

The internationalization of higher education education essay



This study on the internationalization of higher education pursues this objective. Provide a brief overview of the nature and development of internationalization in the higher education system. This will shed light on relevant concepts and strategies from a global, European and domestic perspective and provide background information for an in-depth analysis of the objectives and organizational measures of studies for foreigners in United States and studies abroad for American students.

Results of the Study

The following overview will give the reader a brief summary of the results of the survey.

Internationalization Strategies

Internationalization of higher education is guided by the ideals of academic universality, the humanitarian objectives of social developmental aid work abroad, and the incentives of securing economic productivity at home. In the age of globalization, international mobility is increasingly used to boost USA's competitiveness as a place to study.

The market orientation of internationalization and the social dimension of international student mobility are two conflicting aspects of higher education that require corrective policies to bring them into balance.

United State's continuous attractiveness as a place to study has to go hand in hand with reforms of the structure of higher education studies and measures to improve the general social conditions of students. The market

orientation of studies for foreigners involves targeting specific groups of students.

SUMMARY

As the number of high school graduates in the United States levels off, the competition for international students is getting fiercer as universities attempt to meet their enrollment goals. U. S. universities however are not competing only with each other, but institutions from other countries as well. Rapidly increasing numbers of students in foreign countries have boosted international mobility, resulting in 2.7 million students who study abroad every year. The main countries of origin for foreign students are China, India and South Korea. Industrial countries are the destination of these mobile students.

Data shows that the U. S. currently has the largest share of international students worldwide; In terms of absolute numbers, the USA is the world's leading host country. Mobile foreign students represent 3.7% of the total student population in the USA. However this market share is decreasing due to increased competition from other countries and a perception that international students are not wanted in the U. S. after more stringent visa policies were instituted in response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 making it much harder to obtain a student visa. Having more international students enrolled in U. S. universities benefits both the universities and the U. S. government, hence there must be a more coordinated effort between the two in order for the U. S. to recoup its lost market share and maintain its rank as the top destination country for international students.

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In this paper I will attempt to show that the current U. S. policy of attracting international students to this country cannot sustain the demand of U. S. universities, nor effectively compete with the policies and efforts of other countries; instead international education, including curricular integration, study abroad and student exchange must be central to a new, USA High Education System Strategic Planning for the 21st century. As a result of this national strategy, the students will need to work successfully and comfortably in multiple cultural contexts with people who hold values and viewpoints which vary significantly; Students will be the future leaders and educators in an environment which increasingly requires an international perspective;

What exactly is the Internationalization of higher education?

Internationalization has become an important issue in the development of higher education. Sven Groennings (1987) describes it as " one of the most powerful substantive development in the history of American higher education" (p/2). It is perceived as one of the laws of motion propelling institutions of higher learning" (Kerr 1990, 5); as " a major theme for the next decade (Davies 1997, 83); and as " one of the most important trends of the last decade" (Teichler 1999, 6), if not of the past half century (Altbach 2000c, 2)

De Wit (2002) uses three terms to highlight the complexity of defining internationalisation, namely international dimension, international education and internationalisation of higher education, each referring to a specific phase of the development. He uses three interrelated arguments in which

(i) he sees the international dimension of higher education, prior to the 20th century as more incidental, than organised;

(ii) states that this international dimension as an organised activity, referred to in general by the term "international education", is a product of the 20th century introduced first mainly in the United States for reasons of foreign policy and national security.

(iii)The third argument is that around the end of the Cold War, this international dimension evolved into strategic processes, referred to as the "internationalisation of higher education" and became increasingly linked to globalisation and regionalisation of our societies and the impact of this on higher education.

He further argues that with the development of globalisation, the international dimension will evolve into an integrated element of higher education and move away from its present position as an isolated set of activities, strategies and processes. This is manifested in a shift in emphasis from more traditional forms of international education to strategies that are more directly related to the core functions of the university, and in a shift in emphasis from political to economic rationales. The implications of these shifts are the increasing importance of quality assessment of internationalisation strategies, the emergence of English as the common language of higher education, the increasing relevance of international networks and strategic alliance, and the gradual acceptance of the internationalisation of higher education as an area of research.

De Wit points out the need to relate the internationalisation of higher education in today's world to the general roots of the university, and to place the present developments in historical perspective. His work (2002) makes a useful contribution to the unfolding of this phenomenon in the European and American higher education systems. Another study (De Wit et al., 2005) examined the internationalisation of higher education in the Latin American context.

