

The University-Industry Relationships in Sweden and Iran: A Critical Comparative Study

Authors : Sepideh Nikounejad, Mostafa Ghaderi, Nematollah Azizi, Per-Olof Thang, Mohamad Reza Neyestani

Abstract : From an educational perspective, an effective and efficient relationship between university and industry can be considered as an important means by which not only both sides are improved but also it brings many advantages and benefits for both parties. It means more specifically, mutual collaboration between universities and industry can not only reduce youth unemployment, but it can improve the quality of teaching and learning in higher education settings while providing more qualified people to industrial enterprises. Indeed the lack of effective interaction between Iranian universities and industry has confronted the country and created many challenges include in increasing number of unskillful and unemployed graduates. However, in order to suggest appropriate practical strategies, it is very important to see how this issue has been tackled by Swedish universities, which have had a good background in this collaboration and how they are connected to the industry in particular and labour market in general. The research aims to study and compare the mechanisms, processes, and policies of the current model in the relationships between university and industry in Iran and Sweden. As a qualitative study, grounded theory was applied. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews. Participants were selected purposefully and by the snowball sampling method. The findings indicate that despite reported needs from both sides for close collaborations between universities and industries in Iran, current policies and practices, including internship, laboratory, and financial support, need to be revised critically. However, in light of our findings on the Swedish policies and practices for linking universities and industries, some practical strategies will be suggested for the Iranian higher education context. In conclusion, cooperation models between universities and industries in Iran and Sweden will be described.

Keywords : cooperation, higher education, industry, comparative

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