

Impact of Internationalization on Quality Assurance in Higher Education Curricula

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ABSTRACT: Higher education has been entered into a modern era characterized by "competition" and "quality". Educational quality is a key factor in Higher Education competition among countries. On the other hand, universities are considered as the main indicator of development in countries and can provide the means of dynamic competition for countries in world Economic. Therefore, the enhancement of international dimension in higher education is the enhancement of country in local and global competitions. This article is a comparative study which uses a qualitative content analysis with inductive category development studying and comparing of different approaches and plans for the Internationalization of curriculum of the higher education (including strategies, programs, activities and methods of teaching and learning) in countries like the United states America, Finland, England and China.

Keywords: Internationalization, Higher education, Curricula, Quality assurance.

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTRODUCTION

There is currently a widespread belief that internationalization should not be regarded as a goal in itself, but rather as a means to improve the quality of education. Many national and institutional policy documents set down quality as one of the major goals of internationalization (Ewell&, 1997). The perceived need for the internationalization of higher education based on diversity entails conditions, weighs on the running of higher education institutions and is correlated with quality assurance. Both, internationalization as well as quality assurance should be considered as a challenge for higher education institutions. Statements on the relationship between internationalization and quality are usually based on the assumption or expectation that international co-operation and the exchange of individual students, teachers or researchers add to the critical mass, allow for mutual learning, for a comparison and synthesis of best approaches and practices, for cross-cultural understanding, for foreign language acquisition, etc. It is at the individual, the project, the institutional and even the system level that this international co-operation and exchange is expected to contribute to the quality of processes and outcomes (Woodhouse, 1996).

According to a general classification, the reasons for internationalization can be summed up in three political, economic and cultural fields. In today's world politically education especially the higher education considered as the fourth aspect of the foreign policy (Air, 1992). Culturally, the most important goal for internationalization of the higher education is to

extend the values and principles of the national culture of the countries to the world community. (De wit, 2002). And, economically, international higher education is the main source of both short-term and long-term income in different countries. In general, universities are considered as the main measure of progress in a country and provide the basis for the dynamic competition of a country in the region and in the world. Thus, strengthening the international aspect of higher education is the strengthening of a country in the regional and international competitions too. The objective of the present research is to study and compare strategies, plans and activities which are suitable for the internationalization of the curriculums, teaching and learning methods of higher education in countries such as the United States America, Finland, England and China.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is a comparative study which uses a qualitative content analysis with inductive category development. It includes techniques for analyzing and comparing systematic contexts, organizing the results, the observations, the interviews and the contexts. In the inductive category development the attitudes and findings are studied at first, and then final conclusion is made. (Miring, 2000). Thus, the data is primarily extracted and gathered through search motors of Google, yahoo, AltaVista, Google scholar, find article, written and electronic library sources sending e-mails, and the data basis for the internationalization of higher education curriculum in the selected countries.

After reviewing the literature of the research in the universities of selected countries, the strategies, plans and activities of these countries, including the U.S, Finland, England, and China. For the Internationalization of the higher education and learning and teaching methods have been compared and analyzed and finally the each one conclusion has been presented in the tables.

RESULTS

Internationalization and quality assurance of higher education curriculum in the United States of America: Internationalizing the Curriculum:

Internationalization now appears to have become a robust trend both in American higher education and in the higher education systems of other countries (Cornwell & Stoddard, 1999; Altbach, 2002; Green & Barblan, 2004). Qiang (2003) observes that the internationalization of education is necessary for quality assurance in higher education and preparing college graduates who comprehend the globalization of societies, economic and labor

markets. He further states that these contingencies demand not only specific types of knowledge but also "multilingualism and social and intercultural skills and attitudes".

Internationalizing the curriculum appeared to present a feasible and logical first step toward internationalization in American higher education, one that would conceivably impact student learning for the largest number of students (Green and Olson 2003).

Among all the elements of an internationalized campus, the curriculum stands out as the key part of any internationalization effort if all students are to experience international learning in colleges (Siaya & Hayward, 2003). Internationalization of the curriculum is indeed the 'heart of the matter.' It is the principal mechanism that institutions can use to shape student learning and, ideally, to provide a series of mutually reinforcing learning opportunities. Such opportunities will allow students to develop a nuanced understanding of the place that their own cultures and assumptions occupy in the larger global context. Internationalizing the curriculum is a complex task, requiring attention to general education, the major and pedagogy.

Table 1. Internationalization of higher education curriculum in the United States of America

Strategy	Programs	Activity
Improving student learning by internationalization of the curriculum	Creation of new courses focusing on internationalization	Incorporate international learning into the general education curriculum
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Creation of honors and independent study courses •Recruitment of international faculty •Universal student reading list on international themes •Adoption of textbooks with international content •Development and implementation of international modules to be incorporated into existing courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Infuse the disciplines with international perspectives and content •Use comparative educational approaches •Discuss international issues in courses and through interdisciplinary studies

Internationalization of higher education curriculum in universities Finland: International interaction:

The internationalization of education became a central goal of educational policy in Finland, mainly at the end of the 1980s. This was of course affected by the changes that occurred in Finland's international position at that time, in particular its involvement in the European integration process.

