

Internationalization of Higher Education from the Perspective of Educational Leadership

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Abstract

This paper explores the global dimension of higher education more specifically having special focus towards leadership in educational environment, concentrates to learn leadership practices of educational leaders throughout the world. This research has been conducted to assess the significance of international aspect of higher education specifically from the perspective of educational leadership. The research design that has been followed by this research study is qualitative design hence the researcher has collected data accordingly. Qualitative research has allowed the research to conduct a comprehensive examination of the problem. The researcher has selected secondary method for the collection of data for the purpose of obtaining the information. The researchers reviewed previous researches, case studies, journal articles, and books from the perspective of educational leadership. It was concluded that internationalization of higher education is important with respect to several economic, political, social, and cultural reasons. Further, the most successful higher education institutes that have internationalized are the ones that nurtured institutional leaders who tend to contemplate globally perspective in their thinking and support internationalization by actively working with other players of the institute.

Keywords: Internationalization, Higher Education, Higher Education Institutes, Educational Leadership

Introduction

In the improvement of higher education, internationalization has a fundamental role to play. It is an issue which also holds several question marks and gaps with respect to its meaning, historical dimension, strategic aspects, and its relationship with the society (Sullivan, 2011). The fundamental objective of this research study is to analyse the significant of internationalization in higher education from the perspective of educational leadership. There are a number of

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researches which have been carried out regarding the internationalization of higher education however, there is little to know about the institutional plans (De Wit, 2017). Over the last several decades, the amount of research regarding this topic has significantly expanded. This research has been carried out to expand on the results available regarding the need of internationalization in higher education. The institutes of higher education globally are unremittingly seeking for strategies in order to cope up with the changing environment and dynamics of the 21st Century (Yemini & Sagie, 2016). The traditional way in which the education was delivered by the higher education institutes has been challenged by increased use of technologies, developing interdependence of economies, and the increased mobility of individuals (Sullivan, 2011). The fundamental approach that is used by the institutes to respond to the aforementioned problems is by providing focus on integrating global, international, and intercultural elements with the delivery and outcome of education. This process is also known as internationalisation.

According to the research carried out by Larsen and Haque (2016) one research area which has not yet been explored fully is the viewpoint of leaders belonging to the higher education department regarding their individual pledges to internationalize their institutions. This topic is of a unusual nature because the evidence has pointed out that the most important catalyst in terms of inculcating internationalization at an institutional level is from the leaders of the institutes. Hence, this study has provided a focus towards understanding the perspective of educational leaders regarding internationalization of higher education.

Literature Review

Educational leadership is suggested to prevent any unethical issues and keeps control of the cultural diversity that lies within the parameters of internationalisation of higher education (Lumby & Foskett, 2016).

Internationalisation of Higher Education

In accordance to Renc-Roe and Roxå (2014) internationalisation of higher education institutions has been a major subject of research for the last 20 years. Internationalisation of higher education can be termed as the process in which individuals are motivated to travel to another state for the purpose of achieving better education and in order to conduct academic research. It brings about cultural shifts since it is likely

to suggest that one culture meets the other. The basic meaning of internationalisation as suggested by Renc-Roe and Roxå (2014) is implementing a high quality international educational perspective with the association of intercultural dimensions into studies, researches and the services provided by the secondary educational institutes. The analysis of the term internationalisation suggests that it is likely to follow a global perspective or is considered to promote activities which are highly related to globalisation. Further shedding light on the topic, in accordance to Lumby and Foskett (2016) despite the on-going global financial crises, there has been a rise in the trends for students to obtain higher education in foreign countries. There are however a few factors that must be outlined which are likely able to motivate students in order to obtain international education. One major motivation for students to obtain international education is due to the fact that international institutions possess good reputation and provide relatively good quality academics and research (Lumby & Foskett, 2016). Another reason being proposed for the increase of internationalisation is due to the fact that local universities have agreements which are likely to send potential and capable students abroad.

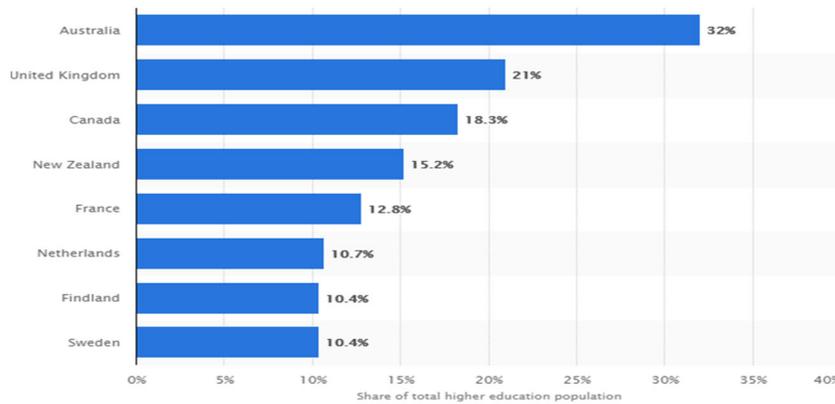


Figure 1: Countries with the largest amount of international students Source: Statista (2018)

The above graph represents the states most visited by international students in the year 2018. Observing the graph, it can be suggested that Australia has had the greatest share of international students visiting to pursue higher education. In accordance to the (2018) it is important to bring up the fact that the American University of

Sharjah in UAE is considered to have 83.8 per cent of the total international students. However, it is important to say that internationalisation of higher education is considered to play an important role in the recruitment of foreign students.

