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Changes in Internationalization at Home in Arab Higher Education Institutions

Is it Time to Really Beef Things Up?

ABSTRACT As global marketplace competition increases, higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Arab world purposefully integrate international and intercultural dimensions into their curriculum, known as internationalization at home (IaH), to empower graduates with the tools necessary to strengthen their economies and be productive global citizens. The purpose of this research is to report changes in the internationalization strategies of fourteen randomly selected Arab world HEIs by looking at six IaH indicators in their mission statements, course descriptions, and strategic plans. The results prioritize internationalization in the HEIs' mission statements with a twenty per cent increase in the number of indicators between academic years 2014–15 and 2019–20. Additionally, through course descriptions/titles, we found some universities were offering up to 350 courses promoted per indicator, with others offering as few as one course per indicator. We also found sixty-five per cent of the HEIs do not have explicit strategic plans, or rather no or implicit strategic plans incorporating internationalization. As the Arab world attempts to strengthen its economies, HEIs should continue to increase IaH efforts by infusing more of the indicators in their mission statements, courses, and strategic plans. KEYWORDS Arab world higher education institutions, internationalization at home, mission statements, course descriptions, competitive global economy, strategic plans

INTRODUCTION

The developing nations of the Arab world continue to suffer from political crises, military conflicts, economic instability, social unrest, archaic educational systems and, most recently, the Covid-19 pandemic, often making travel abroad for higher education almost impossible for most students. In

2020, in the Arab world alone, Covid-19 left more than 100 million students missing out on school and university (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 2020), with the possibility of them dropping out completely even after a vaccine(s) has been developed (Hess 2020). With all the challenges in the region, students at higher education institutions (HEIs) have benefitted from different levels of local internationalization at home (IaH) efforts meant to empower them for national and international employment and global citizenship upon graduation.

In 2015, members of the United Nations signed a treaty to uphold an agenda to implement changes necessary for the welfare of all countries. Among the many facets of that agenda was the need to improve the educational systems through "a world with equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels" (United Nations General Assembly 2015, 7). Revamping the quality and content of educational systems while simultaneously addressing the emerging challenges of local economies presented many obstacles (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2005). Many HEIs have added internationalization strategies to liberal arts curricula to better prepare graduates for the local and global workforce.

Haririan, Bilgin, and Huseyin (2010) assert that one of the measures of economic development is a nation's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2019), the GDP per capita of developed nations varied between US$43,587 in North America and US$29,410 in Europe to those in developing nations of the Arab world with US$8044. This weak economic position, coupled with the rising numbers of youth (15–29 year olds) to about 80 million, over 7 million of whom are higher education students (Bhandari and El-Amine 2012), have left the region struggling to harness this massive potential for economic development (UNICEF 2019). The question creating uncertainty now is: What can the HEIs do to enhance the abilities of graduating students to contribute to their economies?

The goal of this study is to investigate the following research questions:

- Is there a difference in the number of IaH indicators of the fourteen randomly selected Arab world university mission statements between academic years 2014–15 and 2019–20?

- Do the indicators in the course description align with those in the mission statements from 2019-2020 of the selected HEIs?

- Is internationalization reflected in the 2019-2020 strategic plans of the selected Arab world HEIs?

OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

The internationalization of higher education comes as a response to the globalization of the world economy. HEIs in the Arab world have felt an even stronger need to internationalize as young adults wanted fresh opportunities to travel, learn, study, and create knowledge (World Bank 2011).

The conversation about internationalization was highlighted when researchers challenged the existing definitions of internationalization. Soderqvist (2002) extended Knight's (1994) definition to:

> a change of process from a national HEI to an international HEI leading to the inclusion of an international dimension in all aspects of its holistic management in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and to achieve the desired competencies. (30)

However, to avoid equating internationalization with international only, a universal working definition that encompasses both national and institutional levels and which reflects the diversity of education and realities of the day was crafted: "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight 2015, 2). Still, given its fluid reference to values, an updated definition of internationalization, adding "intentional" to process as well as clarifying the purpose was coined in 2015 to become:

> the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society. (De Wit *et al.* 2015, 3)

This strategic and evolved definition serves as a roadmap for our analysis.

