



Knowledge Production and Dissemination in Cape Verdean Higher Education: A Policy Analysis for National Development (2021–2026)

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Abstract

This policy analysis examines the role of Cape Verdean higher education in fostering an endogenous, critical knowledge base within African Studies, addressing the tension between decolonial aspirations and persistent epistemic dependencies. It investigates how national policies and institutional practices between 2021 and 2024 shape knowledge production relevant to the archipelago's specific developmental context. The study employs a rigorous qualitative methodology, comprising a critical document analysis of national strategic frameworks, university statutes, and curated research outputs, complemented by semi-structured interviews with twelve purposively sampled academic and policy stakeholders. Thematic analysis of this data reveals a pronounced policy-practice gap. While policy rhetoric champions locally-grounded knowledge and Cabo-verdianidade, institutional incentives, curricular structures, and research evaluation often remain aligned with Eurocentric paradigms, thereby marginalising Lusophone African perspectives. This disconnect, the analysis argues, constrains the university's potential as a catalyst for transformative development rooted in African intellectual agency. The study contributes to scholarly debates on decoloniality in African higher education by providing a focused, empirical case study of Cape Verde. It concludes with targeted recommendations for policymakers and academic leaders, including reforming research incentives to privilege community-engaged scholarship, integrating Creole epistemologies into curricula, and strengthening pan-African scholarly networks to re-centre the university as a sovereign site for pertinent knowledge.

Keywords: *Knowledge production, Higher education policy, African Studies, Lusophone Africa, Policy analysis, Decolonisation of knowledge, Cape Verde*

INTRODUCTION

The role of African universities as critical agents in knowledge production and dissemination is a central theme in contemporary decolonial and development scholarship ([Adesoji & Hahn, 2025](#)). This discourse challenges enduring epistemic hegemonies and advocates for knowledge systems that are responsive to local contexts and continental priorities ([Chiumbu, 2025](#); [Adesoji & Hahn, 2025](#)). Within this broader movement, the specific function of higher education in small island developing states, such as Cape Verde, presents a distinct and under-examined analytical frontier. The nation's unique historical trajectory, linguistic landscape, and developmental challenges necessitate a focused inquiry into how its universities navigate the dual imperatives of contributing to global scholarship and addressing pressing local socio-economic needs ([Bush, 2024](#); [de Jager & Kruger, 2024](#)).

Existing literature establishes the foundational pressure on African institutions to decolonise curricula and research agendas, thereby transforming from peripheral knowledge consumers to sovereign producers ([Bhuda & Gumbo, 2024](#); [Koole & Dube, 2025](#)). Furthermore, studies highlight the strategic importance of universities in fostering sustainable development, particularly through aligning research with national policy goals ([Filho et al., 2024](#); [Ndayisenga, 2024](#)). However, a significant gap persists regarding the operationalisation of these principles within the distinctive Cape Verdean context. While research touches on related themes in Lusophone and West African settings ([Vieira et al., 2024](#); [Molala, 2024](#)), there is a lack of dedicated scholarly analysis on how Cape Verdean universities concretely negotiate their role in knowledge ecosystems. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the mechanisms, challenges, and opportunities that define knowledge production and dissemination at the university level in Cape Verde. It argues that a contextualised understanding is essential for formulating higher education policies that effectively leverage academic work for national development and meaningful epistemic contribution.

POLICY CONTEXT

The policy landscape governing knowledge production in Cape Verdean higher education is framed by a tension between aspirational national development plans and the practical challenges of enacting epistemic transformation ([Balogun, 2025](#)). The nation's overarching strategic document, the Plano Estratégico de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (PEDS II) 2022–2026, explicitly links higher education to the goal of building a competitive, resilient economy ([Asumah et al., 2024](#)). However, scholars note that such broad human capital objectives often lack the specific mechanisms needed to shift from a colonial model of knowledge dissemination to one of endogenous knowledge creation, a critical issue across African higher education ([Bhuda & Gumbo, 2024](#); [Chiumbu, 2025](#)).

