Internationalization of Higher Education in the Context of Globalization: New Trends and Developments

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Abstract

The process of internationalization of higher education is increasingly treated as a commercial commodity offered at high prices at the national level and tradable products across the borders those who can afford it. This has resulted in the emergence of new types of education providers, and new types of partnerships, presenting new challenges in framing policies and regulations to monitor and enforce quality standards to the educational process. In the ages of globalization as the reality shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, the new information and communication technology (ICT), the emergence of the international knowledge network, the role of the English language and other forces accelerated the process of internationalization of higher education. And it leads few countries to dominate the global scientific systems, the new technologies are owned primarily by multinational corporations or academic institutions in the major Western industrialized nations, and the domination of English creates advantages for the countries that use English as the medium of instruction and research. All this means that the developing countries find themselves dependent on the major academic superpowers. Globalization and internationalization are now the central issues for higher education worldwide.

KEYWORDS: Internationalization, Higher Education, Globalization, Information and Communication Technology

Introduction

The Internationalization of higher education probably began to gain ground in the latter half of the 20th century. The perception of the internationalization of higher education varies by nation and area. And it has gradually changed through the ages, and its perception and definition differ by nation and region. In the emerging contemporary scenario higher education is increasingly treated as a commercial commodity offered at high prices at the national level and as tradable products across borders to those who can afford it. This has resulted in the emergence of new types of education providers, innovative methods of delivery, and new types of partnerships, presenting new challenges in framing policies and regulations to monitor and enforce quality standards to the educational process. The International Association of Universities (IAU) describes that the current trends are dominated by commercial and financial interests. In many of the developing countries there has been a high degree of privatization of the higher education system.

In countries such as India the response to rapidly growing demand for higher education including professional education is to liberally allow the private sector investment in higher education. The internationalization of higher education is now
seen as a logical extension of this phenomenon. The First Global Forum of UNESCO on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in its Report on “Globalization and Higher Education” considered issues such as: Is higher education a public or a private good? How does trade in educational services threaten the notion of public good? Can public good agendas be shared between public and private providers? How can new providers of higher education contribute to promoting access? How does the commercialization of higher education and the emerging market affect issues of equity in particular in developing countries? It also focused on policy issues that need to be addressed and best ways national governments and institutions should prepare for this new development.

Current Scenario

Internationalization is a major trend in higher education. It is also a worldwide phenomenon and it is widely misunderstood. The elements of globalization in higher education are widespread and multifaceted. They include flows of students across borders: it is estimated that more than 1.6 million students now study outside of their home countries. A conceptual understanding of globalization and internationalization is needed to make sense of the varied and complex ways they are affecting higher education in worldwide. In broad terms, globalization refers to trends in higher education that have cross-national implications. These include mass higher education; a global marketplace for students, faculty, and highly educated personnel; and the global reach of the new Internet-based technologies, among others. Internationalization refers to the specific policies and initiatives of countries and individual academic institutions or systems to deal with global trends.

Deep inequalities undergird many of the current trends in globalization and internationalization in higher education. A few countries dominate global scientific systems, the new technologies are owned primarily by multinational corporations or academic institutions in the major Western industrialized nations, and the domination of English creates advantages for the countries that use English as the medium of instruction and research. All this means that the developing countries find themselves dependent on the major academic superpowers. Globalization and internationalization are now central issues for higher education worldwide. The resources discussed here provide us with a map to navigate the trends in international higher education and the complex relations between academe and society, nationally and globally.