MODELS AND INDICATORS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

Driven by the updated 2015 definition, internationalization involves a plethora of models. Research differentiates between comprehensive internationalization, which is strategic (Hudzik 2011), internationalization of the curriculum, tied directly to learning and teaching (Beelen and Jones 2015), internationalization at the national level, and internationalization at the institutional level (Knight 2004). Our research centers on IaH, one of the models highlighted by Knight (2006), which includes curriculum-oriented activities that develop students' international awareness and intercultural skills.

The word "international" stands out in all the models; however, the mere presence of international aspects does not signify internationalization is taking place. An HEI must be "glonacal," a term coined to include global, national and local; international activities must systematize; international affairs need to be embedded in all decision-making processes, and international education should affect all areas of study and research (Teichler 2004). Such systematic steps require full integration into the HEI strategic plan which stems from an institution's mission statement, the driving force for all its constituents. To conclude, one can highlight the importance of the internationalization of higher education as: (1) part of a developing national economy, (2) a catalyst for innovating and stimulating campus' intellectual lives, (3) a universal place of shared education and research, (4) a means to develop global citizenship, and (5) a tool to enhance cultural diversity and global competitiveness (Lin 2019). Clearly, the spectrum of internationalization is multifaceted and ever evolving, so Arab world HEIs are at varied stages of implementation of the concept.

INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HOME (IAH)

Definition and components

The rapid growth in internationalization of higher education has given way to concerns regarding non-mobile students and the ability of HEIs to provide them with the same global skills and experience. IaH exposes students to intercultural and global learning and provides equitable access since it focuses on learning conducted on the home campus and does not require mobility to reap the benefits of internationalized learning outcomes (Garson 2016). Knight's definition of IaH is: "[t]he purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students, within domestic learning environments" (Beelen and Jones 2015, 12). Hence, IaH mandates HEIs to design intentionally international curricular and co-curricular experiences that can expose students to others from diverse backgrounds, open new avenues for students to gain knowledge about international cultures, and place them within a global framework (Soria and Troisi 2014), a cue to challenge students to become "citizen[s] in the evolving global context" (Hovland 2006, 19). We believe IaH in the Arab world can work to undo stereotypes and promote cross-cultural learning, moving students from entrenched parochialism into an international worldview. Given the open nature of IaH, it requires deliberate planning and practice

on the part of Arab world HEIs in order for it to be weaved into the ethos and strategies of those institutions.

Today, our societies are becoming diverse due to mobility, and HEIs should equip their students, staff, and faculty with a global consciousness and intercultural education that celebrates cultural differences and the inter-relationship between varied people to cope better internationally (Crosby 2009). Since every institution accesses its own realities to apply the model of internationalization that caters to its needs (De Wit 2016), the process encourages the introduction of a glonacal perspective into Arab world HEIs.

IaH within the liberal arts program

IaH falls directly into a university's liberal arts program. In the disciplines of history, politics, art, and science lie the concepts and tools that enable individuals to successfully work and function in the global marketplace (Friedman 2005). According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2019, para. 5), "[a] Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity and change," the very qualities needed for success in that international business world.

Mission statements, course descriptions, and strategic plans

Mission statements are the driving force of all universities (Association of American Colleges and Universities 2019). They are an institution's formal, public declaration of its purposes and its vision of excellence to which all departments look for guidance and on which the curriculum is based. When it comes to governance, each university must find its right mission-mix based on its choice of applied or basic research, local or international focus, empha-sis on academia, training of productive workers, and/or building citizenship (World Bank 2012). Such mission statements are becoming more interna-tionalized to meet the demands of the global marketplace. Hudzik (2011) stresses the need for universities to focus on their core mission of producing graduates who can make significant and productive contributions as citizens in a borderless global context. Hence, in this study, we were searching for the ability of the investigated HEIs to put forward a critical agenda of creating opportunities to enhance global views and intercultural communication capabilities (Whitsed and Green 2013).

