

**Challenges of financing public higher education
institutions In the Sultanate of Oman
From the perspective of the staff of faculties of
applied sciences**

Prepared by



Maher bin Ahmed Al-Bahrani

**PhD student at Muhammad the First University
Faculty of Arts and Humanities , Oujda (Kingdom of Morocco)**

maheralbahrani@hotmail.com

Abstract

The study aimed at identifying the funding challenges in the governmental higher education institutions, the challenges in the administrative and financial regulations and rules faced by government institutions of higher education, as well as revealing the significance of statistical differences between arithmetic averages in fields of study were attributed to the category of gender and job dimensions. The descriptive approach was used, and the sample consisted of employees of the faculties of Applied Sciences of the Ministry of Higher Education in the Sultanate of Oman. The questionnaire was used as a study tool, and it consisted of 27 items, which were designed to meet with the scientific methodology in the preparation of the questionnaires.

The results of the study showed that there are many challenges in financing government institutions of higher education, including the challenge of rapid technological progress and the desire for continuous development need to provide the necessary funding, as well as the continued responsibility of the State in spending on higher education. Also the challenges in the instructions and administrative and financial systems of the government regarding higher education institutions, including feeble investment mechanisms in the governmental higher education institutions, as well as the multiplicity of supervisors of governmental higher education institutions, create a form of duplication in their roles, as the results show that there are no differences in variables that due to gender and employment.

Key words: financing university education - higher education.

the study Problem

Higher education institutions are going through great challenges in their endeavor to provide the necessary funding to manage their affairs and provide quality education to their students. Al-Rubaie (2008) attributes this challenge to many factors, including:

- The increasing social demand for higher education and the continuous increase in the number of students wishing to join this level of education.
- The economic conditions of some countries and their inability to provide the necessary funding to face the steady increase in universities and colleges.
- Appealing to the community to work on defining responsibilities, credibility and transparency in directing public funds and rationalizing their spending.

- The role of the private sector has increased after many countries followed the approach of privatizing government projects, which necessitated finding formulas for partnership between the public and private sectors in financing education.
- The need for governments to redefine priorities and create new mechanisms for financial disbursement to achieve justice, equality, and social parity, which means redistributing national income to different sectors according to new standards and priorities that may sometimes be imposed by international variables.

The most important problems related to the administration of higher education and its institutions, as follows:

1. Although higher education acquires a large percentage of the total public spending on education, the expansion of student admission in this sector requires securing additional resources to finance it.
2. The response of higher education institutions to the needs of the labor market and the fulfillment of the objectives of securitization of employment require correcting the imbalance in the distribution of students among the humanitarian, scientific and technical specializations.

the importance of studying

- The presence of many entities benefiting from the outputs of higher education, represented by the beneficiaries, the employers, the various sectors of the economy and society.
- Implementing some principles calling for increasing higher education opportunities, including Education for All and Education for Education, all of which are concepts that urge the opening of wider fields and expansion in higher education, which means increasing costs.
- Access to higher education opportunities for students that leads to the formation of a capable human capital that is able to compete and contribute to raising productivity in the work and production sectors.
- The continued dependence of universities and colleges on government funding constitutes a constant burden in providing increased funding for these institutions, which many governments cannot fulfill at the present time.

- The emergence of market mechanisms as a strong influence in making decisions related to education and its programs, and the demand for continuous adjustments and improvements in them, makes the economic sector a basic engine in higher education, which means that it must participate and contribute to the additional financial burdens resulting from meeting the requirements of renewal.
- Searching for alternatives to finance government higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

Based on what has been diagnosed in the study problem and based on the sources of funding for higher education in the Sultanate of Oman, we are trying through this research to identify the challenges of financing higher education in the Sultanate of Oman by answering the following questions:

- What are the challenges of financing government higher education institutions?**
- What are the challenges in administrative and financial instructions and systems that governmental higher education institutions face?**
- Are there statistically significant differences between the arithmetic averages in the fields of study due to gender and job?**

The study population

The study population consisted of all employees of the Colleges of Applied Sciences of the Ministry of Higher Education, during the academic year 2017/2018.

The study sample

The study sample was formed randomly from the employees of the Colleges of Applied Sciences of the Ministry of Higher Education, whose number is (300) individuals, and the outcome of collecting the questionnaires reached (222) questionnaires out of (300) questionnaires. 74%), and the number of missing questionnaires reached (78), at a rate of (26%).

The study reached several results, the most important of which are:

1. The urgent need for the state to continue financing higher education, because of its role in financing, organizing, monitoring and evaluating the outputs of higher education institutions.

2. The high dependence on the government in financing higher education, which is considered the only source of funding for government higher education institutions, as well as the limited other sources of support for the government. Private higher education institutions also rely heavily on tuition fees as a primary source of funding through the missions that the government allocates to Omani students.

3. There are many challenges in financing higher education, perhaps the most important of which is the rapid development of technology and its accompanying need for continuous modernization and its need for high government spending, and the trend towards academic accreditation and quality also needs financial expenditures.

4. The administrative systems and laws are among the most important challenges that the government must take into consideration in order to facilitate the work of government higher education institutions, as the weakness of investment mechanisms in government higher education institutions has made them lose the ability to compete with private investments, and the lack of necessary legislation in how Increase the revenues of government higher education institutions.

5. The multiplicity of bodies supervising the higher education sector has resulted in the duplication of their work and also the absence of a clear vision for planning in these institutions in order to integrate with each other in specializations, and the locations of governmental higher education institutions at the level of the governorates of the Sultanate.

6. There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the arithmetic averages in all fields that are attributed to the gender variable and the job.

The researcher suggests a number of recommendations:

1. The most appropriate model for financing higher education in the Sultanate of Oman is the model that marries the model of government spending and private sector spending with government higher education institutions increasing their revenues in order to contribute to reducing the burden on the government in spending on higher education, through the enactment of regulations and laws that Governmental higher education institutions are given the necessary powers to supplement their budgets from their revenues.

2. The necessity of putting the national strategy for education into effect, as it is long overdue in implementation, because it will solve the problem of the multiplicity of agencies supervising higher education, the unification of financial and human resources, and the optimal use of these resources.
3. The necessity of changing the laws and regulations in order to allow government higher education institutions the necessary powers to be productive centers in terms of establishing factories, buying land, real estate, etc. and working on managing them in order to contribute to increasing the revenues of these institutions.
4. Establishing a government investment fund that returns income to finance higher education, similar to investment funds established by the government in many fields.
5. Granting higher education institutions administrative and financial independence, and replacing the annual budget allocation with fixed chapters to allocating the total amount that gives higher education institutions the freedom to spend in a manner that suits their needs with the state undertaking supervision, accountability and governance work.
6. Adding an item for social responsibility on public and governmental joint-stock companies and banks, as part of solutions to finance higher education.
7. Linking the specializations offered by higher education institutions to the needs of the labor market, in order to make better use of the available resources in feeding the labor market needs of human cadres.

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