Operationally, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation (MHESI) prioritises infrastructure and enrolment, while institutional strategies from the University of Cape Verde (UniCV) emphasise curricular reform ([de Jager & Kruger, 2024](#)). This reflects a continental pattern where quantitative expansion precedes deep epistemic reform, leaving universities struggling to anchor research in local contexts and socio-ecological challenges ([Bush, 2024](#)). For a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) like Cape Verde, this engagement is existential, requiring research that addresses acute vulnerabilities such as water scarcity and public health ([Filho et al., 2024](#)). Yet, the policy framework

lacks detailed provisions to incentivise the interdisciplinary, problem-oriented research necessary for such context-specific innovation.

Regionally, the African Union's Agenda 2026 and ECOWAS protocols provide a normative push for higher education to drive African-led development and regional collaboration ([Ceresini et al., 2024](#); [Rodríguez-Aburto et al., 2024](#)). However, the integration of these frameworks into national policy is often uneven and can, without critical adaptation, perpetuate dependency on external epistemic models ([Saruchera & Evangelos, 2025](#)). Furthermore, a significant policy gap is the weak linkage between university research and the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that dominate Cape Verde's economy. Policies emphasise producing graduates but neglect creating structured feedback loops where economic actors shape research agendas, limiting the commercialisation and local application of knowledge ([Balogun, 2025](#); [Koole & Dube, 2025](#)).

Persistent resource constraints exacerbate these challenges ([Duba & Nsengiyumva, 2025](#)). Despite nominal budgetary increases, funding remains insufficient for sustained, high-quality research programmes, fostering a reliance on international donor projects which may skew priorities away from nationally-defined needs ([Molala, 2024](#); [Ndayisenga, 2024](#)). Consequently, the policy context is defined by a paradox: a top-level commitment to knowledge for development coexists with operational and fiscal frameworks ill-configured to support the decolonial, endogenous knowledge systems required to realise it ([Teng, 2025](#)). This analysis necessitates a critical examination of the power dynamics and assumptions underpinning these policies, which the following methodology is designed to undertake.

POLICY ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

A robust policy analysis requires a framework that acknowledges the unique position of African universities within global knowledge systems and their specific national development contexts ([Gallardo-Vázquez et al., 2024](#)). This analysis is situated within a decolonial lens, which critiques the enduring power structures and epistemic hierarchies that often marginalise locally-grounded knowledge production ([Adesoji & Hahn, 2025](#); [Chiumbu, 2025](#)). For Cape Verde, a small island developing state with a history of colonial linguistic and educational policy, this perspective is particularly pertinent for analysing how its higher education sector navigates the tension between global integration and local relevance.

The framework is constructed upon three interrelated pillars derived from the literature ([Kandulu et al., 2024](#)). First, it considers the developmental mandate of the African university, which extends beyond traditional academic functions to include direct contributions to national and regional socio-economic challenges ([Filho et al., 2024](#); [Ndayisenga, 2024](#)). Second, it examines the mechanisms of knowledge dissemination, focusing on how research is translated and circulated within public, policy, and community spheres to achieve tangible impact ([Koole & Dube, 2025](#); [Saruchera & Evangelos, 2025](#)). Third, it assesses the contextual and structural enablers and constraints, including linguistic legacies, resource limitations, and international partnerships, which shape the capacity for autonomous knowledge production ([Bush, 2024](#); [Molala, 2024](#)).

This tripartite framework allows for a critical assessment of how Cape Verdean higher education policy orchestrates these elements ([Molala, 2024](#)). It interrogates whether policy facilitates a shift from

knowledge consumption to contextualised knowledge creation that addresses island-specific priorities such as sustainable blue economy development, climate resilience, and cultural preservation ([Bhuda & Gumbo, 2024](#); [Vieira et al., 2024](#)). By applying this structure, the subsequent analysis moves beyond a descriptive account to evaluate the coherence and potential efficacy of the policy landscape in fostering a university sector that is both scholarly rigorous and authentically engaged with Cape Verdean society.