Our research also encompasses the investigation of curriculum through course descriptions/titles, representing a range of activities that bring out IaH: a diversity of programs, educational processes, extracurricular activities,

engagement with local cultural groups and activities involving research, as well as local and international guest lectures, international case studies, digital learning, and online collaboration (Beelen and Jones 2015).

According to Crittenden (2000), organizations design strategic plans in order to properly implement their missions and goals. A comprehensive strategic plan can detect internationalization indicators emanating from the mission statements.

METHODOLOGY

Explanation of data set selection

In 2009, the lack of international classification of Arab world HEIs and the rising numbers of inbound and outbound students motivated the Institute of International Education (IIE), New York, in conjunction with the Lebanese Association for Educational Studies, to conduct a pilot study in seven countries in order to develop an internationally recognized classification system out of which our data set emerged (Bhandari and El-Amine 2012). Bhandari and El-Amine (2012) designed a classification system for the HEIs to compare themselves locally, regionally, and internationally, bring international attention to themselves to share knowledge, conduct research, and help universities in other regions gauge the quality of their graduates.

Brandenberg *et al.* (2009, 67) defined internationalization as "a process in which an institution moves from an actual status of internationality at time X towards a modified actual status of extended internationality at time X+N," hence our look at Arab world HEI mission statements in 2014 and then again in 2019.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Generally, discourse analysis can investigate a range of phenomena through its focus on the way language is created and how it is used (Augoustinos 2017). Therefore, it was our aim to analyze the different use of language by the HEIs to determine the presence of internationalization. Through our desktop research, we used Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional framework as: (1) text through its linguistic features and organization, (2) discursive practice through linking discourse to its context, and (3) social dimension with its focus on the social and ideological effects of discourse to investigate the selected HEI mission statements, course descriptions, and strategic plans,

hence our investigation of internationalization through the use of six indicators or their interpretations, listed in the procedure section below.

Morris (2009) lists numerous measures of success in HEI internationalization, of which three could be directly located through desktop research: "a vision and mission statement exists that identifies internationalization as a core value, principle and goal of the university," "the number and percentage of courses and course components that can be characterized as "global," and "a strategic plan in place to execute the internationalization goal" (145). It was our intention to measure the level of commitment of internationalization through the consistent use of indicators in the mission statements, course descriptions, and strategic plans.

PROCEDURE

In the first phase of the research, a literature review revealed the use of the most popular internationalization indicators *international*, *research*, *social progress*, *citizenship*, *cultural diversity* and *technology* as recurring in HEI mission statements, academic programs, faculty, services, and human resources. The analysis was guided by the definitions provided by the *Merriam Webster Dictionary* (2019).

The second phase was divided into three vital segments. Initially, mission statements from the official HEI websites of academic years 2014–15 (from here on referred to as 2014) and 2019–20 (from here on referred to as 2019) were downloaded into Word documents in order to locate internationalization indicators. The "Find" feature then assisted the researchers to identify the number of courses containing the indicator. When no course descriptions were found, indicators in the course titles were searched. In the case of the Lebanese University and both Tunisian HEIs, there were no publicly displayed course descriptions; only the dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts at the Lebanese University, upon request, provided the researchers with the course catalog. For the analysis of the strategic plans, the presence of an internationalization strategy was determined as explicitly stated, implicitly stated, or not stated at all. Finally, descriptive charts were generated using Excel.

FINDINGS

This section is divided into 2 parts. First, we highlighted changes in IAH mission statement indicators 2014 and 2019, and then we reported the number of indicators appearing in 2019 course descriptions. Three groups

of HEIs emerged: changes in mission statements, no change in mission statements, and the addition of a mission statement.

- Group 1: Nine HEIs changed their mission statements from 2014 to 2019: American University of Science and Technology, Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar University, American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates University, King Abdul Aziz University, Al Ahliyya Amman University, Sfax University, and Al Akhaweyn University.
- Group 2: Three HEIs did not change mission statements: Prince Mohammad University, Abdel Malek El Saadi Tetwan, and the University of Jordan.
- Group 3: The Lebanese University and Université Centrale did not have mission statements in 2014, but did by 2019.

Indicator 1: *International*

Using discourse analysis, we also accepted the word global to represent the indicator *international*.

