

24.3.2026

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Title

Universities responding to policy : organisational change at the University of Namibia

Publication year

2003

Source/Footnote

In: Higher education. - 45 (2003) 3, S. 353 - 374

Inventory number

16295

Keywords

Ausland : Namibia : einzelne Hochschulen ; Hochschule : gegenwärtige Situation ; Hochschule und Publizistik

Abstract

In this article the development of the University of Namibia since its establishment (8 years ago) has been studied within the context of the formation of the newly-independent Southern African state of Namibia. A hybrid framework, based on the major theoretical perspectives of neo-institutionalism and resource dependency, has been utilized to analyse the accounts of key respondents involved in these developments and hence derive an explanatory narrative of the changes involved in response to (government) policy. It is suggested that the major themes within this narrative may be of explanatory value when studying organizational change in small (developing) countries with relatively young institutions. In particular, the following concepts are worth highlighting: the normatively strong but operationally weak state interacting with the normatively weak but operationally strong institution; the common political elite, with institutional leaders sharing government values; and the relative informality of policy formulation and pluralism of government, with leading institutional actions having a policy sensing and shaping role. The loose set of themes devised from the interpretation of

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semi-structured interviews with a relatively small number of respondents can also be considered as providing a conceptual framework for further research both within the specific institution and on a broader comparative basis. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Kirby-Harris, Robert, E-Mail: rkirby@unam.na