

## Iran's Entry into the GlobalMarket for Higher Education

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**Abstract:** This paper aims at investigating the effects of increase in scientific quality of Iranian universities and academic, welfare, and economic facilities on the convergence and entry of Islamic Republic of Iran into knowledge services market (services of the world higher education). This paper investigates the relation of internationalizing the curriculum, absorbing foreign students, developing English language in the universities, sending students to abroad, increasing scientific and technical level of universities, and allocating budget for internationalizing universities with establishment and promotion of the global higher education market as the dependent variables. The present paper is an applied research in terms of objective, and a field study in terms of data analysis. It is a library research in terms of data collection and a correlative research in terms of method. Through t-student tests, the main results of this paper approve the main hypothesis indicating Iranian universities can absorb more foreign students by increasing scientific quality and academic, welfare, and economic facilities. Also based on the structural modeling results, subordinate hypotheses indicate there is a significant relation among internationalizing the curriculum of Iranian universities (0.08), absorbing foreign students (0.150), allocating budget for internationalizing universities (0.271), sending student to abroad (0.346), increasing scientific and technical level of universities (0.274), allocating state budget and increasing academic facilities (0.203), and entry of Islamic Republic of Iran into knowledge services market (higher education services). Also the effect of the above mentioned variables on convergence and entry of Islamic Republic of Iran into knowledge services market (the global higher education services) in short- and long-term is remarkable (the model determination coefficient equals 0.501).

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**Key words:** Higher education, transnational education, higher education services

### 1. Introduction

In general, education constitutes foundation of economic and social development. Economic development based on knowledge and modern technologies in the developing and advanced countries is a particular priority and no nation is independent from other nations in different scientific fields. The less the scientific development of the country is, the more necessary the establishment of research centers and their relation with other countries research centers will seem (Dheuy, E., et al., 2013). One of the methods that universities of developing countries can use for improving quality is establishment of international relations. Internationalizing higher education is a mechanism for implementation of reformations. In so doing, universities need remedial and effective solutions to establish an interaction network, exchange knowledge and technology globally, and contribute to the dialogue among cultures and civilizations. In this regard, such mechanisms as multilingual education programs, student and teacher interchange, study trips, establishment of modern scientific and information networks (internet), and coordinating measurement and evaluation criteria of academic education and skills at regional and global levels can be mentioned (Hălăngescu, C.I., 2011). Transnational education is regarded as a tool for development of international

prospects of higher education and improvement of countries intercultural cooperation. This style of education has some outcomes which may lead to tensions between national higher education system and transnational higher education system including accreditation of courses and training programs, recognition of educational degrees and guaranteeing their quality. These three prospects of transnational higher education are among main issues mentioned in many reports and statements issued by international councils and institutes regarding transnational higher education. Among them, higher education quality guarantee is deemed as the foundation of success in this style of education (Yap, Josef T., 2012).

This paper aims at investigating the relation of variables namely, internationalizing the curriculum, developing English language in the universities, absorbing foreign students, allocating budget for internationalizing universities, establishing the global higher education market, increasing scientific and technical level of universities, and sending student to abroad with Iran entry into the education market.

### 2. Research Literature

#### 2.1 Theoretical Bases

To move towards internationalizing higher education, there are some frameworks in which teacher

skills, content and process of international curriculum of various students, bond with other universities and organizations, and increase in the research-based knowledge are underscored as the most effective factors for educating students with intercultural competencies. In the following, the words used in this paper are defined briefly (Morey, A. I., 2000).

**Higher education institute:** an entity established for generation, distribution, promotion and dissemination of knowledge at higher levels in different scientific fields.

**State higher education institute:** a higher education institute that is dependent upon a ministry or an executive system, and all or part of its budget comes from state general funds.

**Non profit higher education institute:** a higher education institute with a non state management whose costs are supplied by private sector capital, public sector facilities, student tuitions and people donations.

**Education style:** it refers to a style of holding courses on a daily, evening, or electronic basis in the higher education institutes.