Educational Leadership

Different experts have developed consensus on the effectiveness of transformational leadership that has positive influence on students (Egekvist *et al.*, 2017). Further according to Larsen and Al-Haque (2016) educational leaders are known to play a critical role in the promotion of internationalisation of higher education. Further, its' imperative to take into consideration the complexities in modern education, leaders must adapt to think from a global perspective since they are required to create intercultural linkages and forging strong university partnerships (Larsen & Al-Haque, 2016; Murray *et al.*, 2014). It can greatly help students for their future careers since they will be more likely to come up with new business opportunities for themselves. However, it is also important to suggest that educational leaders are supposed to sharpen the skills of the individuals in order to meet the needs and demands of international institutions.

Barriers to Internationalisation of Higher Education

So far the major aspects of internationalisation of higher education have been discussed in the literature, however it is important to considers the barriers faced by the internationalisation of the higher education. One of the major threats faced by the internationalisation of the higher education is from the economic crises which arise in countries. Taking example of European states such as Greece, Romania, Hungary and Poland which are threatened by poverty and unemployment, they are facing serious issues regarding internationalisations. It is viable to understand that international students keep on pouring in and are likely to take advantage of the jobs provided rather than the locals (Asderaki, & Maragos, 2012). There has been a significant number of reductions of the rights provided to foreign students by the European states that were previously provide by many social welfare organisations in the post war part of Europe. As suggested by Asderaki, and Maragos, (2012) it can be stated that educational sector is impervious to change.

Furthermore, multicultural classrooms may lead to cultural conflicts amongst the students since pupils will hold separate beliefs on similar topics. According to Theodoridis (2015) the number of

international student enrolment has doubled since 2000 to 2012. The teachers at international institutions must ensure that the concepts that they are explaining must be aligned to the cultural backgrounds of the students. It is also important to indicate that the teaching styles and course contents are not related to creating discrepancies amongst pupils.

Impact of Internationalisation of Higher Education on Educational leadership

As suggested earlier, educational leadership is considered to promote internationalisation of higher education. In other sense it is vital to suggest that since the rise of globalisation, there has also been a significant rise of students that have been travelling abroad in order to gain higher education (Smithee, 2012). The relative rise of foreign students in the classroom has led to rise in students of different cultural backgrounds which make it important for educational leaders to change their approach of teaching and formulate teaching practices that are culturally diverse.

Internationalisation of higher education calls upon teachers to understand the ethical codes that must be followed by the teachers in the classroom. Educational leaders must be trained and able enough to better explain the concepts so that they are easily understood by the pupils in the classroom. Moreover, it is important to suggest that strong leadership must be adopted in order to cope with the changing trends in the international educational institutions (Green & Ferguson, 2011). Furthermore, it is imperative to understand the impression of globalisation to identify the potential impact on educational leaders that they are highly required to constantly improve their teaching methods.

Research Methodology

From the analysis within the introduction as well as the literature review that has been stated in the previous part the research methodology selected is qualitative research. Considering the aforementioned aspects of the methodology, the researcher has selected secondary data collection method for the purpose of obtaining the information. The research instrument that is used for collection of information for this research paper includes: previous researches, case studies, journal articles, and books. Information is extracted from different research instruments pertaining to the specific aim and objectives of this study. The data analysis approach that has been used by the research is content analysis. Overall, this data analysis technique has allowed the researcher to ascertain the aim in an efficient manner.

Results

Critical Evaluation of Significance of Internationalization in Higher Education

From the findings of the research conducted by Albach (2015) stated that higher education leaders tend to strive for the internationalization of their institutes for different reasons such as: social, economic, cultural, academic, and political. According to the findings of the research conducted by Green (2003) and (Brandenburg & De Wit, 2015) the economic reason behind the internationalization of the higher education institutes is to get the students ready for national and international careers in different domains in order to be competitive in international market as well as to contribute towards economic development and competitiveness. Contrary to this, it has been found that the political agenda for internationalization of higher education institutes is to prepare the students in their knowledge regarding different cultures and societies outside their own nations.