Experiences from Asian Countries

Internationalization of higher education is not a new phenomenon in Asia. Early as the latter part of the 19th century, many countries in Asia had already made various endeavors to establish modern higher education systems by dispatching students and members of faculty abroad for advanced studies or research. The higher education systems adopted by these countries conformed to foreign academic patterns, notably those Western models provided by Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. China and Japan provide typical examples. In these two countries especially although internationalization of their higher education took its major form from the one way process of importing western ideas, academic norms and standards they were not colonized. (Hossain, 1997) But elsewhere, many Asian countries and areas were colonized by Western countries: countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.
Internationalization is one of the major agendas adopted by higher education systems in Asia, universities not only in Hong Kong and Singapore but also in Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, and even mainland China are very keen to expand their international student exchange programs (Tin et al. 2005). In addition, they are equally keen to recruit overseas students or send students to international partners for exchanges. Although some scholars believe studying abroad and student exchanges are powerful internationalizers of higher education (Huang, 2009) others believe that combining education and work experience in an international context would greatly enrich students’ learning experiences in recent years, Japan has actively promoted internationalization of higher education; therefore, international academic exchanges of students and staff have become very popular in Japan’s higher education.

According to the Japan Association for Student Support Organization (Huang, 2009), around 121,812 international students study at Japanese universities and colleges in 2005, and about 35,379 students study at Japanese language educational institutions in 2004. According to a recent report titled Development of New Policies for International Student Exchanges (Central Council of Education, 2003), the Japanese government will promote more international student exchanges. In addition to mobility of students and staff, universities in Japan have also taken international benchmarking very seriously. International advisors from overseas were invited to join the research team based in Japan for an international symposium, engaging in devising criteria to evaluate international dimensions of China is perhaps the world’s most complex, over-hyped, and under-analyzed market for transnational higher education. The country’s size combined with China’s transition from a command to a pseudo-market economy and potential as a superpower has prompted many higher education institutions in the developed world to explore the possibilities for market entry (Carnoy 2006).

From the Chinese perspective, the major benefits of foreign involvement are capacity, status, and innovation. China is rapidly becoming the most significant source of students studying abroad. However, like some other major source countries such as Malaysia and Singapore, may come to view foreign-sourced, in-country provision as more cost-effective in terms of reducing travel costs and stemming brain drain. The third and most recent piece of legislation on transnational provision was released in March 2003 and offers clarification on the prior 1995 regulations. Major features include the stipulation that foreign institutions must partner with Chinese institutions; partnerships must not seek profit as their objective; no less than half the members of the governing body of the institution must be Chinese citizens and the post of president or the equivalent must be a Chinese citizen residing in China; the basic language of instruction should be Chinese; and tuition fees may not be raised without approval (Carnoy 2006).

Experiences from Europe

According to the OECD, about 2.2 billion dollars is spent on education worldwide each year. In the OECD countries, the private sector accounts for an average of 10% of this total. In the United States and Germany, it is as high as a quarter. Most of the money is spent on higher education. The ICT and the growing demand for people with good academic qualifications, the share of privately financed (i.e. commercial) education is increasing. Private education no longer means just schools and universities run by religious or other communities, but education and training programmes offered by multinationals for their own staff or by commercial institutes.
To get their diplomas recognized they sometimes forge alliances with universities, which are also becoming more and more commercial (Damiani 2005).

According to the Lisbon Convention ‘The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region’ was developed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO and adopted by national representatives meeting in Lisbon 1997. The Convention has since been ratified by 27 countries and signed by 14 more (Philip G. Altbach and Jane Knight, 2007). The parties to the Lisbon Convention have also agreed on the need for a code of good practice in the provision of higher education study programmes and other educational services by means of transnational arrangement. The Council of Europe/UNESCO Code of Good Practice in Transnational Education based on the Lisbon Convention, is that, (1) Academic quality and standards of transnational education programmes should be at least comparable to those of the awarding institution as well as to those of the receiving country. (2) Awarding institutions as well as the providing institutions are accountable and fully responsible for quality assurance and control. (3) Awarding institutions should be responsible for issuing qualifications resulting from their transnational study programmes, providing clear and transparent information on the qualifications, in particular by using the Diploma Supplement.