**Foreign student:** a student who is not Iranian and is studying in one of the Iranian higher education institutes.

## 2.2 Research Background

(Gordon, C. et. al, 2013) the paper seeks to provide a retrospect on this process, starting with the incorporation of marketing in higher education, and moving on to its implementation, which has come to be known as market orientation. (Schüller, D. et. al, 2012) the purpose of this paper is to analyze how marketing communication (MC) activities are managed at public universities and their economics faculties in the Czech Republic. The main emphasis is placed on the process of planning and control. The further aim is to identify the main issues in this field. (DRUICA, E. et. al, 2012) this paper intends to advocate the idea that as much as adverse selection, there are subjective factors having impact on the decision made on the Romanian Education Market. (BADEA, L., 2013), Understanding the ongoing and dynamic process is not an easy task, but is extremely important, especially when you are in the midst of the changes it brings. (Popovici, A., 2012) The objective of this paper is to highlight and analyze certain of the important challenges of the Romanian higher education in European context during the post-communist era, within the market economy, in the context of the transformations higher education has been suffering at European level during the last decade of the 20th Century, the first decade of the 21 s.t. Century and the beginning of the second decade of the 21 s.t. Century. (COTELNIC, A., 2012) This paper deals with some issues concerning the importance of quality assurance in universities. Higher education

trains professionals who will lead our society in the nearest future. (POPESCU, A.I., 2012) this article studies the contribution of education in general, and of higher education, in particular, to the city branding strategies. A conceptual framework is proposed to analyze the congruence of city and university branding strategies and to investigate the role higher education plays in city branding strategies.

## 3. Research Methodology

This paper is regarded as an applied research in terms of objective and a field study in terms of data analysis. Also it is a library research in terms of data collection and a correlative research in terms of method. It investigates the relation of internationalizing the curriculum, absorbing foreign students, developing English language in the universities, sending students to abroad, increasing scientific and technical level of universities, and allocating budget for internationalizing universities as independent variables with establishment of global higher education market as the dependent variable. Time territory of this paper is 2012 and the place territory is Iran country. The statistical universe comprises 113 persons. This paper analyzes data by using t-student test to investigate research hypotheses and PLS structural equations and to determine the relation of variables.

### 3.1 Research Hypotheses

#### - Main Hypotheses (Iranian universities)

- ✓ By increase in the scientific quality, the ability of absorbing foreign students is increased.
- ✓ By increase in the academic, welfare, and economic facilities, the ability of absorbing foreign students is increased.

#### - Subordinate Hypotheses (Islamic Republic of Iran)

- ✓ There is a significant relation between internationalizing the curriculum of Iranian universities and the globalmarket for higher education.
- ✓ There is a significant relation between absorbing foreign students and the globalmarket for higher education.
- ✓ There is a significant relation between developing English language in the Iranian universities and the globalmarket for higher education.
- ✓ There is a significant relation between sending students to abroad and the globalmarket for higher education.
- ✓ There is a significant relation between increasing scientific and technical levels of Iranian universities and the globalmarket for higher education.

✓ There is a significant relation between allocating state budget and increasing academic facilities and the global market for higher education.

**3.2 Conceptual Model**

This paper has selected six variables namely, internationalizing the curriculum, absorbing foreign students, developing English language in the

universities, sending students to abroad, increasing scientific and technical levels of the universities, and allocating state budget for internationalizing universities as independent variables, and establishment of the global higher education market as the dependent variable. Figure 1 depicts the research conceptual model.

