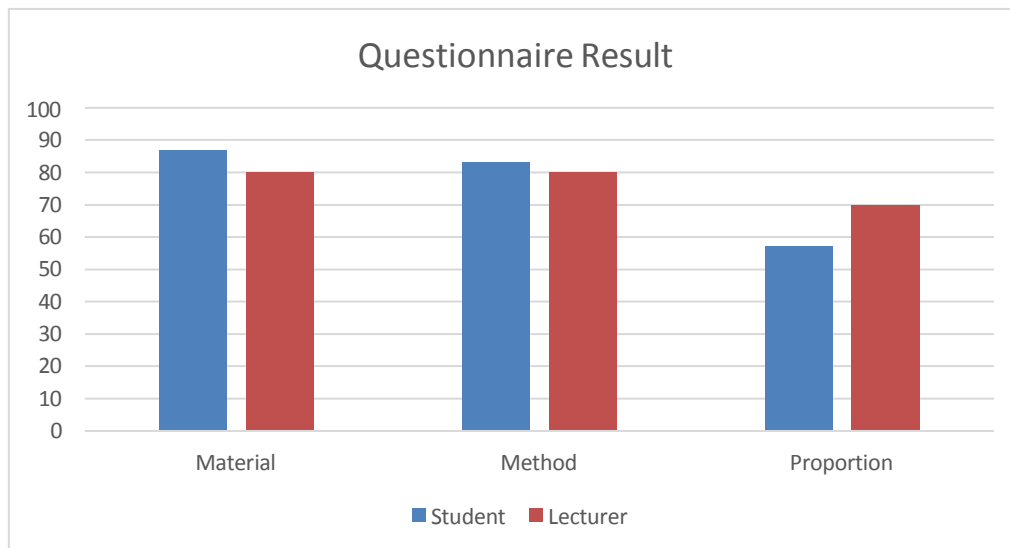


Figure 1. Questionnaire results

Both lecturers (88%) and students (80%) share the same perspectives over the materials delivered in English classes. They agreed that the materials were considered clear, understandable, and appropriate for students' need. Teaching methods were also viewed as interactive and varied as it can be seen from the percentages where 82% of lecturers and 80% of students were satisfied with the methods.

Despite these strengths, both groups identified a need to improve and expand the English curriculum. Respondents suggested enriching the materials with more field-specific content, such as petroleum

engineering English, academic writing, curriculum vitae writing, and TOEFL preparation. Students also emphasized the importance of including all language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and requested more engaging learning activities and discipline-related textbook specially designed to meet their needs.

Nevertheless, the most consistent concern from both groups was the insufficient duration and proportion of English instruction, currently limited to two semesters. Both lecturers/management and students believed English should be offered for more semesters, ideally throughout the

Vol 9, No 2 (2026): ESTEEM

study period. Many suggested adding English either as an extra class or as a low-credit regular subject. Students and lecturers also strongly supported the idea of providing a TOEFL Preparation course before the official TOEFL test.

Curriculum evaluation is essential for improving instructional quality and ensuring alignment with learners' needs particularly within vocational context where curriculum must correspond with the changing industry demand (Mappiasse & Johari, 2014; Vreuls et al, 2023; Fei et al, 2025;). As the first English curriculum evaluation conducted at this vocational college, this study examined curriculum implementation

and stakeholder perceptions to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The findings indicate that although the curriculum structure aligns with institutional standards and study program outcomes, several core components of ESP curriculum development require enhancement.

A major issue identified is the absence of a systematic needs analysis in the curriculum and material development processes. Needs analysis is widely recognized as the one of four pillars of ESP course design because it ensures content reflects learners' linguistic, academic, and workplace communication needs (Anthony, 2018; Basturkmen, 2025; Nguyen & Ho, 2024; Santika, et al., 2022). In vocational education, needs analysis is particularly critical since English instruction must be aligned with discipline-specific professional competencies and job-related communicative practices (Marra, 2013; Flowerdew, 2013). However, English lecturers in this study relied mainly on informal consultation with subject lecturers, rather than directly gathering learners' and industry needs. This practice limits the curriculum's accuracy in responding to occupational language demands—especially

in engineering-based programs where English expectations are specific and technical. Integrating structured needs analysis through the collaboration of English lecturers and industry experts would therefore enhance the curriculum's responsiveness to industry demands (Marra, 2013).

