



Final Report of IHECON2024 Conference

Preface

The Internationalization in Higher Education: Navigating Global Challenges and Opportunities Conference (IHECON2024) held at Ondokuz Mayıs University from October 25 to 27, 2024, was a significant academic event aimed at fostering international cooperation in higher education. The conference addressed crucial themes such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence applications in education, and cultural exchange. With participants from various countries and diverse academic backgrounds, the conference provided a valuable platform for sharing ideas, discussing challenges, and exploring innovative solutions for the future of higher education.

This report presents the key outcomes of IHECON 2024, including its scope, objectives, participant statistics, and partner institutions. Additionally, it offers recommendations for future initiatives aimed at enhancing internationalization processes in higher education.

Scope of the Conference

IHECON2024 was organized by Ondokuz Mayıs University from October 25 to 27, 2024, at the Atatürk Congress and Culture Center. The primary objective of the conference was to promote knowledge sharing and strengthen sustainable academic collaborations on topics such as internationalization in higher education, digitalization, artificial intelligence applications, and cultural exchange.

The conference was held under the theme of "Internationalization in Higher Education: Navigating Global Challenges and Opportunities" attracting contributions from academics, researchers, and postgraduate students from various countries, thus creating an international platform for dialogue and collaboration. Throughout the conference, 72 presentations were delivered across 18 sessions, with representatives from 22 different countries sharing their insights. Each session featured interactive Q&A segments, encouraging a dynamic exchange of ideas among participants.

The conference opened with the speeches of Prof. Dr. M. Said KURŞUNOĞLU, the Chairman of the IHECON2024 Organizing Committee, and Prof. Dr. Çetin KURNAZ, Vice-Rector of Ondokuz Mayıs University; and followed by keynote addresses by Prof. Dr. Kimberly Noels from the University of Alberta, Canada, with "Language Education and Internationalization" and Emeritus Prof. Dr. Hans de Wit from Boston College, USA, with "Critical Reflections on the Concept and Evolution of Internationalization in Higher Education". These addresses set the stage for discussions on the increasing importance of international collaboration and the challenges and opportunities facing institutions worldwide.



Following the keynotes, conference sessions explored perspectives on the role of internationalization in advancing academic exchange and global engagement.

The keynote speakers for the afternoon session were Prof. Dr. Mahmut Aydın (Rector of Samsun University) with “Higher Education Without Walls: What’s Next?,” and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Qiang Zha (York University), with “Problematizing Internationalization of Higher Education: China as the Methodology.”

In sessions held on the second day, speakers addressed the intersection of internationalization with technological advancement, cross-cultural exchange, and the future workforce. Keynote speakers of the second day were Prof. Dr. Mustafa Said Kurşunoğlu (OMU) on “Geo-Conceptual Bases for the Visionary Internationalization in Higher Education: Relevance and Contradictions,” Prof. Dr. Mohd Ariffin B. Abu Hassan (Universiti Teknologi Malaysia) on “Internationalization Strategy of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM): The Way Forward,” Prof. Datuk Ir. Ts. Dr. Ahmad Fauzi Bin İsmail (Rector of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia) on “Internationalisation Agenda of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia: The Way Forward,” Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dewi Yanti Liliana (Politeknik Negeri Jakarta Indonesia) on “Ethical Horizons: Leveraging Generative Artificial Intelligence for Education.” These discussions highlighted how universities can embrace internationalization to better equip students for a globalized world and advance research through global partnerships.

The Head of Chancery of the Embassy of the Republic of Sierra Leone in Ankara, Mrs. Clara Fatmata Koroma, also delivered a speech that focused on the relationship between Türkiye and Sierra Leone.

Objectives of the Conference

1. To support internationalization processes in higher education
2. To discuss digitalization and AI-supported educational practices
3. To promote cultural and academic collaborations
4. To disseminate interdisciplinary approaches and innovative learning methods
5. To identify institutional and individual challenges faced by internationalization processes and to produce applicable solutions



Target Audience

- University academics and researchers
- Higher education institution administrators
- Undergraduate-Postgraduate students
- Institutions working on educational policies
- International education consortia

Participant Numbers and Statistics

- **Total Applications:** 110
- **Accepted Papers:** 72
- **Participants:** 120
- **Number of Countries Represented:** 15

Presentations and Workshops

The conference featured **72 oral presentations and 10 keynote speeches**. The sessions were organized around the following themes:

1. Internationalization in Higher Education:

Country-specific institutional ecosystem examples and evaluations, as well as current and future global trends in internationalization.

2. Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence:

Case studies on the digitalization of universities within the framework of internationalization, and the opportunities artificial intelligence presents for the global education landscape.

3. Cultural Interaction and Education:

Addressing the challenges of cultural interaction, particularly regarding foreign language barriers, and exploring internationalization as a process of reshaping traditional higher education through intercultural exchange.



4. Interdisciplinary Research:

Exploring internationalization as a process that fosters collaboration across various disciplines in higher education, emphasizing knowledge and experience sharing.

5. New Fields of Education within the Context of New Skills:

Evaluating the impact of Industry 4.0 and 5.0 on internationalization processes, with a focus on emerging educational branches and skillsets.

