

Roles of Academics in Higher Education Institutions

Zeynep Kızıltepe

Bogazici University

Abstract

This paper discusses the roles of academicians in connection with the purposes and identities of higher education institutions (HEI), and the knowledge that is created and transmitted in those institutions. The outcomes presented in this exploratory study are based on one-to-one semi-structures interviews done with 20 academicians ($M=8$, $F=12$) working in a state university in Turkey. They were asked four questions, namely: (1) What are the roles of academicians in higher education institutions; (2) Do you think higher education institutions have identities? Why do you think they have? Why do you think they do not have? (3) What are the purposes of higher education institutions? (4) What are the characteristics of the knowledge that is transmitted in these institutions? According to the results of the study, academicians believed that the roles of teachers are threefold: to teach, to do research and to help students become active and conscientious individuals. They further agreed that universities should have an identity, a distinctive individual point of view. They think that the purpose of HEIs is not only to inform students about a certain topic but at the same time to shape their lives, their thinking and life styles. Lastly, they believed that knowledge that is currently offered in HEIs is mostly technical, but unfortunately not creative and/or experimental.

Keywords: teaching; research; active citizenry; knowledge; identity of universities