The Bologna process was launched in 1999 by 30 countries to create convergence between higher education systems as the European countries had their specific higher education systems, where degrees and academic years were inconsistent. This was aimed at establishing a single integrated framework as a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the international recognition qualification by member countries by national quality assurance agencies, Uniform degree structures, the adoption of a common credit transfer system, a common way of describing the qualification (Diploma Supplement), a focus on lifelong learning. (Mthembu, 2004)

The Copenhagen Process was launched in November 2002 by the ministers for education and vocational training of the European Union and the countries belonging to the European Economic Area (EEA) and the European Free Trade Area (EFTA), the European social partners and the European Commission. It led to the creation of major tools for increasing the transparency and recognition of knowledge, aptitudes and skills, and for the quality of the systems: the common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, Europass, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the future European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), and the future European common quality assurance framework for Vocational Education and Training (Bernd 2009).

In 2004, the EU launched the Erasmus Mundus (ERASMUS) program to support master courses run by at least three institutions in three European countries and their exchanges with partner institutions in the third countries. The ERASMUS program managed by the European Commission has promoted and financed almost all student flows within the European Union (EU) and into the EU from the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe (prior to their joining the EU), the candidate countries of the Balkans, and some Mediterranean countries.

The strategy aims at the enhancement of the competitiveness of Europe and respect for the environment, as well as greater social cohesion and the realization of lifelong learning for all. In the past years, the funds allocated to education and training increased. In the 2007-13 period the total should exceed over one percent of the Community budget, compared to only 0.1 percent in 1986 after the Lisbon strategy.
was adopted, a new basis for policy cooperation was established, under the ‘Education and Training 2010 work program’.

Over the past 25 years, the international dimension of higher education in Europe has become more central on the agenda of European and national governments, institutions of higher education and their representative bodies, student organizations and accreditation agencies. Stimulated in the 1980’s by European programmes for cooperation and exchange in education and research, internationalization over these years has moved from a reactive to a pro-active strategic issue, from added value to mainstream, and also has seen its focus, scope and content evolve substantially. Increasing competition in higher education and the commercialization and cross-border delivery of higher education, have challenged the value traditionally attached to cooperation: exchanges and partnerships. At the same time, the internationalization of the curriculum and the teaching and learning process has become as relevant as the traditional focus on mobility. Internationalization has become an indicator for quality in higher education, and at the same time there is more debate about the quality of internationalization itself. The international dimension and the position of higher education in the global arena are given greater emphasis in international, national and institutional documents and mission statements than ever before.

The changing landscape of internationalization is not developing in similar ways in higher education throughout Europe and the world as a whole. There are different accents and approaches. Internationalization strategies are filtered and contextualized by the specific internal context of the university, by the type of university, and how they are embedded nationally. The growing importance of internationalization in higher education on the one hand and the diversity in rationales, approaches and strategies of institutions and programmes on the other hand, call for an assessment of the quality of internationalization at the programme and the institutional level and the realization a system of certifications as to define the progress and status of the internationalization at the programme and institutional level.

However, the internationalization of higher education is a development that is greatly accelerated by the new information and communication technologies. While educational institutions are setting up departments or satellites in other countries, the largest portion of ‘for-profit’ education crosses national borders with the help of ICT. Higher education has moved from the sphere of the “national” to the spheres of the “regional”, the “international” and the “global”. An example of the regional approach in higher education is the Bologna process aspiring to create a European Higher Education Area, an example of an international process is the mutual recognition process of recognition of qualifications (Lisbon Convention of 1997) and the global trade in educational services can be considered as happening in the global sphere partly irrespective of the nation state boundaries.

Internationalization, like globalization is a concept with different interpretations. Internationalization of higher education can be viewed either from national policy perspective or institutional perspective. Internationalization can be viewed as “an intentional national response to globalization” used to facilitate understanding of global environment and ways of interaction in it or “as a systematic, sustained effort by government to make higher education institutions more responsive to the challenges of ‘globalization’ of the economy and society”. Transnational education is commonly defined as “types of higher education study programmes or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including distance education) in which the learners
are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.”