Mission statements Between 2014 and 2019, the number of HEIs using the indicator *international* rose from six to ten.

In Group 1, by 2019 *international* was mentioned at the American University of Science and Technology in Lebanon, in both HEIs in the UAE, Al Ahliyya Amman University in Jordan, Sfax University in Tunisia, and Al Akhaweyn University in Morocco. An example of the use of *international* at the UAE University is that it "is committed to excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, research and service to the nation and beyond." The four HEIs that continue to mention *international* in their mission statements are those in Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

In Group 2, the University of Jordan mentions, "[t]he University has been hosting conferences and symposia that tackle issues of national, regional, and global concern." Abdel Malek El Saadi Tetwan in Morocco used *international* in both its 2014 and 2019 mission statements.

Both Group 3 HEIs incorporate *international* with, for example, the Lebanese University stating "[s]cientific presence at the national, regional and global levels."

Course descriptions In reviewing the twelve publicly shared HEI course descriptions, *international* appears in all except at Prince Mohammad University.

Indicator 2: *Research*

The keywords "study," "scholarship," and "investigate" were included to fully encompass the indicator *research*.

Mission statements It is not a surprising finding that HEIs preparing students for lifelong learning include *research* in all their mission statements by 2019.

To name a few, in Group 1, Lebanon's American University of Science and Technology promotes "lifelong learning," which we interpreted as *research*. In Qatar, "Virginia Commonwealth University cultivates a dynamic intercultural environment of diverse research."

In Group 2, all three HEIs that did not change their missions mention *research*. For example, Prince Mohammad University states, "[t]he importance of performing basic scientific research."

When both Group 3 HEIs added their new mission statements, *research* was integrated. For example, the Lebanese University's mission statement mentions "education with its various majors and degrees, scientific research."

Course descriptions The second most popular indicator, *research*, is mentioned in all course descriptions.

Indicator 3: *Social progress*

The search for the indicator *social progress* included phrases such as "development," "community service," "community involvement," and "betterment of society."

Mission statements Compared with 2014 mission statements, where only eleven HEIs used *social progress*, in 2019 all fourteen mention it.

From Group 1, Qatar University adds to its mission statement, "intellectual and scholarly community characterized by open discussion, the free exchange of ideas, respectful debate, and a commitment to rigorous inquiry."

In Group 2, Prince Mohammad University included the phrase, "transform the graduate to play a pioneering and leading role in the community, enabling him or her to take responsibilities and contribute to solving problems through innovative thinking, collective work, reflection and self-development."

In Group 3, *social progress* is in the Université Centrale's mission statement with, "promotes the transfer of knowledge and skills in collaboration with strong players in the economy."

Course descriptions *Social progress* is another indicator found in all course descriptions in 2019.

Indicator 4: *Citizenship*

The key words "citizen," "nationalism," and "national identity" were also used to represent *citizenship*.

Mission statements From 2014 to 2019, there was an increase in the appearance of the indicator *citizenship* from six to eleven.

In Group 1, in the UAE, both HEIs mention citizenship in 2014 and 2019. Al Ahliyya Amman University in Jordan added *citizenship* recently. In Tunisia, Sfax University did not mention *citizenship* in 2014 or 2019.

In Group 2, Prince Mohammad University does not mention *citizenship*, but Abdel Malek El Saadi Tetwan and University of Jordan do.

In Group 3. Université Centrale states, "preparing students for professional success: A new generation of African leaders." By linking the discourse to the context, it is believed one must be a citizen of his own country first before becoming a leader.

Course descriptions Even though the indicator *citizenship* appears in the mission statements of nine out of twelve HEIs, it appeared the least often in the courses offered.

Indicator 5: *Intercultural diversity*

A comprehensive use of the words "culture", "cultural", "culturally", "diverse", "diversity", or statements hinting at intercultural diversity as engagement with local or the international community, exposure to other speakers, and/or exploiting diversity within the classroom revealed the presence of the indicator *intercultural diversity*.

