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**Abstract**

Given the relatively high degree of academic freedom granted to institutions in Israel in conjunction with the lack of governmental policy on internationalization, directors of higher education institutions comprise key agents in the institutional internationalization process that is taking place in Israeli higher education. In this study, we took a qualitative approach to explore the views and attitudes of seven college directors in Israel. We show that motivation for internationalization is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by the college directors' personal characteristics as well as by the colleges' contextual factors. Moreover, it seems that second-tier colleges use internationalization to promote themselves towards the status of first-tier research universities. The study provides a first insight into the perceptions and motivations of Israeli educational institutions' leaders regarding the development of institutional-level internationalization strategies.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)