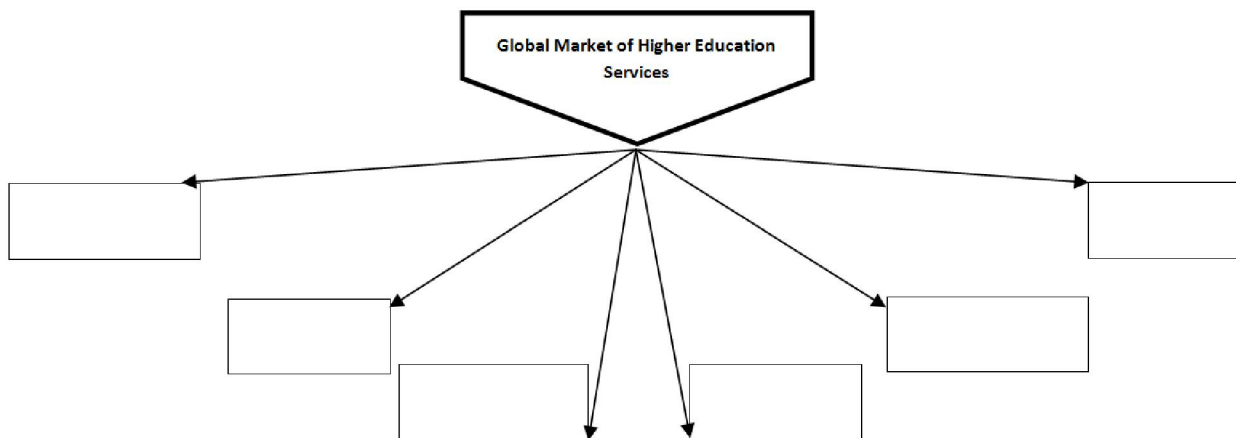


Figure 1- Research conceptual model

**4. Research Findings**

**4.1 Main Hypotheses**

First hypothesis (by increase in scientific quality, the ability to absorb foreign students is increased)  
Table 1 presents the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 1- The results of testing first main hypothesis

Variable	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-value	Degree of Freedom	P-value
Increase in scientific quality	113	1.9861	0.26518	19.486	112	0.000

The mean respondents' attitude (1.9861), T-value (19.486), and degree of freedom (112) at a confidence level higher than 99% are significant and the related hypothesis is approved.

Second hypothesis (by increase the in academic, welfare, and economic facilities, the ability of absorbing foreign students is increased). Table 2 presents the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 2- The results of testing second main hypothesis

Variable	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-value	Degree of Freedom	P-value
Increase in academic, welfare, and economic facilities	113	1.6062	0.32586	3.464	112	0.001

The mean respondents' attitude (1.6062), T-value (3.464), and degree of freedom (112) at a confidence level higher than 99% are significant and the related hypothesis is approved.

specifies the relation and direction of each variable with the dependent variable, i.e. establishment of the global higher education services market. In the following, figure 2 shows the model pertaining to the research hypotheses.

**4.2 Subordinate Hypotheses**

To test the relation of each independent variable with the dependent variable, PLS structural equations modeling is used. A structural equation modeling

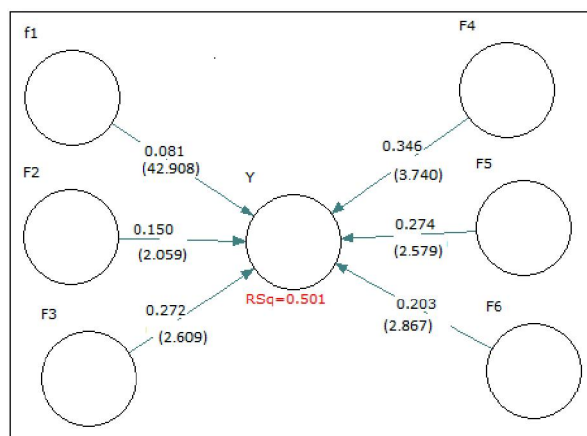


Figure 2- The results of structural modeling estimation

Where,

F1: internationalizing the curriculum

F2: absorbing foreign students

F3: developing English language in the universities

F4: sending students to abroad

F5: increasing scientific and technical levels of universities

F6: allocating budget for internationalizing the universities

Y: Iran entry into the knowledge services market

### Subordinate Hypotheses (Islamic Republic of Iran)

First hypothesis (there is a significant relation between internationalizing the curriculum of Iranian universities and the global market for higher education). Table 3 presents the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 3- The results of testing first subordinate hypothesis

Variable	Number	Coefficient estimate	Standard Error	T-value	Result
Internationalizing the curriculum	113	0.0810	0.4208	42.9088	Approved

With regard to the coefficient estimate (0.08) and t-student value that is higher than 1.96 (equaling 42.9), the first hypothesis is approved.