**Experiences from America**

Over the course of the twentieth century, America created one of the world’s truly great systems of higher education a system that has generated tremendous scientific discoveries, fueled the economy, solved pressing social problems, and ensured the cultural vitality of communities. It has educated millions of students, creating a well-trained workforce and spawning creative ideas and innovations that have improved the quality and longevity of life. Access to higher education has provided tremendous opportunities for social and economic mobility, enabling all kinds of people, including new generations of immigrants, to realize their hopes and dreams while enabling America to benefit from the creative energies of all its people.

In an increasingly interconnected and complex world, most U.S. colleges and universities acknowledge the need to equip students with skills and knowledge that will allow them to function effectively across cultures and nations. Nevertheless, there is little evidence that this is being done. While most institutions acknowledge the need to be responsive to globalization, this preliminary review suggests that there have been few significant advancements in internationalization at U.S. postsecondary institutions since the American Council on Education (ACE).

Internationalization of higher education can be defined as the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of the institution. The increasingly international focus of higher education is dialectically related to the present globalization and regionalization of our societies and markets. As a result, the importance of quality assessment of internationalization strategies has grown, international academic consortia and networks have emerged, and English has been firmly established as the language of communication in higher education. The combination of historical, comparative, and conceptual analysis of internationalization of higher education provides a framework for further research and practice of this important trend in higher education.

Internationalization in American institutions of higher education may be designed to fulfill an idea on the part of trustees or other stakeholders that this is necessary for the institution to be competitive in its efforts to retain its standing and fulfill its mission, or it may be the result of internal drive from the faculty or from the administration to pursue agendas related to the curriculum or to implement a theoretical commitment to some educational outcome associated with the process of internationalization.

It may also be a combination of the two. There are two principal modes in which internationalization proceeds; it may be opportunistic, growing out of specific isolated initiatives; or it may be more coherent portfolio of activities undertaken as a result of some level of institutional planning. US colleges and universities and private companies are undertaking hundreds of initiatives and partnerships to deliver cross border education courses and programs probably the most active and innovative nation in worldwide program and provider mobility.
US cross border activity increasingly involves private and publicly traded companies. The Global Education Index, developed by the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, classifies many large, active publicly traded companies that provide education programs and services. The US houses majority of a scan of over fifty GEI companies. Better know companies include Kaplan, Apollo Group, DeVry, Carrier Education Corporation and Laureate Education. Kaplan owned of 57 colleges in the US. Now owns dublie business school Irelands largest private undergraduate institution and likely the first of many purchase of the foreign institution. The Apollo Group owns the University of Phoenix, now the largest American private university.

Experiences from Africa

African countries face numerous challenges in building their knowledge institutions universities. The challenges that countries face can be characterized as both internal and external in nature. Internally, economic hardship, civil strife, disease, and natural disaster have caused major problems in building meaningful social, economic, cultural and educational institutions. The external forces are equally, if not more significantly, culpable in impacting the development of higher education in the continent. Structural adjustment programs, trade imbalance, debt burden, and unfavorable policies have punched a serious blow on the already weak state of affairs. African higher education, more specifically, had to negotiate its very existence due to a poor and ill-informed policy imposed externally. That other countries across the world are building their institutions feverishly and forcefully, one hopes, will not only help African countries from doing the same but also to generate more external support towards this effort.

Higher education institutions have a special place in Africa as bastions of virtually all knowledge dissemination and creation, unlike elsewhere where numerous other knowledge brokers do exist. Africa, a continent of 54 countries, has around 800 million people. More than 300 public and 1,000 private institutions enroll five million students that employ about 200,000 faculties. Higher education in Africa is a five-billion dollar enterprise. It should be noted that the reality of North Africa is different from the rest of Africa, what is generally known as Sub-Saharan Africa.

Bologna Declaration reflects a search for a common European answer to common European problems. The process originates from the recognition that in spite of their valuable differences, European higher education systems are facing common internal and external challenges related to the growth and diversification of higher education, the employability of graduates, the shortage of skills in key areas, the expansion of private and transnational education and so on. The Declaration recognizes the value of coordinated reforms, compatible systems and common action.