Related issues and concepts

It is interesting to take a look at the third Global Survey Report on Internationalization of Higher Education, which was recently released by (IAU 2009). This comprehensive survey is the largest of its kind worldwide, and includes responses from 745 institutions in 115 countries. For purposes of analysis, the results were clustered in the following regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East, and North America (the U. S. and Canada). Even though the survey is on its third edition, it still has limitations which fortunately are acknowledged and explained in the document.

According to this survey, the top five reasons for internationalizing an institution are, in order of importance, to improve student preparedness; internationalize the curriculum; enhance the international profile of the institution; strengthen research and knowledge production; and diversify its faculty and staff. However, when the information is analyzed by regions, interesting variations are found. For instance, both North America and Latin America give much more importance to international preparedness of students than Europe. Interestingly, institutions in Africa consider as the <https://assignbuster.com/the-internationalization-of-higher-education-education-essay/>

more important internationalization rationale, to strengthen research and knowledge production. The Middle East gives the highest importance equally to improving student preparedness and also strengthening research.

Results suggest also that institutions in North America are not bothered with the notion of increasing their international profile. For them, this is placed at a distant fourth level of importance in comparison with, for instance, Europe where it is the second most important rationale. I wonder if this can be explained by some degree of insularity, or a somewhat egocentric perspective of the region's status in the world of higher education.

Surprisingly, all regions gave an extremely low importance to internationalizing the campus with the idea of diversifying sources of income or in response to public policies.

When asked about the most important benefits of internationalization, the top three reasons at the global level listed in order of relevance were: increasing international awareness of students; strengthening research and knowledge production; and fostering international cooperation and solidarity. The only significant difference in this otherwise very consistent pattern was offered in the IAU Survey by institutions in North America for which "international cooperation and solidarity" was not considered as beneficial as it was in the rest of the regions. This factor placed a worrying 5th in North America

Another puzzling finding of the survey has to do with to which geographic region higher-education institutions are turning their eyes for their internationalization work. The aggregate results show that no major shifts

have happened in the last five years. And the winner is ... Europe! (Asia-Pacific region was placed second.) The bronze medal goes to North America. Nevertheless, the analysis by region should be a matter of concern for policymakers in some parts of the world. For instance, in the Asia-Pacific region the first geographic priority for the internationalization policy in the majority of their institutions is - Asia-Pacific, followed by Europe. For European institutions the first priority is placed on Europe itself and the second one on Asia-Pacific. For North America the first priority is Asia-Pacific, followed by Europe. Latin America and the Middle East consider Europe as the key regional priority. Sadly, the only region considering Africa as the principal priority is precisely Africa, but aside from that, none of the regions even consider Africa as a second or third priority.

THE FIELD OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

International education has a somewhat unusual position in higher education. While recognized as an important sphere of activity, it tends to be handled by administrative offices at the top of departments of languages and literature and international affairs. The scholars involved in international education usually have their primary involvement in other teaching and research. This leads to four distinctive characteristics particular to the field of international education:

1. There is little consensus concerning the guiding theme of the field as well as its scope. Should the field stress internationalization, transnationalization, or globalization (Barrows, 2000; Committee for Transnational Competence, 2000; Hilary, 2000)

2. International education is not a prominent feature of the contemporary higher education experience. Using enrollment in foreign languages as an indicator, 16 percent of all U. S. college students were enrolled in foreign languages in the peak period of the 1960s; the proportion is currently down to 8 percent (Hayward, 2000, p. 6).

3. There is imbalance in regional coverage. The regions and languages covered at a particular institution are a function of idiosyncratic patterns of faculty recruitment. Nationally, there is reasonable coverage of Western Europe and Latin America and most European languages compared to limited coverage of Africa and the Middle East. For students enrolled in foreign languages, Spanish is the most popular followed by the other major languages of Western Europe; 6 percent enroll in Asian languages.

Languages of the Middle East make up only 2 percent (1.3 being Hebrew and .5 percent Arabic). The languages of Africa constitute only 0.15 percent of enrollments.

4. Because international education is not a primary concern of most scholars in the field, research is somewhat sporadic, non-cumulative, and tends to be carried out by national organizations as part of advocacy projects (e. g. Lambert, 1989; Brecht and Rivers, 2000). The most recent example is the American Council of Education's (ACE's) Internationalization of Higher Education: A Status Report. (Hayward, 2000).