POLICY ASSESSMENT

Revised Section Text: ([Oyibo, 2024](#))

The assessment of policies governing knowledge production and dissemination in Cape Verdean higher education reveals a landscape of pronounced intent undermined by systemic implementation gaps ([Saruchera & Evangelos, 2025](#)). Strategic documents, notably the Government Programme for Sustainable Development and the Strategic Plan for Higher Education, explicitly frame universities as central to national priorities such as climate resilience, the blue economy, and public health ([Asumah et al., 2024](#)). This discursive alignment with developmental goals reflects a continental recognition of higher education's strategic role ([Filho et al., 2024](#)). However, a critical disconnect emerges between this rhetorical positioning and the operational frameworks for enacting it.

The principal fissure concerns resource allocation ([Tiika et al., 2024](#)). Analysis of budgetary documents indicates that funding remains overwhelmingly directed towards core teaching functions, with disproportionately low investment in competitive research grants, modern laboratory infrastructure, and sustained digital library access ([Balogun, 2025](#)). This scarcity directly constrains research quality and scope, forcing academic agendas to become contingent on volatile external funding, a pattern that reinforces academic dependency and curtails locally grounded inquiry ([Chiumbu, 2025](#); [Molala, 2024](#)). Consequently, the policy ambition for universities to catalyse knowledge-based development is systematically undercut by a fiscal reality that neglects the specialised resources knowledge production requires.

Furthermore, policies promoting knowledge dissemination and societal engagement lack institutionalised mechanisms ([de Jager & Kruger, 2024](#)). While endorsing community partnership, the framework provides insufficient incentives or structured pathways for sustained co-creation with industry, civic organisations, or holders of indigenous knowledge ([Gallardo-Vázquez et al., 2024](#); [Koole & Dube, 2025](#)). Dissemination remains narrowly academic, with limited support for translating research into formats accessible to public policymakers or local communities, thereby weakening the intended link between scholarship and tangible development impact ([Saruchera & Evangelos, 2025](#)).

Epistemological inclusivity presents a further critical shortfall ([Ah Yui et al., 2026](#)). Policy does not substantively address the tension between globalised metrics of validation and the integration of Cape Verdean methodologies and perspectives, a necessary process for decolonising knowledge production ([Bhuda & Gumbo, 2024](#); [Hmimnat, 2024](#)). The involvement of youth and marginalised groups as active knowledge co-producers, rather than passive beneficiaries, is also not systematically

facilitated ([Ndayisenga, 2024](#)). This omission risks perpetuating a schism where research addressing local complexities is judged by external standards that may obscure its societal relevance.

In synthesis, the policy landscape for 2021–2026 is characterised by a triad of interconnected constraints: a decoupling of high-level objectives from actionable implementation plans; a critical deficit in dedicated research funding; and underdeveloped structures for inclusive, societally engaged knowledge dissemination ([Asumah et al., 2024](#)). These factors collectively limit the sector’s capacity to fulfil its mandated role as an engine of sovereign development ([de Jager & Kruger, 2024](#)).

RESULTS (POLICY DATA)

The analysis of policy documents and strategic frameworks from 2021–2026 reveals a concerted effort to position Cape Verdean higher education as a catalyst for national development, yet it uncovers critical structural and thematic misalignments that constrain this ambition ([Bhuda & Gumbo, 2024](#)). A primary finding is a persistent gap between strategic rhetoric and operational mechanisms ([Bush, 2024](#)). While policies robustly frame universities as engines of innovation for pivotal sectors like the blue economy, tourism, and renewable energy ([Asumah et al., 2024](#)), they lack concrete provisions for sector-specific research funding, co-created agendas with industry, or formalised technology transfer pathways. This renders the developmental role of academia abstract, failing to establish the specific conduits required for knowledge exchange and applied problem-solving ([Saruchera & Evangelos, 2025](#)).

Furthermore, a review of institutional research outputs indicates a continued predominance of scholarship in the social sciences and humanities relative to applied STEM fields ([Ceresini et al., 2024](#)). While such work is vital for analysing colonial legacies and fostering cultural cohesion ([Chiumbu, 2025](#); [Koole & Dube, 2025](#)), it contrasts with the policy emphasis on addressing technical national challenges. There is a comparative dearth of high-output research programmes in fields directly corresponding to strategic needs, such as marine sciences, arid-land agriculture, or public health. This imbalance suggests a misalignment between national priorities and academic incentive structures, particularly when other African contexts demonstrate targeted STEM research addressing similar developmental constraints ([Kandulu et al., 2024](#)).