Mission statements Ten HEIs had *intercultural diversity* in their mission statements in 2014, and by 2019, all the HEIs believed global citizenship requires knowing other people's ethnic backgrounds, cultures, habits, religions, and traditions, and therefore include some form of reference to *cultural diversity*.

In Group 1, the presence of *cultural diversity* in all updated mission statements shows its vital importance. For instance, at Sfax University, the phrase "animate university life through sports and cultural activities" is found and at Al Akhaweyn University, we find "principles of diversity."

In Group 2, *cultural diversity* is articulated in Abdel Malek El Saadi Tetwan University's mission statement, which includes the phrase "development and dissemination of science, knowledge and culture."

In Group 3, the Lebanese University's mission statement includes the phrase "dissemination of knowledge and culture," and Université Centrale uses "your background, your culture and your assets; we build a common success by exploiting differences and reinforcing our similarities."

Course descriptions Intercultural diversity is the most popular of all indicators for it appears in all HEI course descriptions.

Indicator 6: *Technology*

Finally, *technology* was also identified by locating the terms "technological", or "online".

Mission statements In five years, only the American University in Sharjah added *technology*, making the total number of HEIs using the indicator equal six.

From Group 1, the American University of Science and Technology claims to offer "innovative operational support and administrative services for academic projects and programs, including credited and non-credited lectures, conferences, seminars, workshops, institutes, online formats, and formal courses." Similarly, the American University of Sharjah added the new dimension of technology, stipulating it is "committed to world-class research and innovation, our scientific and technological advancements render a permanent impact on global and regional challenges," demonstrating a clear indication of the new emphasis on technology to prepare their students for the global market.

In Group 2, All three HEIs mention *technology* in their mission statements. The University of Jordan states, "computers are an integral part of the student registration process, and other administrative, research, and instructional procedures."

In Group 3, neither university added technology.

Course descriptions Although only six out of twelve HEIs mention *technology* in their mission statements, all offer courses involving technology.

By looking at the strategic plans of the researched HEIs, which go beyond the mission to include vision, values, goals, strengths, and plans of action, we find a documented direction signaling a serious uptake of

internationalization missions. Of the researched HEIs, Prince Mohammad University, Al Akhaweyn University, and Sfax University rise to the challenges of the day with an explicitly stated internationalization priority through strategic initiatives and steps to achieve the goal. A majority of the HEIs, including American University of Science and Technology, Lebanese University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar University, American University in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates University, King Abdul Aziz University, Al Ahliyya Amman, and the University of Jordan, boast strategic plans with an implicit guide towards implementing internationalization as evident in the use of their six indicators. Université Centrale and Abdel Malek El Saadi Tetwan do not have a publicly documented strategy in place.

DISCUSSION

It is the intention of internationalization to infuse the curriculum with an international and intercultural dimension to help students reap the benefits of a global experience. This said, how do the findings above answer our research questions?

Regarding the first research question, the major phenomenon to consider is that nine HEIs updated their mission statements between 2014 and 2019—a clear indication that earlier versions were no longer suitable in an age of globalization where dramatic changes in society are occurring. This is supported by Wang *et al.* (2007), who claim that the social, political, economic, and technological advances of this time show that the right moment is needed for HEIs to modify their mission statements. After Covid-19, it is only expected for HEIs to continue re-evaluating their missions to meet the rising online needs of students living in the MENA region.

By 2019, the selected HEIs had designed more comprehensive mission statements with the total number of internationalization indicators increasing by twenty-two per cent to sixty-nine indicators out of a total of eighty-four in five years (figure 1). The indicators *research*, *social progress*, and *intercultural diversity* were present in all investigated mission statements, followed by *citizenship* in eleven and *international* in ten. The indicator *technology* appears in only six university mission statements (figure 2). The following are the possible reasons for the lack of the last three indicators in the updated mission statements.