Historical data

Following the events of September 11, the total number of international students studying in the United States leveled off and even dropped slightly

after 2002, though enrollment numbers have recently rebounded. (See fig. 1.) According to the Institute of International Education (IIE), the decline in the number of international students attending U. S. higher education institutions between 2003 and 2006 was the first drop in over 30 years.

While the United States continues to be the leading destination for international students, the U. S. share of international students worldwide dropped-from 26 to 20 percent between 2000 and 2008.[1](See fig. 2.)

According to the Pew Global Attitudes Project, since 2002 the United States' image has declined in both the Muslim world and among many of America's oldest allies. In the wake of September 11, the United States also tightened its immigration policy and made it more difficult for foreign nationals, including international students, to apply for a visa. As we previously reported, these changes, made to help protect our nation's security interests, may have contributed to our declining share of international students and the perception that the United States was an unwelcoming place for international students. (GAO 2007) The U. S. government seeks to improve global attitudes toward America through diplomatic and development assistance efforts, which include funding higher education for international students in the United States. (GAO, 2008) Nine weeks after September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush said (Bush, 2001):

... We must also reaffirm our commitment to promote educational opportunities that enable American students to study abroad, and to encourage international students to take part in our educational system. By studying foreign cultures and languages and living abroad, we gain a better understanding of the many similarities that we share, and learn to respect

our differences. The relationships that are formed between individuals from different countries, as part of international education programs and exchanges, can also foster goodwill that develops into vibrant, mutually beneficial partnerships among nations. America's leadership and national security rest on our commitment to educate and prepare our youth for active engagement in the international community....

On February 27, 2002, Secretary of State Colin Powell reaffirmed the State Department's support for foreign students:

The Department's policy on student visas is based on the democratic values of an open society and the perception that foreign students make an important contribution to our nation's intellectual and academic climate, as well as to our nation's economy. We must continue to nurture these vital relationships even as we improve the security of our borders. ... American values, including democracy, economic freedom, and individual rights, draw students from many nations. As these students and scholars from other countries gain from our society and academic institutions, they also serve as resources for our campuses and communities, helping our citizens to develop the international understanding needed to strengthen our long-term national security and enhance our economic competitiveness. The professional partnerships and lifelong friendships that are created through international education are important for a secure, prosperous future, not only for our own country but also for the world as a whole.

The New York Times, in a September 24, 2002, editorial, suggested that our efforts to spread our influence and understanding of our culture should be

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stepped up, not abandoned. Cautioning that government policies must not impede legitimate exchange, the editorial said, " Higher education is one of the best methods we have of spreading the word about who we are and of exposing our citizens to non-Americans. Bringing foreign students onto our campuses is among the best favors we can do ourselves."

While the federal government provides funds for the education for international students to achieve public diplomacy and development objectives, the vast majority of students who come to the United States to study do not receive funding from the U. S. government. According to the Institute of International Education's Open Doors 2008 report, 623, 805 students came to the United States to study during the 2007-2008 academic year and nearly 9 out of 10 international students reported their primary source of funding for education as coming from either personal and family sources or from their host college or university in the United States.

Who are the main players in the international market for students?

In order to have a genuine perspective on the reality of the competitors that the U. S higher education institutions face, it is useful to have a look at what the international outlook has in store. According to the Institute of International Education, the number of international students in U. S. higher education institutions has increased in most years since 1955. According to IIE's Open Doors 2002, the authoritative source of data on international student enrollment for academic year 2001-2002,

" This year's 6.4 percent increase in international student enrollment in U. S. colleges and universities equals last year's increase, which was the largest increase in the past 20 years. This continues a trend of substantial growth in foreign student enrollments that began in 1997, after a four-year period of minimal growth."

It is quite evident that although the absolute numbers are increasing, U. S. market share is decreasing. According to IIE, the U. S. share of internationally mobile students-the proportion of all international students who select the United States for study-declined by almost ten percent from 1982 to 1995, the last year that IIE did the calculation (39.2 to 30.2 percent). In itself, that is not an alarming statistic. U. S. market share is still healthy, and the argument could be made that our nearly 40 percent market share was unsustainable. It is what lies behind that statistic that is alarming.