The Bologna Process, as a major thrust for mobilizing higher education and research for economic transformation, sets vital precedence to other regions such as Africa where higher education institutions have been subjected to justify their very presence. It is common knowledge that higher education in Africa was starved to its near destruction owing largely to poor and ill-informed policy conceived, enforced and implemented by external forces. The World Bank economists had it that higher education was a poor investment and thus whatever resources that were available, should be, they insisted, directed to other forms of the education sub-sectors. This policy had a devastating impact on higher education development in the continent for over two decades consequently undermining the possible competitive edge of these countries in the current global knowledge market.
Education is the most fundamental cornerstone to a vibrant economy. Businesses consider many factors when locating, starting, or expanding but the quality of workforce, particularly for ICT related businesses is paramount. Accordingly, in ACCRA declaration make the following recommendations: African governments should make technology education start from the kindergarten and the primary level, African governments should aggressively bring to fruition the commitment to universal and free education using both conventional and innovative ICT solutions to make the dream a reality, African governments should focus on growing a well-developed workforce in the area of ICT, as this has become a strategic imperative for the development of the continent, etc.

The role of business, private business is the principal engine for job creation and a leveling of income disparity. Corporations are rightfully in the business of making profits. However, they have a responsibility to participate in their communities as both economic engines and corporate citizens leading the way toward both a culture of economic excellence and a culture of philanthropy. We therefore call on corporations within Africa and those doing business in Africa to aggressively engage government in the process of building physical and legal infrastructure that promotes the general and economic well being of all citizens. This should include but not limited to: expanded competition, contract enforcement and transactional transparency, lending practices for SMEs and greatly expanding access to ICT.

Civil Society organizations, NGOs and indigenous professionals play a critical role in building the Social Capital of nations, regions and communities. Improved Social Capital enhances both economic opportunities and the human condition. Economic opportunity and the human condition cannot, and must not, be separated from one another in our struggle to improve economic growth in Africa. Growth, opportunity and improvement of the human condition must stretch across all levels of the socio-economic strata of our societies. Enhanced commitment within NGOs budgets for capacity building and professionalism, ICT training and support, and professional development that enhances sustainability.

International Institutions and Funding Agencies play a critical role in addressing the social and economic needs of Africa. Initially these funders provided grants and loans to nonprofit organizations largely based in developed countries. There were valid reasons for such funding decisions including transparency and professionalism but during the past decade, in many regions of Africa, indigenous organizations have made great strides in enhancing their own capacities and professionalism.

Today, many of these organizations have the capacity to serve as the lead organization for such grants yet too often Foundations, International Institutions and Funding Agencies continue to provide assistance through surrogates who are not based in the countries or regions that the funding is intended to assist. While there are still economies of scale and professional development considerations, the preference for indigenous organizations should be a fundamental tenet of funding considerations.

The international Institutions, Foundations and Funding Agencies to increase the levels of funding and particularly the levels of funding that have a direct impact on the community or problem being targeted. Deployment of ICT for the cooperative development of valid assessment protocols and the sharing of that information, such assessment should be targeted at the challenge of providing transparency and confidence among donors that encourages greater levels of funding for indigenous organizations while at the same time demands. Greater flexibility for grants and loans
requiring government endorsement and a preference for extra-governmental organizations as the lead partner in such grants. Increased capacity building, wherever possible by local organizations, focusing on ICT skills, professional development, and development and fundraising to enhance the professionalism and sustainability of organizations. A zero tolerance policy for official corruption that unjustly affect indigenous organizations who could perform the function without government endorsement, e.g. a by-pass policy allowing direct funding where official corruption can be demonstrated or a by-pass policy based on a finding of recent precedent.

Kishun (Paul Croucher Joris 2000) points out that in South Africa the most important aspect of internationalization is “linked to the policy and funding implication of increased emphasis on internationalization, both at the national and institutional levels. The worldwide experience is that national policies are key in providing a broad framework within which a higher education sector can strategically develop to take advantage of opportunities to internationalize.”

African countries and other least developed countries could use knowledge to narrow the income gap between them and the developed world economies. Higher education (HE) is an important institution that these countries will need to develop and improve in order to meet this challenge.

