Chapter 5

In Search of Footprints of Technology Leadership for Innovation in Strategic Planning: A Study of Turkish Universities

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores how technology leadership fosters an innovative technology mindset as manifested in Turkish universities’ strategic plans which all show a general focus on technology. Using MAXQDA18 for conducting content analysis of these institutions’ strategic plans, the study finds significant differences between successful and unsuccessful universities in terms of technology leadership for innovation. It also demonstrates the universities’ outcomes as a result of their efforts in technology leadership and innovative mindset with specific regard to the context of emerging markets. Moreover, given that universities play a significant role in economic and societal development, this study offers valuable findings for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7769-0.ch005
INTRODUCTION

Considered a worthy investment, technology is transforming higher education, providing a global interconnectedness that reshapes educational, social, economic and cultural life (Brennan, 2008), and that enhances the quality of graduates and researchers (McRobbie, 2007). Moreover, with a global focus on technology, societies demand higher-quality education at a lesser cost (Guile, 2001). Similar to private businesses, universities are thus expected to operate more efficiently and strategically. In addition, the rapidly evolving ecosystem calls for higher education leaders to operate technology that generates innovative approaches to organizational processes (Graves, 2001; Weiss, 2010).

As a result, combining expertise in the use of technology and leadership skills to drive technology implementation is crucial to universities (Flanagan & Jacobsen, 2003; White & Bruton, 2007; Yukl, 2002). With regard to teaching, research activities, and administrative tasks, technology has revolutionized every aspect of higher education (Katz et al., 2004). Providing an educational pathway for technically trained students to advance and develop leadership/innovation strategies will be one of the essential building blocks of educating the next generation (Hurt et al., 2014). While research on technology leadership, especially in higher education, is still at a nascent stage and needs further research (Chua & Chua, 2017; Jameson, 2013), this chapter considers technology leadership in universities that is stimulated by strategic thinking that fosters technological innovations as an advantage to achieve strategic objectives.

Moreover, the impact of environmental variables such as the technology-oriented society, internationalization, changing demographics, inadequate state-provided resources, the speed of production of new information, increased costs and demands at national and global levels, coupled with growing numbers of universities, has led to a highly competitive environment for higher education institutions. Therefore, universities, too, are required to operate efficiently in order to compete with their peers, and they must adopt a strategic management approach to meet the demands of contemporary society (Papadimitriou, 2014). The present study adopts the Resource-Based View as the most suitable approach within the scope of strategic management literature to highlight the key role of technology as a resource in the context of higher education. As the Resource-Based View focuses on resources as a key to creating sustainable competitive advantages for organizations (Barney, 1991; Powell, 1992), this study assumes that in universities, technology and related innovations are the strategic resources for broadening and augmenting the quality of academic and administrative activities. Accordingly, this chapter explores the ways in which technology is utilized and excellence in technological leadership is
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