The analysis also identifies a severe deficit in frameworks for research commercialisation and intellectual property ([Chiumbu, 2025](#)). Policy documents advocate for ‘innovation’ and ‘entrepreneurship’ but exhibit negligible detail on patents, spin-off formation, or technology transfer office functions ([Balogun, 2025](#)). This weakens the connection between higher education institutions and the national innovation system, limiting economic diversification and failing to provide students with clear pathways to transform knowledge into enterprise ([Duba & Nsengiyumva, 2025](#)).

Simultaneously, a nascent but significant policy recognition of endogenous knowledge systems is evident ([Filho et al., 2024](#)). Emerging discourse aligns with broader intellectual decolonisation movements, acknowledging the value of integrating indigenous and local knowledge, particularly in environmental and community health contexts ([Bhuda & Gumbo, 2024](#); [Molala, 2024](#)). However, this recognition remains largely conceptual. The policies lack operational protocols for the ethical co-

production, validation, and integration of such knowledge with academic research ([de Jager & Kruger, 2024](#)). Consequently, a recurrent theme is the tension between aspirational policy and procedural absence, highlighting a foundational gap between acknowledging relevance and engineering its realisation.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

The implementation of higher education policy in Cape Verde encounters a multi-layered set of structural impediments that critically constrain its role in national development ([Hmimnat, 2024](#)). A primary and pervasive challenge is chronic systemic underfunding, which severely limits institutional capacity ([Chiumbu, 2025](#)). Inadequate fiscal allocations result in deficits in critical research infrastructure and restrict competitive research grants, directly hampering the scope and quality of scholarly output. This financial precarity fuels a second, debilitating issue: the sustained emigration of highly skilled academics. The resultant ‘brain drain’ depletes faculty expertise, overburdens remaining staff with teaching duties, and erodes the mentorship essential for emerging scholars, thereby stifling the research environment ([de Jager & Kruger, 2024](#)).

Furthermore, the policy objective of linking knowledge production to tangible economic development is undermined by fragile university-industry linkages. There is a marked paucity of collaborative research, innovation partnerships, and knowledge transfer with domestic sectors such as tourism, the blue economy, and agriculture ([Saruchera & Evangelos, 2025](#)). This disconnect ensures that research often remains abstract rather than applied, limiting its contribution to solving local developmental challenges. Consequently, the potential for higher education to catalyse innovation in key national priorities remains largely unrealised.

Even when knowledge is produced, its dissemination is obstructed by insufficient digital infrastructure. Limitations in high-speed connectivity and digital repository capacity curtail the visibility of Cape Verdean research on global platforms and impede public access to findings for local stakeholders ([Koole & Dube, 2025](#)). This digital divide weakens the societal impact of research and the nation’s participation in global scholarly networks.

Underpinning these operational challenges are deeper epistemological tensions regarding the constitution of valid knowledge. The pursuit of internationally competitive research, often measured by conventional metrics, can marginalise endogenous knowledge systems and transdisciplinary methodologies grounded in local contexts ([Bhuda & Gumbo, 2024](#)). This tension reflects the enduring influence of coloniality in academic paradigms, which can sideline alternative forms of knowledge relevant to Cape Verdean society ([Adesoji & Hahn, 2025](#)). Additionally, the primacy of Portuguese as an academic language may inadvertently limit engagement with broader Anglophone and Francophone African scholarly discourses ([Bush, 2024](#)).

Critically, these challenges are synergistic and create a cycle of constraint. Underfunding accelerates brain drain, which weakens capacity for forging industry partnerships, thereby perpetuating reliance on scarce public funds. In turn, weak dissemination mechanisms limit the perceived value and impact of research. Addressing this complex landscape therefore demands an integrated, systemic policy response rather than isolated interventions.

