DEFINING STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC QUALITY: A SCALE DEVELOPMENT STUDY

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Abstract

In accordance with changing focus on institution and program quality as a result of recent trends in globalization and internationalization, accreditation practices started to become more widespread all around the world (Bakioglu, Baltaci, 2010; Bakioglu, Ulker, 2015). However, whether or to what extent accreditation process makes contributions to the quality of institutions and programs is still questioned. Purpose of this study was to develop a valid and reliable scale so as to measure the influence of accreditation of intensive English programs in higher education on academic quality. While developing scale, a comprehensive literature review was conducted, pilot scheme was administered and expert advice was provided throughout the development process. The sample was comprised of 96 accreditation self-study coordinators and program administrators whose programs were accredited by a U.S. accrediting agency. While 87 of those participants were from the U.S.A., the remaining contributed to the study from Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Peru, Colombia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The scale was posted to participants as a web link. After data was collected from various countries within the scope of the analyses, frequency and percentage calculations, Mann Whitney-U Test, Kruskal Wallis-H Test and Independent Samples t Test were implemented. As a result of the analyses conducted within the scope of validity and reliability studies, the final version of the scale was composed of one factor with a reliability coefficient of .986 (Cronbach's Alpha) and the total variance explained a percentage of 53,025 %. Six items were excluded from the scale in accordance with the factor analysis conducted. After all the analyses, it was concluded that the scale was valid and reliable. The scale, if utilized before the accreditation process, will direct the institutions and programs towards expected academic quality indicators and ideal processes and practices in accordance with those indicators; and, if utilized after the accreditation process, will help institutions and programs to determine whether and to what extent accreditation contributed to existing processes and practices as well as which areas need more focus for improvement. Some recommendations were made related to the development process of accreditation related scales.

Key words: Accreditation in higher education; Quality of Intensive English Programs; International research; Scale development

References

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