Both lecturers and students reported positive perceptions of the relevance of learning materials and the variety of teaching methods used. Materials were aligned with students' fields of study, and teaching approaches were seen as engaging, which contributes to improved learner motivation and participation (Dursun & Aykan, 2025; van Dulmen et al., 2022; Xiong, 2025). Nevertheless, students' comments indicated a desire for more interactive, communicative, and task-based learning opportunities, particularly those that simulate workplace communication. Recent ESP and TVET research highlight the importance of learner-centered pedagogies, practical communication tasks, and workplace-integrated learning activities to strengthen employability-related English competence (Alhomidan, 2025; Sakkir et al., 2022; Skarpaas & Hellekjær, 2021). Incorporating more presentation tasks, simulations, and job-related communicative activities would therefore help better prepare students for professional English use.

A shared concern among respondents was the insufficiency of English exposure. English is currently taught for only two semesters (3–4 credits total), which was viewed as inadequate for achieving meaningful proficiency. This perception reflects broader evidence that extended contact time and continuous exposure are necessary for measurable language development, especially in EFL contexts with limited English use outside the classroom (Benigno et al., 2017; Getie, 2020; Jaekel et al., 2022; Tran & Miralpeix, 2024; Qassrawi et al., 2023). For polytechnic students,

Vol 9, No 2 (2026): ESTEEM

greater exposure to English is also linked to employability and smoother transition to the workforce (Erling, 2015; Zuo et al., 2025; Arkoudis et al., 2009). Increasing English instruction to more semesters, or offering supplementary non-credit ESP programs, would thus better support students' long-term language development and workplace readiness.

A strong preference for a field-specific ESP textbook was also evident. Students expected learning materials tailored to their discipline and professional context, rather than generic content. ESP literature consistently emphasizes that materials for vocational learners must be contextualized, industry-relevant, and updated to reflect real-world communication practices (Anthony, 2018; Paltridge & Starfield., 2013). Locally developed materials allow lecturers to incorporate industry-specific terminology, authentic texts, and context-relevant tasks based on learners' proficiency and workplace expectations (Coxhead et al., 2019). Supporting English lecturers in developing customized ESP materials or program-specific textbooks—grounded in a robust needs analysis would thus significantly enhance curriculum relevance and effectiveness.

In summary, this study highlights three key areas for improvement: (1) integrating systematic needs analysis into ESP curriculum development, (2) increasing English instructional duration and exposure, and (3) developing localized, field-specific ESP materials. Addressing these areas would strengthen alignment between the English curriculum and vocational learners' academic and professional needs.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the current curriculum is considered adequate and aligned with program needs, but both students and lecturers expect more intensive English exposure, enriched ESP materials, and

increased learning hours to better support students' academic and future professional demands. This research, however, did not observe the perspective of alumni users to find their opinion about the English proficiency of the college's outcomes. In further research, it could be an appealing study to conduct. Furthermore, a need analysis of learners in each study program had a chance to an engaging topic. Syllabi design could also follow up the research.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to Politeknik Akamigas Palembang for funding this research and all participants for volunteering in this research

6. REFERENCES

- Alhomidan, A. M. A. (2025). Integrating English for specific purposes in technical and vocational education: A sustainable model for industry–education alignment. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 13(2), 201–218. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15341890>
- Al-Jardani, K. S. S. (2012). English language curriculum evaluation in Oman. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 2(5), 40–44. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v2n5p40>
- Anthony, L. (2018). *Introducing English for specific purposes* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351031189>
- Arkoudis, S., Hawthorne, L., Baik, C., Hawthorne, G., O'Loughlin, K., Leach, D., & Bexley, E. (2009). *The impact of English language proficiency and workplace readiness on the employment outcomes of tertiary international students*. Department of Education, Employment and Workplace