Many Arab countries realize that the journey to preparing its people to become global citizens starts at home, so governments have taken steps to
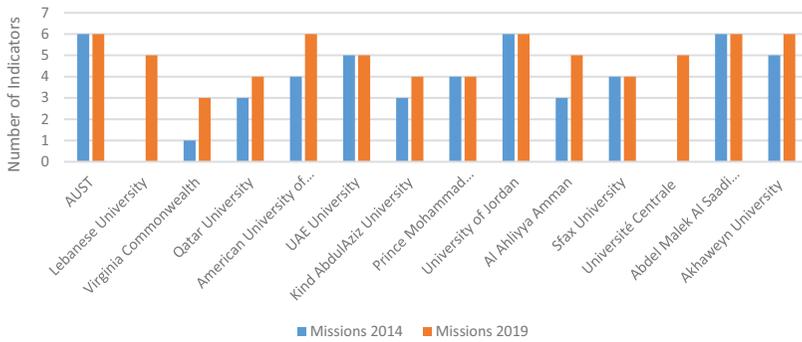
FIGURE 1. Changes in the Number of Internationalization at Home (IaH) Indicators in Mission Statements, 2014 versus 2019

instill the values of *citizenship* in their people through national reform documents. However, this has not materialized adequately in all Arab world HEIs, possibly due to the nature of educational programs in authoritarian political systems (Faour 2013).

The reason the indicator *international* appears in ten HEIs, but not in Qatar and Saudi Arabia, could be shortcomings of their central governance. In fact, in Saudi Arabia, university education is driven by the centralized authority of the Ministry of Higher Education with no clear parameters for milestone changes (Alamri 2011). In Qatar, institutional autonomy in public HEIs is restricted by the Supreme Education Council because central governance limits the actions of the university and does not allow for flexibility in internal decisions. Although branch campuses of private Western universities may enjoy more freedom (Crist and Powell 2017), Virginia Commonwealth University does not include *international* in its mission statements because being a branch campus already falls within the scope of internationalization (Knight 2004). In Saudi Arabia, the absence of the indicator *international* could be attributed to the reality that, "The identity and social norms of young Saudis [and Emiratis] may possibly change by the increasing access to education, international media and new technologies which may threaten their identity and attachment to Islam's rules" (Hilal 2013, 197). Therefore, the possible governmental fear of internationalization, overshadowing the essence and identity of Saudi Arabia, could have prevented them from explicitly mentioning *international* in their mission statements.

The indicator *technology*, one of the most important skills for work in the twenty-first century, is the least mentioned in all mission statements.

We should note that internationalization involves several models, so an HEI may not have integrated comprehensive internationalization into their mission statement, but instead could have chosen internationalization of the curriculum which incorporates the dimensions into the learning outcomes, assessments, teaching methods, and support services (Beelen and Jones 2015).
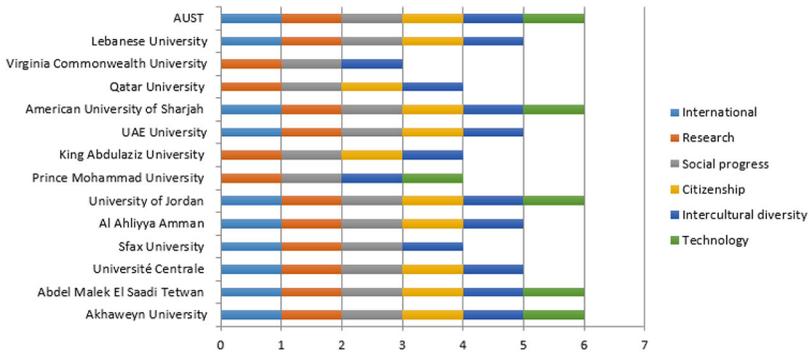

FIGURE 2. Presence of IaH Indicators in Higher Education Institution (HEI) Mission Statements, 2019

In discussing the second research question, the focus will be on the alignment of the course description to the mission statements of twelve HEIs only due to the absence of the Tunisian course descriptions. Although mission statements dictate curriculum design and therefore course content, identified through course descriptions, there is sometimes a slight discrepancy between the two, as evidenced in the mentions of sixty-eight out of seventy-four of all internationalization indicators in the course descriptions versus sixty out of seventy-four (ten per cent) fewer mentions in the mission statements (Figure 3).