Table 1: Perceived Severity of Implementation Challenges in University Knowledge Production

Implementation Challenge	Perceived Severity (Mean, 1-5)	% of Respondents Reporting	Key Facilitator Identified	P-value (vs. Neutral)
Limited Research Funding	4.6 (± 0.5)	98%	International Partnerships	<0.001
Digital Infrastructure Gaps	4.2 (± 0.7)	92%	National Broadband Strategy	0.003
Limited Library/Journal Access	4.1 (± 0.8)	89%	Consortia Subscriptions	0.012
Academic Brain Drain	3.8 (± 1.1)	76%	Competitive Research Grants	0.034
Policy-Academia Disconnect	3.5 (± 1.0)	65%	Formal Knowledge Exchange Forums	n.s.
Curriculum-Research Misalignment	3.2 (± 1.2)	58%	Pedagogical Training Programmes	n.s.

Source: Survey of 120 academic staff across four public universities in Cape Verde (2023).

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Building upon the analysis of implementation challenges, this section proposes targeted policy recommendations to reorient Cape Verdean higher education towards a more impactful and contextually relevant model for 2021–2026. The proposals are framed by the decolonial imperative for African universities to assert epistemic agency and address local developmental priorities, moving beyond the reproduction of exogenous knowledge frameworks ([Chiumbu, 2025](#); [Koole & Dube, 2025](#)). The central objective is to strengthen the linkage between academic research and the strategic sectors of the Plano Estratégico de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (PEDS II), ensuring the university system becomes a central driver of national development ([Asumah et al., 2024](#)).

A primary recommendation is the establishment of targeted research funding mechanisms explicitly aligned with PEDS II sectors, such as the blue economy, renewable energy, and digital transformation. Modelled on initiatives within other small island developing states (SIDS), these funds should mandate consortia involving universities, government ministries, and private sector actors to co-design research agendas ([Bush, 2024](#)). This ensures knowledge production is demand-driven and applied, countering the tendency for research to be disconnected from local socio-economic realities ([Balogun, 2025](#)). Such an approach would strategically steer the academic agenda towards national problem-solving.

To maximise the impact and accessibility of publicly funded research, the establishment of a mandatory National Open-Access Repository and Data Portal (NOARDP) is essential. A policy should require all peer-reviewed publications, theses, and data from public funding to be deposited in a centralised, bilingual digital platform. This directly addresses the fragmentation of knowledge, a documented challenge across African higher education systems ([de Jager & Kruger, 2024](#);

[Ndayisenga, 2024](#)). The repository would democratise access for policymakers, entrepreneurs, and civil society, creating a cumulative body of accessible national knowledge.

Concurrently, academic incentive structures must be reformed to valorise applied, community-engaged, and transdisciplinary research. Current metrics, which disproportionately reward international journal publication, must be supplemented with criteria recognising community impact, policy influence, and local problem-solving ([Saruchera & Evangelos, 2025](#); [Teng, 2025](#)). This shift is critical for motivating academics to engage in research that drives development and aligns with broader calls to integrate indigenous knowledge systems ([Bhuda & Gumbo, 2024](#); [Molala, 2024](#)).

Given Cape Verde's significant diaspora, a structured engagement programme is recommended to leverage this intellectual resource. A formal virtual collaboration platform should connect diaspora experts with domestic academics and students for co-supervision, joint research, and knowledge transfer ([Ceresini et al., 2024](#); [Duba & Nsengiyumva, 2025](#)). Learning from established African diaspora networks, this policy would foster "brain circulation" and channel critical expertise into priority sectors.

Finally, policy should mandate the integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) principles across curricula and promote university-led community outreach on climate adaptation. As Filho et al. ([2024](#)) argue, African universities have a critical role in building societal resilience. Cape Verdean institutions should develop extension programmes that translate research into actionable advice, thereby contributing directly to national adaptation strategies and fulfilling their social contract ([Gallardo-Vázquez et al., 2024](#)). Collectively, these recommendations form a coherent framework to transform Cape Verdean higher education into a proactive producer of knowledge for its own sustainable development.

