

International Standards on higher education

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Abstract

The United States institutions of higher education are among the highest ranking in the world. Among the top ten best universities in the world, the United States has seven institutions. Among top 100 universities globally, half the Universities are from the United States. The scientific output of American universities is unmatched by any other country; the United States universities and colleges produce Nobel Peace Laurates and scientific papers than any other country (Beschoner & Hutchison, 2013). The US system of education is unquestionably the best in the world regarding producing quality. In the last ten years, quality concerns have begun to plague higher learning in the United States. These concerns arise from a steep increase in tuition fees, increase in student and university debt. The cost of education in the US has increased by five times since 1983 (Carla & Karen, 2015). Student debt appears to have doubled in the last 15 years. A student in US University is 57% likely to complete his or her degree program within five years.

Key words: Higher education, Standards, System, Students, International

Introduction

Although the US education system has proved consistently to be the best in the world, international standards have been adopted in colleges and Universities in order to ensure quality of the average university students. These international standards have been implemented through accreditation of colleges and university education. The application of international standards of education in colleges and universities has improved the level of learner performance in middle-level colleges and universities. It has reduced the number of complaints filed by students by 23% (Cooper, Cilbuka, & Lance, 2010). The application of international standards of education has revolutionized by increasing the number of instruction hours a student spends with the instructor. The compliance with international standards of education has increased transparency in educational institutions and as such reduced the mismanagement of finances because education leaders are required to be accountable (Glanz, 2014). The Universities and colleges are only granted accreditation once they have met the international standards established for that course. Accreditation is not compulsory but a voluntary one that is granted to colleges and universities upon request (Glenn, 2008).

The process of granting universities accreditation is a rigorous one that entails self-study by the organization that is requesting for accreditation and peer review conducted by the administrators and the members of the faculty, administrators and the members of the public. The last stage of the process is the oversight by accreditation institution for a period in order to ensure that those standards are adhered to by organization (Carla & Karen, 2015). The primary objective of this paper is to investigate the impact of international standards of education in tertiary education. The research study will 'primarily' focus on the ways in which the education

sector handled the resistance to change. Finally, the research study will analyze how the American standards of education are slowly replacing the international standards of education.

Research Relevance

The research is relevant to policymakers and education leaders. It defines what the international standards of education are and attempts to establish the gap between the international standards and the domestic standards for achieving quality in education. This research will be valuable to policy makers in determining what improvements will have to be made in institutions of higher education in order to determine the measures that have to be taken in order to conform to the international standards. The research is relevant because it seeks to establish the impact of international standards on the quality of education (Glickman, 2009). Policy makers will rely on this research in order to determine whether it is important to continue applying the international standards in tertiary level institutions of learning. In the light of globalization and the emergence of the United States as a global leader in education, the research will also seek to establish whether the American educational standards have developed past the internationally established standards (Cooper, Cilbuka, & Lance, 2010). Institutions of higher learning will also use this research in order to determine what modifications they can make to their curricula in order to meet the international standards (Glickman, 2009). The prime objective of the international standards of education is to ensure institutions produce professionals that can meet demands of the international labor market. The research study will be used by college professors as a base for providing instructions for their students in order to ensure that they are eligible to work anywhere in the globe (Halász & Michel, 2011).

Contribution to the existing Literature

The existing academic literature provides insufficient information about the implication of international standards on the quality of education. The study makes an interesting contribution on the academic literature by proving the intersection standards on the American standards of education and European measures of quality of educations in universities and education (Hobson, 2015). The study highlights that accreditation in the US is equivalent to quality assurance in Europe. The study highlights a very important fact that appears to have been left out in many case studies and literature reviews, the international standards of education are largely modeled from the American standards of education (Hondara & Smith, 2014). Finally, the study states that the quality of education is not solely determined by the academic performance of the students but by the facilities available in the education institution, the curricula, the recruitment capacity and the number of student complaints submitted to the institution (Hondara & Smith, 2014). The quality of education in higher education institutions should not be approached only from the learner-performance perspective only.

Literature Review

Global ranking of universities and colleges has put pressure on universities and to put pressure on colleges and universities to conform to the international standards of education. The 2014 conference of CHEA International Group Quality that a single set of international standards for education will stimulate the growth of domestic systems for higher education. The

application of international standards on education in the institutions of higher education will signify the demise of local standards such actions were necessary in order to ensure that the quality of education is harmonized and higher education institutions can produce global professionals (Joseph, 2012). Higher education is entering a post-traditional era where the quality of education is not measured by the academic performance of the student alone but rather by a myriad of factors such as the number of complaints made by the students, the facilities that are available in a university and the rate of completion of degree courses upon enrollment (Prensky, 2008). Unlike other universities and colleges around the world where education is controlled by the central government, in the United States, the quality of education is a concern for states and school districts. Lack of the federal control of the education sector has led to resistance of colleges and universities to adopting international standards of education in favor for the state standards. Since the United States is the global leader in education, some colleges have felt absolutely no need for implementing the international standards of education.

The International standards are greatly modeled from the standards of education modeled on the Ivy League universities in the US (Rhodes & Fletcher, 2013). The Ivy League universities are constantly modifying their system to some extent that their standards fall higher than those set by the International bodies are. This phenomenon has in the past been the chief cause of resistance to application of international standards. The result is the rise in the cost education, high rates of student dropouts from public universities, high student and university debt and the deterioration of the quality of education in middle-level colleges and Universities. European institutions use quality assurance in reference to the outcome of higher education while the term used in the United States in that respect is accreditation. There has been a challenge in coming up with a set of well-defined educational standards that apply to all the countries because of the different education systems (Prensky, 2008). The European Union has its own set of well-defined principles and other nations as well, but there is no single set of agreed standards that can be applied to all nations. What comes closest to the definition of International standards is a set of goals and minimum standards for which there is no consensus in the community of nations (Scott, Tolson, & Lee, 2010). Despite the confusion that has characterized international standards for ensuring quality in higher education, there minimum quality standards that education institutions have to be met by Institutions in US and Europe in order to rank higher in the global education quality index (Wilma & Luckin, 2013).

The application of international standards in higher education institutions has led to a decline in the number of complaints raised by the students (Wang, 2011). Complaints are an indicator of lack of satisfaction of the consumer. The application of international standards of education in institutions of higher education has led to improved student performance (Scott, Tolson, & Lee, 2010). Institutions that have implemented these standards have been able to produce professionals that deliver quality services in their respective fields (Prensky, 2008). The interpersonal interaction between instructors and students has increased in classrooms. International standards of education require more interaction between teachers and students. The result of these interactions is improved the performance of students (Koshy, 2009).

International standards require universities to be transparent in the use of finances. Without financial accountability, financial mismanagement was a common phenomenon among US universities. Extraneous expenditures drove colleges and universities into a monumental debt. In order to clear this debt, an increment of tuition fees was necessary (Schathter, New York). Countries such as Britain and Australia have low rates of default in paying college debt. This has raised concerns about the expense of college education and the need to reduce the

burden of college debt in the United States. Currently, a political solution to the student loan debt is in the offing (Ramirez, 2012). International standards of education have resulted in negative consequences such as the negligence of local or state educational standards, which are specifically designed to meet the needs of the region (Ramirez, 2012). Universities and colleges have neglected student performance and focused on facilities, student support groups and other factors that are considered in the global ranking of education. The impact of these standards is higher in developing countries than in the US.

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