Merely the existence of fiercer competition is not the only reason for the declination of U. S. market share. at least two other factor can be noted. First, it is reflects aggressive recruitment efforts by the competitors of the USA-the usual suspects, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany and more recently China and others-who have determined that they want to reap more of the foreign policy, economic, and educational benefits those international students bring. Combined with the distinctive absence of such a conclusion on the part of the United States, which apparently assumes that international students will always come because they always have such complacency risks the loss of this country's leadership in international education, with the accompanying negative ramifications for our security, foreign policy, and economy.

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Second, the declination U. S. market share does not appear to reflect any decline in international demand for U. S. higher education. Demand is still strong. The problem is access. While competing nations seek to remove disincentives to study in their countries, U. S. policy ignores-and sometimes exacerbates-the disincentives to study here. The problem lies not in the internationally popular product, nor in the highly motivated customer, but rather in market imperfections that keep the two from finding each other. Those imperfections are all subject to the control or the influence of American public officials. If they continue to ignore these factors, the market share that the American high education currently enjoys, will continue to be eroded out to the competition.

Ultimately, what's wrong with this picture is the absence of a strategy to sustain the number of foreign students coming to the USA. For a generation after World War II, the United States had a strategy of promoting international student exchange as a means of waging the Cold War and promoting international peace. But now more than ever, the U. S. government seems to lack overall strategic sense of why exchange is important-and, therefore, of what U. S. interests are at risk by not continuing to foster exchanges. In this strategic vacuum,

At the most basic-and encouraging-level, the problem is not one of weakness. The United States has every resource it needs to be successful in attracting international students-and, indeed, has been successful at it. The United States has more higher education capacity than our major competitors combined, the high quality of U. S. higher education is universally recognized, and the United States is a magnet for many
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throughout the world. The problem is not how to make the United States and its higher education system more attractive, but how to make them more accessible.

A strategic plan is needed to address them. The principal barriers to access are:

- (1) The absence of a proactive, coordinated effort to recruit international students;
- (2) Burdensome U. S. government regulations, which often effectively cancel out recruitment efforts.
- (3) The cost of U. S. higher education,
- (4) The complexity of American higher education system.

All of important powers have historically used education for international students as a tool to advance diplomatic, development, economic, and other objectives, often simultaneously.

In the survey of GOA 2009 titled " HIGHER EDUCATION Approaches to Attract and Fund International Students in the United States and Abroad" (GOA 2009), the approaches of several countries have been analyzed.

For example, Australian officials said that international higher education helps Australia achieve economic goals. Education was Australia's third largest export and contributed \$15. 5 billion in Australian dollars (about \$13

billion in U. S. dollars) to its economy in 2008. International students also help Australia meet its foreign relations and diplomatic goals.

According to Chinese officials, providing international educational opportunities to foreign students is part of their strategy for promoting cultural, scientific, and technological exchanges between the East and the West. China develops exchanges with other countries in the fields of education, science, and technology to strengthen friendship and understanding between the Chinese people and people around the world and to promote modernization in China. China reported that its collaboration with foreign universities and educational institutions helps to develop an exchange network that allows it to send " the best students to study in the best universities under the supervision of the best advisers," mutually benefiting institutions and countries.

Officials from Germany's national agency that supports international education, stated in the GOA report that international students help Germany advance several goals, including increasing the international appeal of German universities and promoting the academic, economic, and democratic development of developing countries. German officials said that their ability to advance several goals simultaneously is an important strength of international education. For example, international students studying in science and technology help advance German research and innovation goals while also advancing public diplomacy goals by returning to their home countries as unofficial ambassadors for Germany.

Officials in the United Kingdom (UK) reported that international education contributes to building a high-skilled workforce, helps build relationships with people from around the world, enhances understanding about each others' cultures, and opens doors to trade, investment, and political influence. The European Union (EU) also seeks to advance several international education goals, including promoting intercultural understanding through cooperation with non-European countries as well as ensuring that education and training are accessible to the global community.

To promote their higher education systems internationally, countries like the United Kingdom, Germany, and Australia have developed broad marketing strategies with a focus on outreach to international students. These marketing strategies include developing a national brand through the use of logos and slogans to promote higher education systems among international communities, much as a corporation would promote a commercial brand, as shown in figure 3.

The financial outlook.

