Chapter 7

Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in North Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

Internationalization has become one of the hotly debated issues in higher education institutions due its role in competitive advantage. Countries around the world encourage their universities to engage in competition and cooperation on the local and global level, and this can't be achieved without internationalization. This chapter is proposed to shed light on a unique case study: internationalization of higher education in North Cyprus, which is a politically unrecognized country. To achieve the aim of this chapter, a survey from International Association of Universities (IAU) was adapted to evaluate the internationalization in the four largest and oldest universities in North Cyprus.

INTRODUCTION

The intense of competition among universities and colleges can be attributed to globalization; universities and colleges compete with each other not only on the local level but internationally (Alpenidze, 2015). Moreover, systems and policies in higher education institutions (HEIs)are being transformed by globalization (Márquez, Torres, & Bondar, 2011). Because of this, universities started adopting strategies for internationalization. Therefore, the theme of internationalization in higher education started gaining attention by scholars and policy makers in the last decades of twentieth century (de Wit, 2011; Knight, 2013). At the moment, Internationalization is considered to be one of the major aspects to be dealt with higher education institutions (Pohl, 2015).

Knight (2004) defined internationalization in higher education as "the process of merging global, international, or intercultural dimensions into the objective or delivery of post-secondary education". This definition is widely accepted (Yemini & Sagie,2016). This broad acceptance might be related to a fact that is in this current era of global technologies and knowledge, markets and companies recruit university graduates who have the international knowledge, awareness, intercultural relations, and who can speak foreign languages (Chokheli & Alpenidze, 2015). University graduates can't have these characteristics without studying at international universities.

De Wit (1995) and Knight (1997) stated that internationalization of HEIs needs two strategies to sustain and improve the international dimensions of HEIs functions, these strategies are, organizational and program strategies. Organizational strategies include initiatives for the organizational level to institutionalize and facilitate global dimensions at HEIs through operating systems and management (Márquez, Torres, & Bondar, 2011). Program strategies include Research, university services, and academic initiatives (Márquez, Torres, & Bondar, 2011). Although that these strategies are necessary for internationalization, but they are not enough if there is a lack of support from the state.

The governments throughout the world can play a vital role in internationalization. Governments hope to have universities that can cooperate and compete on the global level (Márquez, Torres, & Bondar, 2011). Thus, governments can intervene to stimulate internationalization through funding (offering scholarships for international students as it is in the case of North Cyprus). However, OECD (2009) posited that continuing reforms in the national systems work as a first condition for the responses of institution and systems to

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