

A comparative study of the degree of convergence of Iranian comprehensive universities with the competency model of world-class university faculty members

Mohammad Farzaneh¹ | Hassanreza Zeinabadi² | Abdolrahim Naveh Ebrahim³ | Bijan Abdollahi⁴

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to compare the degree of convergence of Iranian comprehensive universities with the competency model of WCU faculty members. To achieve the main goal of the research, the researcher used a quantitative survey method. The statistical population of the research, including all faculty members of first-level comprehensive universities in Tehran (University of Tehran; Shahid Beheshti University; Tarbiat Modares University; Allameh Tabatabaei University), was equal to 4211 people in the academic year of 2021-2022, of which 352 people were studied using the multi-stage stratified sampling method. In order to collect data, the questionnaire of competencies of WCU faculty members was used, which was designed by Farzaneh et al. (2022). The validity of the research tool was confirmed using face and content validity methods and its reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha=0.98$). The findings showed that the competence status of faculty members is generally higher than average and there is a significant difference among level one comprehensive universities in Tehran in terms of the competence status of WCU faculty members. All in all, the results show that even the country's first-level universities have a significant distance from the ideal situation in terms of some of the basic components of a WCU; And this important thing requires the double attention of policy makers and planners of the country's higher education system.

Keywords: Higher Education; World-Class University; First-level comprehensive universities; Faculty Members; Competency

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¹ Ph.D. in Educational Administration, Faculty of Management, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran.

² Associate Professor Department of Educational Administration Faculty of Management, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran.

³ Professor Department of Educational Administration Faculty of Management, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran.

⁴ Professor Department of Educational Administration Faculty of Management, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran.

Introduction

The contemporary world is changing more and more, and higher education and universities are not unaffected by these developments. These developments have caused dramatic changes in the nature and practice of higher education in many countries around the world. Undoubtedly, universities and institutions of higher education will no longer be able to adequately cover the different expectations and requests of society and the new missions of scientific societies using their traditional methods. As a result, universities are forced to institutionalize and expand the necessary changes in their organization and management, missions, form, structure, program content and educational and research processes in order to fulfill their roles and respond to the new expectations caused by the current rapid developments. In this situation, one of the most important approaches that has attracted the attention of different countries is the development and guidance of prominent universities to become a world-class university; And based on this approach, a special emphasis has been placed on the competence of human resources and new and different responsibilities and roles have been defined for each of the human resources and pillars of the university, including faculty members. However, despite all these attributes, not much research and study has been done in this regard, and this issue has not been investigated in a systematic and scientific manner. However, the results of the few available studies, including the research of Nazarzadeh Zare et al. (2016), showed that the components of a world-class university for comprehensive universities in the country are at a lower than average level. Also, some other related researches indicate the existence of weakness in some competencies among the faculty members of the country's universities (Fathi et al., 2011; Nazarzadeh Zare, 2016). Despite the reliable evidence of the importance of the role of faculty members in building a world-class university, as well as the existing evidence of the existence of some weaknesses, defects, and obstacles, no specific research has been done so far regarding the requirements and competencies needed by the faculty members of a world-class university. Therefore, the present research has been carried out in order to respond to this need. according to this, the purpose of this research was to compare the degree of convergence of Iranian comprehensive universities with the competency model of WCU faculty members.

Methodology

This research was of an applied type in terms of its purpose, and based on the method of data collection, the present article is a quantitative research of a survey type. The statistical population of the research, including all faculty members of first-level comprehensive universities in Tehran (University of Tehran; Shahid Beheshti University; Tarbiat Modares University; Allameh Tabatabaei University), was equal to 4211 people in the academic year of 2021-2022, of which 352 people were studied using the multi-stage stratified sampling

method. In order to collect data, the questionnaire of competencies of WCU faculty members was used, which was designed by Farzaneh et al. (2022). This questionnaire has 97 items and 13 components (scientific superiority/dynamism; teaching ability; self-development; scientific freedom; research superiority/dynamism; computer literacy; human relations; leadership ability; scientific extroversion; global citizenship; cultural intelligence; professional ethics and cognitive and personality traits). The validity of the research tool was confirmed using face and content validity methods and its reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha=0.98$). For data analysis, one-sample t-test, Friedman and one-way analysis of variance were used in SPSS software.

Results

The findings showed that, the general state of competences of academic staff members has a significant difference from the hypothetical (theoretical) average and the results show that the state of said competences is generally higher than the average. Also, the results of the t-test separately show that the average scores of the merits of research excellence, computer literacy, human relations, cultural intelligence, professional ethics, cognitive and personality characteristics are above average, the scores of the merits of excellence/scientific dynamism, scientific freedom, self-development, Teaching ability, scientific extroversion and leadership ability are close to the average of research tools, as well as global citizenship competence is below average. In addition, the results of the analyzes regarding each of the components of the competency model of the faculty members of the WCU were also conducted, which indicated the difference between the universities in some components. All in all, the results show that even the country's first-level universities have a significant distance from the ideal situation in terms of some of the basic components of a WCU; And this important thing requires the double attention of policy makers and planners of the country's higher education system.

Discussion and conclusion

The assessment of the model of faculty members' competencies among the four first-level comprehensive universities of the country indicated that the thirteen competencies of world-class faculty members (including: academic freedom, professional ethics, scientific excellence, research excellence, scientific extroversion, teaching ability ; self-development; human relations; computer literacy; cognitive; global citizenship; leadership ability and cultural intelligence), among the faculty members of the studied universities are not in a favorable situation, although the status of most of the indicators is at an average or slightly higher level. It was average, but it seems that reaching the desired level will not be so simple and easy to reach, in other words, the faculty members of Iran's famous universities, although they have the necessary conditions and qualifications, but obtaining sufficient conditions is

much more difficult. In addition, the comparison between the four studied universities showed that the faculty members of these universities do not have much difference in terms of having world-class qualifications. There has been no principled and written procedure regarding promotion to world class.

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