Second hypothesis (there is a significant relation between absorbing foreign students and the global market for higher education). Table 4 presents the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 4- The results of testing second subordinate hypothesis

Variable	Number	Coefficient estimate	Standard Error	T-value	Result
Absorbing foreign students	113	0.1500	0.6288	2.0591	Approved

With regard to the coefficient estimate (0.15) and t-student value that is higher than 1.96 (equaling 2.059), the second hypothesis is approved.

Third hypothesis (there is a significant relation between developing English language in the

universities and the global market for higher education). Table 5 presents the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 5- The results of testing third subordinate hypothesis

Variable	Number	Coefficient estimate	Standard Error	T-value	Result
Developing English language	113	0.2712	0.1380	2.6093	Approved

With regard to the coefficient estimate (0.27) and t-student value that is higher than 1.96 (equaling 2.6), the third hypothesis is approved.

Fourth hypothesis (there is a significant relation between sending students to abroad and the global market for higher education). Table 6 presents the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 6- The results of testing fourth subordinate hypothesis

Variable	Number	Coefficient estimate	Standard Error	T-value	Result
Sending students to abroad	113	0.3460	0.118	3.7408	Approved

With regard to the coefficient estimate (0.34) and t-student value that is higher than 1.96 (equaling 3.74), the fourth hypothesis is approved.

Fifth hypothesis (there is a significant relation between increasing scientific and technical levels of the

universities and the global market for higher education). Table 7 presents the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 7- The results of testing fifth subordinate hypothesis

Variable	Number	Coefficient estimate	Standard Error	T-value	Result
Increasing scientific and technical levels	113	0.2740	0.1519	2.5796	Approved

With regard to the coefficient estimate (0.2740) and t-student value that is higher than 1.96 (equaling 2.57), the fifth hypothesis is approved. Sixth hypothesis (there is a significant relation among

allocating state budget and increasing academic facilities and the global market for higher education). Table 8 presents the results of testing this hypothesis.

Table 8- The results of testing sixth subordinate hypothesis

Variable	Number	Coefficient estimate	Standard Error	T-value	Result
Allocating state budget	113	0.2030	0.1313	2.8674	Approved

With regard to the coefficient estimate (0.2030) and t-student value that is higher than 1.96 (equaling 2.86), the sixth hypothesis is approved.

## 5. Conclusions and Suggestions

With respect to the research findings, internationalizing the curriculum is necessary in the Iranian higher education system. It is evident that in the current century, universities must educate persons with competencies required for working and living and must fulfill needs of international and intercultural communities. This involves sufficient knowledge of students regarding various societies and cultures or in fact having an intercultural and international vision. International orientation of the curriculum in the higher education system may provide the opportunity of gaining intercultural and international competencies for both Iranian and foreign students.

The main result of this paper is that by increase in scientific quality and academic, welfare, and economic facilities, the ability of absorbing foreign students is increased. Also internationalizing the curriculum of the Iranian universities, absorbing foreign students, developing English language in the universities, sending students to abroad, increasing scientific and technical levels of the universities, allocating state budget and increasing academic facilities have a significant relation with the global market for higher education.

### - Suggestions

- ✓ Considering higher education internationalizing issue in the strategic document by Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution.

- ✓ Holding related educational workshops, research opportunities, interaction with professors of other cultures, and carrying out joint research.
- ✓ Proper advertisements and establishing virtual or semi-direct cross-border higher education centers with cooperation of the world valid universities.
- ✓ Providing academic websites, brochures, catalogues, etc. in the international language, and international physical or virtual debates and gatherings to inform the international community about academic activities and facilities.
- ✓ Knowing most higher education systems of the world and carrying out comparative research regarding the curriculum, and also membership in the regional and international conventions on higher education and distance education.
- ✓ Reviewing educational content, materials, and resources, teaching-learning methods and modern evaluation methods for internationalizing elements of the curriculum.

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