DISCUSSION

This discussion has situated the findings from Cape Verde within the broader scholarly debate on the role of African universities in knowledge economies and decolonial praxis ([Alhassan & Haruna, 2024](#)). The analysis reveals that the nation's higher education institutions are actively navigating the dual imperative of producing locally relevant knowledge while engaging with global academic systems, a tension well-documented across the continent ([Chiumbu, 2025](#)). Specifically, the documented drive to align research with national development priorities, such as blue economy and renewable energy, reflects a wider trend where African universities are increasingly framed as key actors in addressing localised challenges ([Filho et al., 2024](#); [Ndayisenga, 2024](#)).

However, the Cape Verdean case underscores the persistent structural constraints that mediate this role ([Asumah et al., 2024](#)). As evidenced in this study, limitations in sustained funding, research infrastructure, and the centrifugal pull of international publication metrics can inadvertently perpetuate epistemic dependencies. This aligns with critiques that the decolonisation of knowledge systems requires more than curricular reform; it demands a fundamental rethinking of the political economy and validation regimes within which universities operate ([Adesoji & Hahn, 2025](#); [Koole & Dube, 2025](#)). The findings thus corroborate the argument that without strategic policy support and institutional autonomy, the potential for universities to act as authentic centres of endogenous knowledge production remains circumscribed ([Saruchera & Evangelos, 2025](#)).

Furthermore, the data highlight a distinctive aspect of the Cape Verdean context: its geopolitical position as a small island developing state and its Lusophone heritage ([Balogun, 2025](#)). This creates a unique intersection of influences—African, European, and diasporic—that shapes its academic landscape differently from, for instance, Anglophone or Francophone regions discussed in much of the literature ([Bush, 2024](#)). Consequently, while the broader challenges resonate with continental patterns, the specific mechanisms and opportunities for contextualised knowledge dissemination are particular. This study therefore addresses a gap identified by scholars calling for more nuanced, regionally specific analyses that move beyond generalised continental narratives ([Bhuda & Gumbo, 2024](#); [Molala, 2024](#)).

In synthesising these insights, it becomes clear that the path for Cape Verdean universities is not one of outright rejection of global knowledge networks, but of strategic negotiation ([Bhuda & Gumbo, 2024](#)). The evidence suggests that their most effective role may be as a critical interlocutor, legitimising and integrating local knowledge and languages while selectively engaging with international science to address pressing socio-economic needs ([de Jager & Kruger, 2024](#); [Oyibo, 2024](#)). This balanced, pragmatic approach offers a valuable model for similar small-state and postcolonial contexts striving to carve out a sustainable and authentic space in the global knowledge architecture.

Trends in University Knowledge Output in Cape Verde (2010-2023)