Overall, the most popular indicators to appear in course descriptions are *intercultural diversity* followed by *research*, which align with the popularity of those indicators in the mission statements as well. *Social progress* follows as the third most popular indicator in course descriptions in addition to being present in all mission statements. At the lower end of the spectrum, we found *international* and *technology* followed by *citizenship* as the least most popular indicators in the courses.

The only discrepancy appears through the indicator *international*. It is infused in eight out of twelve of the mission statements, but it appears in
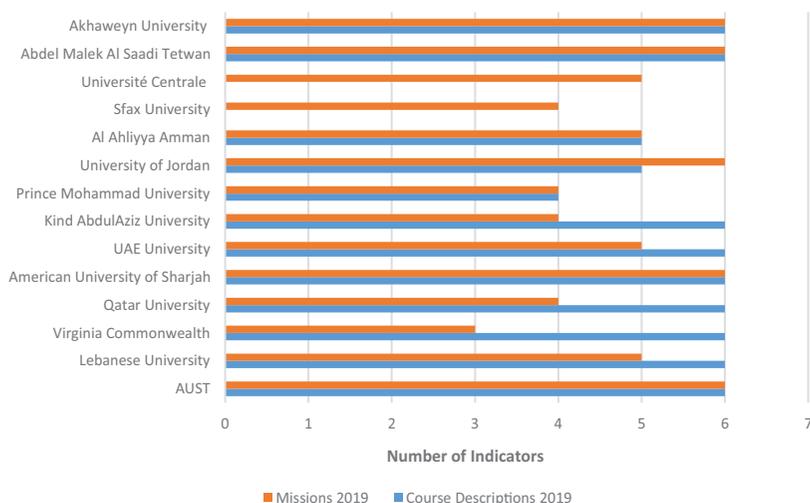
FIGURE 3. IaH Indicators in Mission Statements versus Course Descriptions, 2019

eleven out of twelve course descriptions. This could be explained by the presence of *international* both explicitly and implicitly in the strategic plans.

Regarding the indicator *research*, as agreed by Svensson and Wihlborg (2010), a university's primary obligation is to develop human knowledge. This checks out with all mission statements and course descriptions across the HEIs, coinciding with internationalization as being a hub for continuous research and innovation.

The findings of the *social progress* indicator across the mission statements and course descriptions of all HEIs align with Camelia and Dorel (2013), who claim that HEIs are driven to meet the changing needs of their environment, hence, service to society through liaisons with the community and professional development beyond the classroom. This follows the literature that clearly states that *social progress* is a key player in the IaH arena, especially after the updated definition of internationalization explicitly stated the necessity of making "a meaningful contribution to society" as a core requirement.

Citizenship aligns well between mission statement and course descriptions since it appears in ten out of twelve mission statements and in nine out of twelve course descriptions, but of all the indicators it is described in the least number of courses. For example, although the American University of Science and Technology mentions *citizenship* in its mission statement, it teaches it in only the Survey of Political Theory course. The low count of the

citizenship indicator in authoritarian nations such as the Gulf countries, Tunisia and Morocco may be attributed to challenges faced by governments in building a climate of citizenship where the people have the freedom to voice their opinions and participate in nation-building (Faour 2013).

The infusion of the *intercultural* indicator into all mission statements and course descriptions highlights the varied sources of cultural diversity that are changing the direction of IaH efforts at the selected HEIs and coincides with the goal of IaH of developing a citizen who can integrate the local, national, and the global arenas in their curricula.

The explanation for the infrequent mention of *technology* in the mission statements and course descriptions could fall under one of the following categories: (1) the institutions are in countries such as the Gulf region which find contingencies of the time such as technology, media openness, and knowledge abundance to be challenging (Vardhan 2015); or (2) it is a public university, which is funded mainly by the state, and is therefore tied to the national laws which define the legal framework and institutional goals (World Bank 2012). This may not be a drawback since the core of IaH is the integration of international and intercultural dimensions into curricula, but its presence may be an advanced drive towards internationalization.