6. R&D Projects, Patents, and Innovation Processes:

Discussing the development of practical solutions and concrete orientations through R&D projects and innovation in the context of bilateral cooperation between university institutions.

Partner Institutions and Stakeholders

The broad scope of IHECON 2024 is reflected in its extensive list of stakeholders and partner institutions, including:

Institutional Partners

- **Mediterranean Universities Union (CMU)**
- **Yunus Emre Institute**
- **Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities**
- **Eurasian Research Institute**



Conference Partners

- Ondokuz Mayıs University (Türkiye)
- Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (Malaysia)
- Samsun University (Türkiye)
- IPB University (Indonesia)
- Università del Salento (Italy)
- Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology (Pakistan)
- Université 8 mai 1945 (Algeria)
- Atyrau State University (Kazakhstan)
- Urgench State Pedagogical Institute (Uzbekistan)
- International Islamic University Malaysia (Malaysia)
- Governors State University (USA)
- Njala University (Sierra Leone)
- Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University (Kazakhstan)
- Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University (Kyrgyzstan)
- Benadir University (Somalia)
- Politeknik Negeri Jakarta (Indonesia)
- Al Istiqlal University (Palestine)
- National University of Modern Languages (Pakistan)
- Gjakova University "Fehmi Agani" (Kosovo)
- Ondokuz Mayıs University Technology Transfer Office (Türkiye)
- Asia Pacific University (Bangladesh)
- New York Tirana University (Albania)



- Komrat State University (Moldova)
- Agricultural University of Tirana (Albania)
- Tuzla University (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Sierra Leone University (Sierra Leone)
- Prizren University (Kosovo)
- Muteesa I Royal University (Uganda)

Sponsors

- **Yunus Emre Institute**
- **Samsun Metropolitan Municipality**
- **Çarşamba Municipality**

This wide network of stakeholders highlights the international reach and impact of the conference, demonstrating its importance in fostering global academic partnerships.

Web of Science Indexed Book Chapter

Selected papers presented at the conference will be published as a book chapter indexed in the Web of Science (WOS). The book, titled “**Global Perspectives on Internationalization and Innovation**”, will cover topics such as digitalization, internationalization in higher education, and sustainable academic collaborations.

The main topics of the book chapter include:

1. International Student Mobility in the Digital Age
2. AI-Supported Language Learning Applications
3. Sustainable Academic Collaborations
4. Interdisciplinary Approaches and Research Networks



Internationalization: Situation Assessment and Recommendations for Future Perspectives

Based on the outcomes of IHECON 2024, the following concrete outputs and recommendations are suggested to enhance internationalization processes in higher education:

Key Findings:

1. Global Trends in Internationalization:

There are three dominant regions in the global landscape of internationalization: Europe, the Americas, and the Far East. Among these, the Far East appears to have the most active and seamless ecosystems in both regional and global relations.

2. The Impact of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Networks:

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital networks is redefining the boundaries of higher education. These advancements pave the way for online international student statuses and virtual campuses designed accordingly.

3. Cultural Interaction and Language Barriers:

While AI-driven simultaneous translation tools address language barriers, they cannot fully replace the human element of cultural interaction in physical environments, which remains essential for genuine intercultural exchange.

4. Multidisciplinary and Multicultural Dimensions of Internationalization:

Although internationalization has traditionally been viewed as a subject of educational or social sciences, it now encompasses a multidisciplinary, multilingual, and multicultural orientation, reflecting the complex global network of academic and individual collaborations.

5. New Specializations and Professions:

The knowledge and skills required by Industry 4.0 and 5.0 are continuously evolving, both in scope and depth. The emergence of new specializations and professions can only be addressed through dynamic and updated internationalization processes.

6. Rethinking Classical Internationalization Approaches:

Traditional internationalization practices based on academic and student mobility must shift towards project-based collaborations and R&D initiatives. Universities should adopt a more specific and visionary approach to developing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) that go beyond classical frameworks.



Recommendations:

1. Effective Use of Digital Platforms:

Foster the use of digital platforms to enhance global participation and accelerate knowledge sharing. Develop bilateral collaboration initiatives at both institutional and individual levels.

2. Support for Interdisciplinary Research:

Encourage interdisciplinary collaborations among academics in the global network to drive innovative solutions and address complex global challenges.

3. Enhance Student and Academic Exchange Programs:

Expand the number and diversity of exchange programs to promote cultural interaction and share international experiences more effectively.

4. Proactive Institutional Engagement:

Rather than relying solely on opportunities offered by international associations to which your university belongs, take proactive institutional initiatives to build direct collaborations.

5. Strategic Planning for Sustainable Collaborations:

Develop and implement strategic plans to establish long-term, sustainable academic partnerships that can adapt to evolving global needs.

6. Integration of Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies:

Support the integration of AI and other emerging technologies in education and research to enhance the quality and efficiency of academic processes.

7. Expand the Scope of International Partnerships:

Avoid limiting partnerships to institutions within the same academic tier. Update your internationalization vision to embrace a global perspective, seeking partnerships across diverse regions and fields to seize broader opportunities.

IHECON2024 ORGANIZING COMMITTEE