The world of Higher Education is however changing everyday, and one of the major forces imparting and shaping higher education at this time is internationalization. Internationalization of higher education in East Africa raises various questions related to its magnitude and intensity, its capacity to address issues of access, equity and regional research and developmental needs. Internationalization and regionalization as processes in higher education can synergize each other but can also limit the success of the other depending on their focus. In Africa, internationalization has mainly involved new forms of provision of higher education and not necessarily relevant content. At the same time, regional approaches in the context of wider Pan-African concerns on the implications of internationalization in the continent are at play.

**Experiences from Australia**

In Australian universities the prevailing model is the student mobility model and the export of higher education. In an update on the internationalization of Australian universities from the University of Melbourne (2006), it is stated that the Australian case is not one of globalization it should be regarded as a traditional import-export model for the economic benefit of Australian universities.

Current developments within the Australian university sector, while acknowledging the continuing importance of revenue from international students at a time of decreasing government financial support, indicate a broadening of the concept of internationalization. The diversity of student backgrounds is being acknowledged. Greater emphasis is being placed upon learning, teaching and assessment practices. Most importantly, new ways of increasing local students’ participation in the internationalization process are being introduced.

The initial phase of educational aid began around 1950 with what became known as the Colombo Plan. Under this plan students from member countries were fully sponsored by the Australian Government to study in Australia. In the 1970s Australia’s aid policy was restructured and a shift to bilateral assistance for specific developing nations was instituted. A program of Australian Development
Scholarships (ADS) was introduced whereby greater emphasis was placed upon the particular needs of partner countries (Wit 2009). In April 2005 there were almost 2,500 students on ADS studying in tertiary institutions in Australia, the majority of these being from Indonesia, Vietnam, Papua-New Guinea and the Philippines. In the third phase, during the period after the 1970s but particularly after the 1990s, a commercially-based education services sector involving many Australian education institutions began evolve. This phase overlaps the second phase. By 2004 the export of Australia’s education services was the country’s third largest and the fastest growing export.

An interesting recent development has been the significant growth of overseas higher education enrolments undertaking study through off-shore delivery by Australian higher education institutions, with a number of Australian universities establishing campuses in other countries. This has occurred through the provision of programs of study through collaborative arrangements with overseas universities and the establishment of off-shore campuses (Bernd, 2009).

During the last decade, competition for funding and privatization transformed most Australian universities into corporate enterprises. Melbourne University (1855), a traditional university, recently developing Melbourne Private, and creating an alliance, with Australian and overseas universities to deliver online courses; Monash University, established in 1961, becoming a multiversity by merging six campuses in Australia and building campuses in Malaysia and South Africa, and capitalizing on satellite television and other new technologies extending open learning to students in Australia and overseas; and Murdoch University, a small university established in 1975, beginning as an alternative university and now struggling to be a global player in this competitive environment. Pressures are mounting for all Australian universities to commercialize, to become more utilitarian, and to market their courses more aggressively in Australia and overseas.

Conclusion

Concept of internationalization of higher education gradually changed through the ages and its perception and its definition differ by nation and region. The present trend in the higher education exhibits a vibrant move towards expansion and growth at different levels and locations. Institution building, designing of innovative study programmes and techniques, resource mobilization, use of marketing strategies etc are taking place faster than in the past. The internationalization of higher education is basically the process of presenting exchange activities in education and research of various kinds among universities and institutions in different countries. Full-fledged international exchange in higher education is typically regarded as an activity in the higher education sector; developed on the premise of the existence of a nation after modern states were established in Europe. The major issue is that, few countries dominate global scientific systems, the new technologies are owned primarily by multinational corporations or academic institutions in the major Western industrialized nations, and the domination of English creates advantages for the countries that use English as the medium of instruction and research. All this means that the developing countries find themselves dependent on the major academic superpowers. Globalization and internationalization are now central issues for higher education worldwide. And the resources provide us with a map to navigate the trends in international higher education and the complex relations between academe and society, nationally and globally.
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