

Higher Education: Strategies and Challenges in Twenty-First Century

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Introduction

The twenty-first century has brought profound challenges to the nature, values, and control of higher education. Societal expectations and public resources for higher education are undergoing fundamental shifts. The lack of necessary specialties, low-education, low-conscienceness, sciences and technologies are extremely important problems in today's societies. It is necessary for states to plan for education development, consciousness-raising and technical as well as professional skills development (Etaat, 1999). One of the education development strategies is higher education development. Due to the significant role of higher education in current societies, higher education came to serve the administrative and economic interests of the governments and became a necessary dimension of the development. In this direction, higher education has become more international and subject to national culture and government. The new issues facing higher education, both nationally and internationally, are introducing changes, demonstrating new tendencies and displaying different challenges. As Knight (1999) has said, "Today, higher education is not limited to a geographical interpretation of the concept". It is part of the universities' efforts to fulfill their primary functions, namely, the teaching and learning process, research and scholarly activities, and service to society. Changes both within and outside the academy are altering its character – its students, faculty, governance, curriculum, functions, and very place in society.

Fundamentals Of Higher Education

Mission, vision, core values and smart objectives are elaborated with hypothetical statements as below:

- **Mission statement:** The purpose is to provide quality education in the arts, and sciences, at higher educational levels.
- **Vision statement:** The vision statements may produce discoveries that make the world a better place, open the world to the students, provide career-oriented and graduate innovative programs, achieve a higher quality of education and research, learning and teaching excellence, effective engagement with community, enterprise multiculturalism, currency and relevance, increased access to innovative pedagogy, creative use of technology.
- **Core values:** The core values of higher education are integrity and respect, honesty and accountability, and intellectual rigor.
- **Smart objectives:** The objectives of higher education should be specific, measurable, achievable, and realistic in nature to be achieved within a fixed time frame.
- **Research Methodology :** This Article is based on secondary sources and it is part of my Ph.D work.

STRATEGIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION :

The overview of prerequisites, definitions, and necessities shows that different elements have different roles in higher education. These elements have been defined in various ways such as mechanisms, facilitators, activities, challenges, factors and strategies. The strategies are applied to describe the activities done by a higher education to integrate a global aspect into research, teaching, service functions, management policies and systems. The University of Tokyo specified five strategies for the internalization of higher education (The University of Tokyo, 2005). These strategies are global in nature, and may be operational to other universities to complete their plans. In these strategies, individuals at all levels must effectively play their roles and duties. In summary, the five strategies are:

- Provision of high standard of education;
- Enhancement of research activities through strengthening research networks;
- Promoting cooperation with society;
- Improvement of infrastructure to promote “internal internationalization”;
- Formulation of a long-term plan

The most important strategies of higher education originated from global experience are as follows:

- (1) Revision of textbooks and representation of courses which correspond to the content of global community knowledge and national problems;
- (2) Development of humanistic resources for the realization of social, economic, cultural consequences of higher education;
- (3) Scientific and cultural cooperation by the students unions and scientific boards of higher education;
- (4) Use of the comparative studies to present the content of existing educational programs;
- (5) Emphasis on inter-cultural skills for planning in higher education;
- (6) Acquaint students with abilities and skills in the international arena;
- (7) The planning of special textbooks for students;
- (8) Exchange experiences among higher education;
- (9) The cause the effective and more scientific cooperation among the higher education;
- (10) Enrichment of higher education environments for educational and research activities according to the global standards;
- (11) The planning of educational programs according to the time needed through regional and international cooperation among higher education;
- (12) The acceptance of more numbers of scientific boards and foreign students in higher education;
- (13) The protection of researchers, scientific boards and young managers in higher education;
- (14) The effective cooperation in planning, executing, accessing of the research projects;
- (15) Preparation of facilities for scientific boards to use new technologies;
- (16) Exercise of scientific cooperation through cooperation at international and regional levels;
- (17) Preparation of public information to save time and spend the existing capitals in other sectors in higher education;
- (18) Necessary preparation at the managerial level to develop higher education;
- (19) Necessary preparation at the managerial level to face the challenges of higher education;
- (20) Development of international and regional cooperation to promote the quality of educational programs

Challenges of Higher Education

Globalization poses challenges to higher education systems of the world. These challenges should be solved through important strategies. In some literatures, these challenges have been classified into two categorizations: individual and institutional. The individual challenges of higher education in these literatures are a lack of competency, negative attitudes, absence of incentives, lack of personal knowledge and expertise. On contrast, institutional challenges consist of a lack of financial sources, scarcity of human resources, and educational structure (Saat, 2007). It is important to keep in mind that the national challenges of higher education originate from the states view on education (Sariolghalam, 1993). On the other hand, national challenges are related to the economic, social and cultural problems at the national level. For example, the lack of financial facilities, the great number of applicants for entering university, limitation of universities in accepting students are the most important challenges of higher education in Sudan. On the other hand, the most important challenges of higher education consist of a lack of coordination of programs with community needs, suitability of higher education quality, enough use from the informatics Technologies in learning and teaching process and number of volunteers. It is clear that the challenges of higher education have direct relations with the economic problems and rate of the countries' development. It can be said that, the most important challenges of higher education are: the lack of financial facilities, the great number of applicants entering the universities, limitation of universities in accepting students, problem of students' job, coordination of the textbook programs of universities with the day needs, enough use from the informatics technologies in learning and teaching process, financial problems, resource safeguarding, structure coordination of higher education with international standards, migration of the prepared forces from country, structure inflexibility of higher education and specialized manpower.

Conclusion

The discussion helps higher education to adopt themselves with the changes of time and the current needs of society. These conditions change the structures and universities' manpower especially the scientific boards. They also encourage permanent education; promote the quality of higher education and produce active students. In spite of these problems, the challenges guide students towards self-learning, the exercise of learning skills and the use of information. Attention to strategic planning to higher education management is needed. Revision of textbooks and preparation of educational periods according to society's need is must. Renewal of manpower, Attitude change of scientific boards to use new technologies, Digitization of libraries and references with emphasis on preparation of informatics databases, Use of new technologies to generate information and scientific stagnations of the world; Reconstruction of higher education to use the new technologies cheaper and faster than before; Use of tools and educational models, especially distance education for development of higher education, the shortening of educational periods, applying of thought qualifying of education and use of software in network-based learning; Progress of programs and educational workshops in order to change the attitude of the scientific board's number of universities for using new and educational tools; Use of communicative and informatics tools to localize necessary alternatives; Emphasis on tolerance skills, dialogue, cooperation and relationship internationally; Considerations on condition changes and regional factors for competing with global higher education by using distance and network-oriented education are some the importance strategies which is must needed for the improvement of the higher education.

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