Participation in the integration process called for a great upsurge in international activity throughout the educational system, and especially in higher education. This was the result of rapid, large-scale changes in the need for expertise because the opening of Finland's rather closed society and economy to international cooperation and competition required a profound transformation of established practices (Ministry of education 2001).

High international quality and increased efficiency are the main goals set out for universities

and polytechnics in documents on educational policy. International interaction is seen as an essential factor for the quality of education. Higher education should also provide those who complete degrees with the ability to work on the international labor market. Higher education in Finland is extensive and diverse, and the network covers the entire country. The extent of the network is adequate to ensure regional development and equality (Kwiek 2001).

Kappler (2008) states " international activities at the University of Helsinki are manifested especially through international cooperation in research; researcher, teacher and student exchanges; the widespread use of English as language of instruction; publishing in international journals and series; and the wide-ranging linguistic abilities of both teachers and students, along with their active participation in international co-operation projects. The mission of the University of Helsinki is defined by law: "The University is charged with promoting independent academic

research and scientific knowledge, providing the highest quality instruction based on research, and

educating young people to serve their country and humankind.

Table 2. Internationalization and quality assurance of higher education curriculum in Finland

Strategy	Program	Activities
International interaction	<p>Promote high quality research and education of researchers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop teaching and its assessment. • Promote international activities through enhancement of interaction and by taking advantage of international research funds. Increase interdisciplinary co-operation in research and teaching. • Promote the university's impact on the external community. 	<p>Student exchange</p> <p>Trainee exchanges</p> <p>Teacher exchange</p> <p>Awarding double degree</p> <p>Postgraduate and research cooperation</p> <p>Quality</p> <p>Degree structure</p> <p>Instruction in foreign languages, teaching Finnish</p>

Internationalization of higher education curriculum in universities England: International students

The economic impact of international student recruitment in UK higher education has been of major concern to strategists and managers across the sector since at least the 1990s (Leonard & Morley, 2004). The quality of the student experience has become a consideration, 'branding' is to become the 'common platform' for all international activities of UK HEIs, rather than a recruitment tool and a need for greater understanding of the countries in which UK institutions operate is articulated given the focus on

promoting strategic partnerships and alliances with 'priority countries' (Caruana & Spurling 2006). Seemingly, international education, rather than international student recruitment, is the new focus in UK HE policy terms. Nonetheless, whilst benchmarking studies and sharing of best practice are promoted as mechanisms to improve the student experience and the need to consider work placement and employment issues vis-à-vis the international student experience are apparent, the rhetoric of the marketplace prevails (Morrison, Merrick & Le Metais, 2005). Perhaps it would be grossly naïve to assume otherwise, in the context of the globalized world.

Table 3. Internationalization and quality assurance of higher education curriculum in England

Strategy	Program	Activities
Internationalizing the Curriculum'	<p>Key conceptual frameworks, policy, strategic management and development in the field; evidence-informed and practice-based research</p> <p>Specific areas of interest</p>	<p>Curriculum innovation and evaluation</p> <p>international collaboration and exchange, the international dimension of on-line learning communities and 'internationalization at home' embedding intercultural learning in the curriculum.</p>
The experiences of international students	<p>International student adjustment and support</p> <p>International students' expectations/motivations, studies related to recruitment, students' experiences of teaching and learning</p>	<p>Academic skills, psychosocial, English language</p> <p>Coping in lectures, teamwork, learning styles, coping with assessments studies of home/international student relations and the views of home students on internationalization</p>

Internationalization of higher education curriculum in universities China: Economic reforms

In general, driving forces for the internationalization of higher education in China since the latter part of the 1970s are concerned with those related to economic reforms, higher education reforms, challenges from economic, political and cultural globalization, and in particular changes in higher education associated with China's membership of the WTO (Fuato Huang, 2005).

The internationalization of higher education in China was essentially motivated by a desire for realizing "the four modernizations" (modernizations of industry, agriculture, defense and science & technology) through implementation of economic reforms.

Improvement of academic standards and enhancement of the quality of education and research in light of those of advanced Western countries and international standards, have become another strong driving force to promote internationalization in China (China Education Yearbook Editorial Board, 2004)

Table 4. Internationalization and quality assurance of higher education curriculum in China

Strategy	Program	Activities
Economic reforms	Study abroad, The integration of international dimension into university teaching and learning, Provision of transnational programs in cooperation with foreign institutional partners in Chinese universities.	Dispatching abroad Chinese students and members of faculty for advanced studies or research and attracting foreign students Introducing foreign textbooks and references and development of both English programs and bilingual programs (Chinese and English)

DISCUSSION

If the countries businesses are to survive and prosper in a global economy they must have managers who are comfortable working with foreign executives and living in foreign cultures. If world peace is to be an achievable goal, people of different races, religions and languages must interact with a tolerance and appreciation of diversity. The need to understand other people and to coexist and compete with them require an international dimension in a student's academic experience. "Internationalizing a college or university means internationalizing each individual. A college or university education should provide each student with a broader, deeper appreciation for other cultures and peoples. Internationalizing is not an add-on programs; it is an attitude. Educated professional in an interdependent world must, throughout his or her lifetime, work at understanding the many and diverse components of that world. These educational goals are accomplished through internationalized curricula and faculty, study abroad programmed and study tours, faculty and student exchanges, and aided by the presence of an international student body.

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