The findings from our first two research questions indicate that a one-size-fits-all approach cannot apply, as seen above, since each Arab world HEI applies a model that matches its vision and culture. The discrepancies between mission statements and course descriptions (Figure 3) may be attributed to: (1) the different approaches used for internationalization as discussed in the literature above; or (2) the division of authority between administration and faculty. With reference to the division of authority, the president and board, who are often experienced beyond the academic disciplines, have the main authority over the mission and the strategic vision of an institution, while the faculty possesses the knowledge and authority over the curriculum (Gaff and Meacham 2006). The governing board must often be concise in its mission statement (Baum *et al.* 1998) at the expense of not mentioning internationalization indicators which could otherwise be developed in the course descriptions and strategic plans.

Finally, the intention of the third research question was to determine whether HEIs have a strategic plan for internationalization that affirms the mission statements (figure 4). Morris (2009) confirms that successful strategic planning for internationalizing includes a transparent plan that addresses the vision, mission, goals, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and

FIGURE 4. Percentage of HEIs with an Internationalization Strategic Plan

threats (SWOT analysis), audit and continual evaluation. Even though Prince Mohammad University and Al Akhaweyn University have four out of six of the indicators and Sfax University does not have publicly displayed course descriptions, they all have broad goals identified after a thorough SWOT analysis. Their explicitly stated strategic plans identify their priorities with clear guiding steps towards expected outcomes. The majority of HEIs, such as American University of Science and Technology, Lebanese University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar University, American University in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates University, King Abdul Aziz University, Al Ahliyya Amman, and University of Jordan, employ the same language of internationalization indicators implicitly in their strategies, which signal that they are driven towards internationalizing, but still need to work on addressing all key planning categories and making their internationalization plan visible. Despite the presence of the indicators in the mission statements of the last set of HEIs, Université Centrale and Abdel Malek El Saadi Tetwan University show that they lack fundamental actions necessary for effective internationalization. Those HEIs have started the process but have not followed through with a publicly shared strategic plan to materialize their internationalization goals as stated in their missions.

Taken together, the findings clearly support the spectrum of choices provided by internationalization as one can note the great diversity among Arab world HEIs in terms of type of institutions, governance structures, and language used to express internationalization. Most of the investigated Arab world HEIs yield an overwhelming drive towards cultivating IaH through

their formal curriculum, with few clearly highlighting the term "internationalization" as a strategic priority for the coming years.

CONCLUSIONS

This research highlights the internationalization efforts made by fourteen public and private Arab world HEIs in their mission statements and course descriptions. It goes a step beyond previous research because it examines the alignment of internationalization between the course descriptions and mission statements. Although some HEIs have increased the frequency of mentions and include an extensive explanation and development of those indicators in a comprehensive strategic plan to highlight their importance, others have just stated them briefly, not enough to realistically instill in the students those very qualities needed to be effective global citizens.

The complex nature of HEIs and their diverse goals make it difficult to assess their performance with universal criteria or a standardized measurement tool (World Bank 2012). Each university speaks to its own audience and the language used to convey internationalization in the mission statements, course descriptions, and strategic plans only reveals its multifaceted nature. However, the discourse studied through this desktop research alone cannot categorize HEIs as internationalized or not. If one is to draw defining results, a more thorough analysis of an HEI's formal as well as informal curriculum, and other elements, such as pedagogy, international enrollment, mobility exchange, faculty profile, institutional planning, funding, infrastructure and resources, curriculum, internet availability, performance evaluation, and governance accountability, needs to be conducted to measure IaH efforts.

To inform a policy of change that can mark an institution on a global scale, HEI administrations should have the deliberate intention to do so (Jaramillo *et al.* 2013). This can be achieved through fundamental actions necessary for affirming internationalization, among which are the linking of the mission statements to a strategic plan that commits all constituents to the process and is subject to assessment and revision of its elements. Now more than ever, HEIs in the Arab world should also evaluate their position to empower their non-mobile students and to provide the best alternative for them to keep their global competitiveness while cultivating IaH intercultural, international, and global dimensions. We feel Arab world HEIs are preparing their workforce to contribute to their developing economies, despite the need for a continual evaluation of mission statements, course descriptions, and

strategic plans as well as more collaboration between administration and faculty to mandate necessary changes so that IaH efforts could be better aligned with one another. ■

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