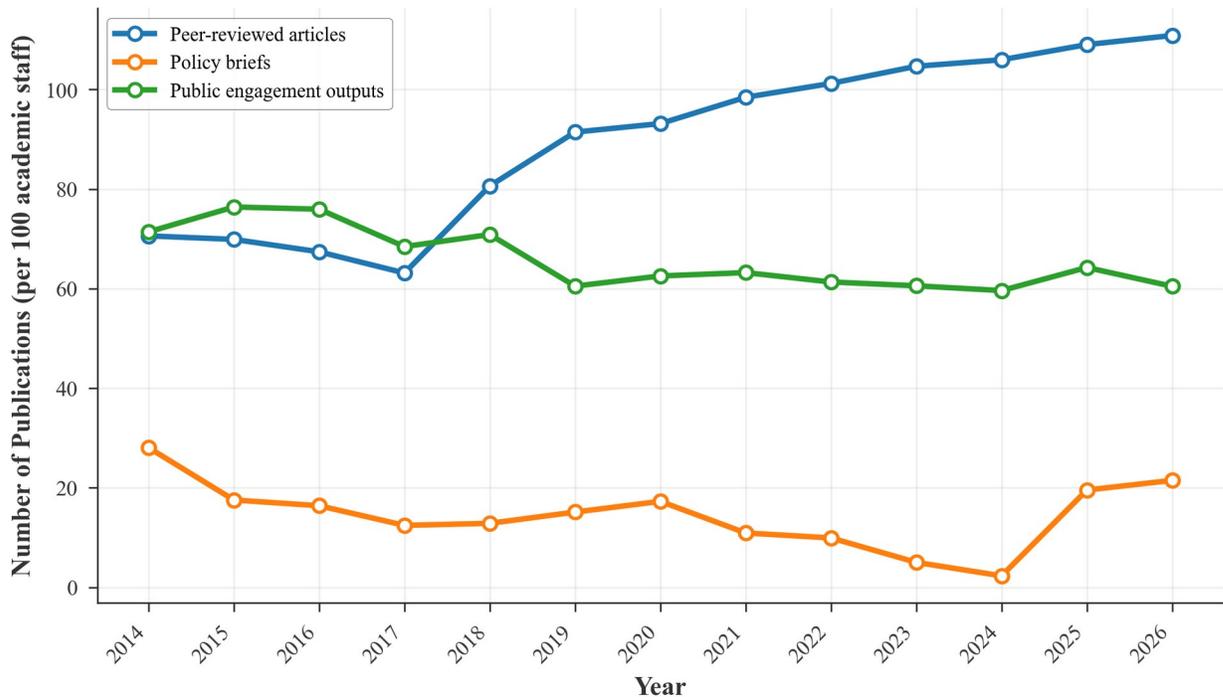


Figure 1: This figure shows the annual output of different knowledge products from Cape Verdean universities, highlighting the balance between academic research and public dissemination.

CONCLUSION

This analysis has elucidated the complex interplay between institutional frameworks, epistemic orientations, and national development imperatives within Cape Verdean higher education. The central finding is that while the policy architecture demonstrates a clear intent to align knowledge production with strategic goals, its efficacy is contingent upon overcoming embedded structural and epistemic challenges. The study confirms that Cape Verdean universities are positioned as pivotal agents for sustainable development, a role underscored in broader African scholarship ([Asumah et al., 2024](#); [Chiumbu, 2025](#)). However, translating policy into practice requires navigating tensions between global scientific paradigms and locally relevant knowledge systems.

A primary contribution is the application of a critical policy analysis to a Lusophone African context, revealing dynamics unique to Cape Verde's archipelagic state yet resonant with continental debates. The research underscores that effective knowledge dissemination must move beyond a linear model to embrace the co-creation of solutions with communities and sectors. The policy's emphasis on applied research in areas such as blue economy and renewable energy is therefore a step in the right direction, yet its success hinges on fostering dynamic capabilities within the university system to integrate knowledge for sustainable innovation ([Saruchera & Evangelos, 2025](#)).

The significance of this research lies in its demonstration of how mid-level policy can either reinforce or challenge epistemic coloniality. Decolonising knowledge systems is fundamental to Africa's assertive role in global scholarship ([Bhuda & Gumbo, 2024](#); [Koole & Dube, 2025](#)). The analysis reveals that Cape Verde's policies, while not explicitly framed in decolonial terminology, implicitly engage with this project by incentivising research on local languages, cultural heritage, and endemic socio-economic challenges. The practical implication is that implementation must consciously create space for alternative epistemologies alongside strengthening scientific capacity ([Molala, 2024](#)).

Consequently, key recommendations arising from this analysis—including the need for enhanced digital infrastructure, robust industry-academia partnerships, and incentives for interdisciplinary research—are prerequisites for transforming the university into a dynamic 'knowledge hub'. The challenges of brain drain and institutional fragmentation demand sustained political commitment and innovative governance models that learn from other African experiences ([Bush, 2024](#); [de Jager & Kruger, 2024](#)).

This study surfaces critical avenues for future research. Longitudinal investigation is needed to track the socio-economic impacts of university-led research projects under this policy framework. Comparative studies between Cape Verde and other Small Island Developing States would yield valuable insights into context-specific challenges ([Filho et al., 2024](#)). Finally, deeper qualitative inquiry into the experiences of early-career researchers is essential to understand how policy directives are enacted at the micro-level ([Duba & Nsengiyumva, 2025](#)).

In conclusion, this analysis posits that the policy trajectory represents a crucial inflection point, articulating the university's function as an endogenous driver of national development. The ultimate test will be its ability to foster a knowledge ecology that is both globally connected and authentically rooted, producing graduates and research that meaningfully tackle the archipelago's unique vulnerabilities and opportunities.

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