Vol 9, No 2 (2026): ESTEEM

- Relations.
https://internationaleducation.gov.au/research/Publications/Documents/ELP_Full_Report.pdf
- Basturkmen, H. (2025). Learning a specialized register: An English for specific purposes research agenda. *Language Teaching*, 58(1), 57–68.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444823000472>
- Benigno, V., de Jong, J., & van Moere, A. (2017). *How long does it take to learn a language? Insights from research on language learning* (Global Scale of English Research Series). Pearson.
<http://www.english.com/t4qgNJUYH866vT43/GSE-learning-hours.pdf>
- Coxhead, A., Parkinson, J., Mackay, J., & McLaughlin, E. (2019). *English for vocational purposes: Language use in trades education*. Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429449932>
- Dursun, F., & Aykan, A. (2025). Exploring teachers' narratives: Challenges and strategies for enhancing the teaching process. *SAGE Open*, 15(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440251332557>
- Education First. (2020). *EF English proficiency index: A ranking of 100 countries and regions by English skills*. <https://www.ef.com/epi>
- Erling, E. J. (2015). *The relationship between English and employability in the Middle East and North Africa*. British Council.
https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/pub_en-the_relationship_between_english_employability_in_mena_research.pdf
- Fei, A., Chen, J., Lee, W., Xin, K., Behnke, C., & Gordon, S. (2025). Designing hospitality curriculum for the future: A comprehensive assessment of an undergraduate program in the United States. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 37(2), 138–153.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2025.2453736>
- Flowerdew, L. (2013). Needs analysis and curriculum development in ESP. In B. Paltridge & S. Starfield (Eds.), *The handbook of English for specific purposes* (pp. xx–xx). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Getie, A. S. (2020). Factors affecting the attitudes of students towards learning English as a foreign language. *Cogent Education*, 7(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2020.1738184>
- Jaekel, N., Schurig, M., van Ackern, I., & Ritter, M. (2022). The impact of early foreign language learning on language proficiency development from middle to high school. *System*, 106, Article 102763.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2022.102763>
- Mappiase, S. S., & Johari, A. (2014). Evaluation of English as a foreign language and its curriculum in Indonesia: A review. *English Language Teaching*, 7(10), 113–122.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n10p113>
- Marra, M. (2013). English in the workplace. In B. Paltridge & S. Starfield (Eds.), *The handbook of English for specific purposes* (pp. xx–xx). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Nguyen, P. T., & Ho, H. V. (2024). Needs analysis for university EFL learners majoring in Business English: A scoping review of research and practice. *World Journal of English Language*, 14(6), 207–216.
<https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v14n6p207>
- Ormeci, D. N. (2009). *An evaluation of English language curricula implemented at the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades in respect of teachers' opinions* (Master's thesis, Trakya University).
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/50609774.pdf>

Vol 9, No 2 (2026): ESTEEM

- Paltridge, B., & Starfield, S. (Eds.). (2013). *The handbook of English for specific purposes*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Qassrawi, R., Abuhussein, H. F., Rafidi, T. J., & Yousef, R. (2023). Language intensive exposure in EFL curriculum: Attitudes towards the Unlock textbook series at Birzeit University as a case study. *Cogent Education*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2166626>
- Qodir, A., Baehaqi, L., & Miftah, M. Z. (2016). Developing materials of listening comprehension for the English department students. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 6(1), 1–20.
- Sakkir, G., Abduh, A., Andrew, M., Muslim, A. B., & Yasdin, Y. (2021). The challenges faced by teachers in teaching English in the current curriculum change. *Proceedings of the National Seminar, Research and Community Service Institute of Universitas Negeri Makassar*, 513–523.
- Santika, S., Wirza, Y., & Emilia, E. (2022). A needs analysis for ESP in a multimedia study programme of a vocational high school. *Indonesian Journal of Education*, 15(1), 61–68. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ije.v15i1.46156>
- Skarpaas, K. G., & Hellekjær, G. O. (2021). Vocational orientation: A supportive approach to teaching L2 English in upper secondary school vocational programmes. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 2, Article 100064. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2021.100064>
- Suer, S. (2022). A systematic review of English curriculum evaluation studies in Turkey (2005–2021). *E-Kafkas Journal of Educational Research*, 9, 528–544. <https://doi.org/10.30900/kafkasegt.963984>
- Supriani, N., Dardjito, H., & Istiqomah, E. K. (2019). Evaluating 2013 curriculum implementation on English subject of junior high school in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. *Tamansiswa International Journal in Education and Science*, 1(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.30738/tijes.v1i1.5445>
- Tran, L., & Miralpeix, I. (2024). Out-of-school exposure to English in EFL teenage learners: Is it related to academic performance? *Education Sciences*, 14(4), 393. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14040393>
- van Dulmen, T. H. H., Visser, T. C., Pepin, B., & McKenney, S. (2022). Teacher and student engagement when using learning materials based on the context of cutting-edge chemistry research. *Research in Science & Technological Education*, 41(4), 1617–1638. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02635143.2022.2070147>
- Vreuls, J., van der Klink, M., Koeslag-Kreunen, M., Stoyanov, S., Boshuizen, H., & Nieuwenhuis, L. (2023). Responsive curriculum development: Which factors support breaking through institutional barriers? *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 77(3), 582–610. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13636820.2023.2270470>
- Xiong, X. (2025). Influence of teaching styles of higher education teachers on students' engagement in learning: The mediating role of learning motivation. *Education for Chemical Engineers*, 51, 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ece.2025.02.005>
- Zuo, H., Zhang, M., & Huang, W. (2025). Lifelong learning in vocational

Vol 9, No 2 (2026): ESTEEM

education: A game-theoretical exploration of innovation, entrepreneurial spirit, and strategic challenges. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 10, Article 100694. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2025.100694>