Likewise, the findings of Lim (2003) showed the academic rationales eliciting the internationalization of the higher education institutes is that it allows the students to attain knowledgeable and diverse worldview along with being able to comprehend the international dimensions of their field of study. Moreover, the findings of Sullivan (2011) have also showed that internationalization of HEI tends to allow the students to be able to develop global and critical thinking skills. The results of the research carried out by Deardorff (2006) have highlighted the socioeconomic rationales for the need of internationalization. The results of the research have stated that internationalization of HEI helps the students in terms of developing necessary communication skills in order to collaborate with people from different cultures.

Assessment of Educational leadership in Internationalization of Higher Education:

This section draws upon the findings from limited secondary resources. According to the findings of Smithee (2012) leaders in higher education are considered to be one of the most important facilitators with regard to encouraging the internationalization agendas for the higher educational institutes. From the analysis of the existing studies that have been conducted regarding higher education and internationalization, it has been observed that most of the work is related to skills and

competencies of the educational leaders in advancing the higher education internationalization agendas (Turner & Robson, 2008).

According to the findings of Rizvi (2014), considering the fact that internationalization is a complicated process educational leadership is required to be strong and staunch for the purpose of supporting the internationalization process. In similar manner, the findings of the research conducted by Heyl and Tullbane (2012) have concluded that the higher education leaders are required to develop intercultural skills, self-knowledge regarding their competencies, and cross-cultural skills for the purpose of working efficiently with people that come from diverse backgrounds. It has been pointed out by Simon (2014) that successful internationalization in the higher education should be considered as 'team responsibility' or set of 'collective action' (Bogotch & Maslin-Ostrowski 2010). From the critical analysis of the findings of previous researches it has been found that the most successful higher education institutes that have been internationalized are the ones who are blessed with leaders who tend to think globally and support internationalization by dynamically working with other players of the institute. However, it has been found from secondary information that there are no researches which have been carried out with respect to the way in which HIE leaders distinguish their position with respect to internationalization.

Enabling Factors and Hindering Factors in Internationalization of Higher Education

The research carried out by Albach and Knight (2007) one of the major factor that contributed significantly towards the development of internationalization of higher education is the support from leaders of the institute such as chancellors and directors. Similarly, the findings of the research carried out by Qiang (2003) have revealed that if the trustees of the educational institutes are encouraging towards the entire process such as provision of funds then the development of implementation of the internationalisation is carried out efficiently. Conclusively the results of the aforementioned researches have pointed out that if the chancellor or leader of the educational institute has a personal investment in the process of internationalization then they are more encouraging. In order to facilitate the development and implementation of the internationalization programme, a taskforce is an important aspect that contributes positively towards the success of the plans. It has been found by the research carried out by De Wit (2002) that a specialised taskforce helps in terms of facilitating the involvement of faculty throughout the

plan. However, it is important to note that the aforementioned factors are internal in nature. There are also certain external stimuli that are found to be influential in terms of enabling the development and implementation of internationalization of higher education.

Regardless of the fact that enabling factors are important in internationalization of higher education, there are also certain internal and external factors that act as hinderers that impact the development and implementation of internationalization of higher education. The findings of the research by Brandenburg and De Wit (2015) have indicated that a decentralised organizational structure is an obstacle in developing internationalization programs. Further, De Wit (2017) concluded that lack of senior leadership is a major obstacle that can hinder the plans of internationalisation for a higher education institute. Thus, the above findings suggest that the educational institutes and bodies need to focus on decreasing the hindering factors and encouraging the favourable factors.

Conclusion

The internationalisation of higher education has been the primary fuel to the increasing globalisation. It was noted that by incorporating internationalisation in academia, the productivity among the students significantly increases due to the diversity they face in their learning environment. In addition to this, it can also be concluded that higher education institutions tend towards internationalisation because of the fact that students are exposed to advanced academic, cultural, social and political studies of different countries. Furthermore, it can also be deduced from the above discussion that the education institutions opt for internationalisation in order to spread awareness amongst the students regarding the national and international way of competing in different domains. The study put an immense emphasis on this aspect due to the consideration that the globalisation of the world has evolved a dire need for the students to expose themselves to international competition in order to enable themselves to operate effectively and efficiently in the international and national market.

Adding more to the conclusion, it can also be abstracted from the above discussion that the exposure of the students to international politics and foreign policies of different countries could also increase the competency level of students which will ultimately help them to competitively stand amongst the other high potential students. In addition to this, it was also pointed out in the study that the education institutions

which tend to internationalise their institutes are considered to be more efficient than the institutions which do not opt to internationalise as globalisation of world has persuaded students to attain cohesive understanding and knowledge about the happenings of the modern era. Furthermore, it can also be concluded from the above study that the internationalisation of institutions happens gradually and may take decades and the leadership of the educational institutions needs to be very strong in order to successfully function in the international competition.

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