Internationalization of higher education is good business for the U. S. economy. While this is not in the most important reason for reaching out to such students, it is nevertheless one the basic driving force leading competitor countries to adopt proactive strategies for attracting them. NAFSA (Association of International Educators) estimates that international students and their dependents spent nearly \$18. 78 billion in the U. S. economy in the 2009-2010 academic year, which makes international education a significant U. S. service-sector export. (NAFSA 2003) This economic benefit is shared by schools, communities, states, and the U. S. <https://assignbuster.com/the-internationalization-of-higher-education-education-essay/>

economy as a whole. According to the Institute of International Education, more than 70 percent of undergraduate international students pay full tuition and receive no financial aid, thus allowing schools to offer more financial assistance to American students.

The Statistical Analysis of The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States for the 2007-2010 Academic Years estimates that foreign students and their dependents contributed approximately \$15.54 billion to the U. S. economy during the 2007-2008 academic year; approximately \$17.6 billion to the U. S. economy during the 2008-2009 academic year; And approximately \$18.78 billion to the U. S. economy during the 2009-2010 academic year.

Every higher education institution has more or less received ample financial benefits. For example at New York's Columbia University, international students accounted for 21 percent, or about 7,000, of the student body in the 2008-2009 school year. These students funneled almost \$250 million to Columbia in tuition and living expenses, according to a report by its international student office. (Laya 2010). At South Florida University for example in-state U. S. citizens pursuing undergraduate studies pay \$5,100 in tuition annually, out-of-state students; including those from foreign countries, pay about \$15,900, more than three times as much. (Fischer 2010. Chronicle of Higher Education) For schools like South Florida, increasing the number of international students also means increased revenue.

But this is not the only benefit that international students bring. United States has relied on undergraduate and graduate students from other countries as important sources of innovation and productivity in our increasingly knowledge-based economy. Such students who remain in the country after completing their studies have brought needed research and workforce skills and strengthened our labor force. For example, international students have earned about one-third or more of the degrees at both the master's and doctoral levels in engineering, math and computer science, and the physical sciences. Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, says U. S. visa curbs on immigrants with special skills in science, math or technology must be overhauled." If we don't, American companies simply will not have the talent to innovate and compete," Gates said in testimony to the House Committee on Science and Technology on March 12, 2008. (Laya 2010). In addition, U. S.-educated students take home preferences for American products, and business students in particular take home an education in U. S. business practices. By any measure, international education makes a significant contribution to the U. S. economy.

Is there a correlation between the role nations to play in the international scene and the internationalization of their universities?

Our ability to relate to and interact with those whose cultural backgrounds differ from our own will be among the determining factors for the future of our societies. For most people, regardless of whether they aim for international careers or life in their local communities, intercultural dialogue will become a fact of life rather than an option. Education will need to play a

key role in developing the ability to conduct intercultural dialogue, which is an integral part of developing democratic culture.

A panel of leading experts in national security, higher education, and foreign policy made a strong case for the need to place international education at the heart of America's public diplomacy efforts, at a policy forum November 16, 2006. The speakers were Dr. Joseph S. Nye, Distinguished Service Professor at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University; Ambassador Cresencio Arcos, Director of International Affairs at the U. S. Department of Homeland Security; Sanford J. Ungar, President of Goucher College; and the Honorable Jim Kolbe, United States Congressman (R-Ariz.). (NAFSA 2005)

Joseph Nye stated that " the presence of foreign students in American universities is a tremendous resource for American 'soft power.'" He told a story about the influence of educational exchanges on reform and dissident elements in the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and noted that while hard power is necessary, " it is [also] essential to get our story out, and the best way to [do that] in terms of winning hearts and minds, the best emissaries are really people who have been [to] American universities and return home." Nye acknowledged improvement in the visa process but said " we have quite a long way to go" to ensure that we keep the doors open and remain an attractive destination for international students.

Goucher College President Sanford J. Ungar focused his remarks on the importance of promoting study abroad among American college students. Goucher recently instituted a new policy that requires all of its students to

study abroad before graduation. (...) Ungar stressed that the international education of today's students must be " an urgent matter of public policy" and an important component of public diplomacy.

Representative Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.), the final panelist, (...) spoke specifically about his efforts and those of Congressman Jim Oberstar (D-Minn.) to urge the establishment of an international education policy for the United States, most recently through their introduction of House Concurrent Resolution 100. Tying together the comments of the other panelists, Kolbe said: " We can't lead in a world that the American people don't understand...We can't have a successful foreign policy with out internationally educated and aware citizens who support that foreign policy and who understand, relate and interact with the people of all countries that we are engaged with. And... a successful foreign policy depends on our being able to educate future leaders from around the world about our way of life, our system of government, our culture, our political sy