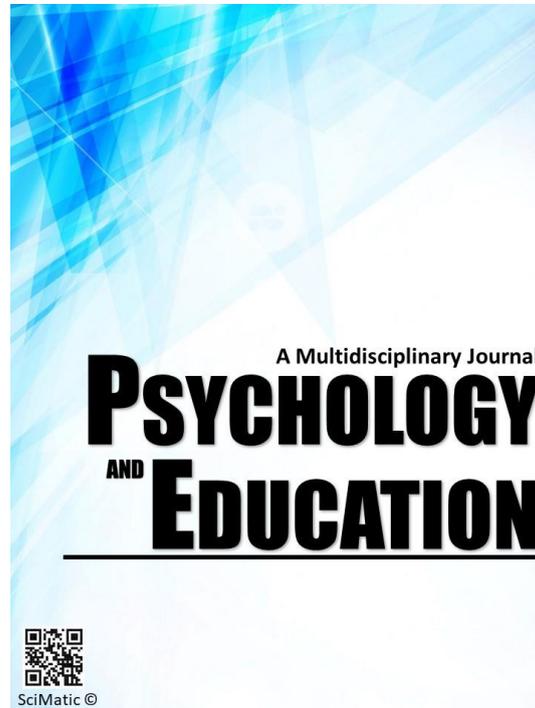


INTERNATIONALIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS



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Internationalization in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Institutional internationalization is increasingly becoming a profitable strategy used by colleges and universities to respond to the transformative effects of globalization in higher education. As educational institutions begin to put greater emphasis on the dimension of their academic and organizational programming, it becomes important that they strategize the best possible planning practices to ensure systematic, continuous, and sustainable initiatives. This study aimed to identify and measure the internationalization initiatives of Higher Education Institutions in Baguio and Benguet. In light of the findings of the study, the following are the conclusions: The HEIs are initiating internationalization initiatives both in Academic Programs and Organization Strategies to catch up with the growing demands of internationalization. The HEIs understand the paramount importance of internationalization in their campuses in terms of Social/Cultural, Political, Economic and Academic aspects. The institutions face difficulties encountered in the implementation of internationalization initiatives in terms of Student, Faculty and Staff Mobility, Internationalizing Curricula, Research Collaborations, International Networks, International Distance Education and International Quality Assurance Systems.

Keywords: *higher education institutions, institutional internationalization, globalization*

Introduction

Institutional internationalization is increasingly becoming a profitable strategy used by colleges and universities to respond to the transformative effects of globalization in higher education. As educational institutions begin to put greater emphasis on the dimension of their academic and organizational programming, it becomes important that they strategize the best possible planning practices to ensure systematic, continuous and sustainable initiatives. To meet these, institutions explore alternative strategies and approaches to funding to meet actual and potential budget shortfalls (Livingstone, 2005). Some institutions offer online courses, recruiting international students, opening branch campuses in other countries, privatizing services, and tightening fiscal management (Johnstone; Livingston; van der Wende).

Consequently, Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have begun promoting the exportation of the product of education beyond national geographic borders for the sake of sustainability, economic competitiveness, and relevance in the marketplace. Additionally, forces of globalization triggered by advances in technology, communications, and transportation are severely impacting the technical core of institutions and dictating instructional content, determining delivery mode and constricting academic support services (Vaira, 2004). Given these circumstances, higher

education institutions are employing different initiatives in their attempt to overcome the pressures of globalization. According to Bruce (2009): Most colleges and universities continue to struggle to find a place in the globalized environment. In order to address this financial pressure, a diversification of sources of income is proposed for which reason campus internationalization opportunities have surfaced as a viable strategy (de Wit, 2002).

Scholars agreed that the term “internationalization” involves a large scope of services and activities conducted at, and by, colleges and universities to respond to the pressures of globalization (Burnett & Huisman, 2010). For this study, internationalization will be used as the preferred term to all aspects of college or university initiatives that deal with international education in the areas of teaching, research and service to successfully engage in and meet the challenges of globalization. In a similar study, Belizar (2013) mentioned that with the ongoing developments, the acquisition of higher order thinking skills or otherwise known as 21st century skills such as life and career skills, ICT skill, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills and communication skills become the main thrusts of the educational system.

The activity of higher education and training has become one of the prime movers of development. In effect, higher education and training has become the key agents of global change and in their hands come the responsibility of developing competitive graduates needed by the knowledge-based economy. Still, as



cited by Belizar (2013), Dunn and Nilan (2007) identified the upward credentialing of the labor market as rationale for internationalization. This has led higher education to be within the reach of the masses.

Belizar (2013) further added that the demand for tertiary education everywhere drove the creation of many more HEIs that rapidly enrolled large number of students. With the advent of technological advancement, employer expectations of skilled graduates have placed more pressure on HEIs to stay abreast of innovative professional education in specific fields and to develop best practice curricula and pedagogy towards global competitiveness. Over the years, the Philippine Higher Education Institutions have become more internationally focused by investing more time and resources into modifying their missions and restructuring operations to promote the internationalization agenda on their campuses. While studies on higher education internationalization have provided organizational strategies and frameworks regarding best practices for internationalizing institutions, the study involving higher education institutions in Baguio and Benguet has not been included.

In fact, many colleges and universities in CAR grapple with how to internationalize an effective international education program. The level of internationalization initiatives continues to vary from little engagement to highly strategized program planning from among the HEIs. This shows that there is still a fertile ground for research activities in the Cordilleras that involves the study of internationalization because it only few have started their internationalization initiatives. Belizar (2013) has stated that studies conducted on internationalization included only the Big Four universities like the University of Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University and University of Sto. Tomas.

Considering this scenario, this prompted the researcher to look into the perceptions of the institutions on how far they have internationalized their campuses as they move towards excellence. The researcher finds it timely and relevant to study and evaluate the internationalization programs of higher education institutions in Baguio and Benguet since it has been very recent that CHED has released its Policy Framework for Internationalization through CMO No. 55, S. 2016.

Given the current relevance of the issue of higher education internationalization in the country, the outcomes of this study will have theoretical and

practical implications for a spectrum of entities in higher education. In addition to strengthening the body of literature, outcomes should provide valuable insights to higher education practitioners, particularly those involved in international education decision making, regarding optimizing the available initiatives to lead change and also, to systematize internationalization. Institutions who will participate in this study will be interested in ascertaining whether their initiatives played a significant role in their internationalization.

Furthermore, the results of this research should enhance their strategies in meeting or surpassing government expectations and level of accreditation which is a key towards a quality – assurance system and internationalization of Philippine Higher Education for them to advance national interest of sustaining the country’s global and international educational prominence and to prepare its citizens to function proficiently in an increasingly pluralistic society.

Ultimately, it is the expectation of the researcher that findings in this study may offer insights to the HEIs on the importance of having a development plan which may be used in enhancing the implementation of internationalization initiatives. In addition, the researcher seeks to identify best practices that may be shared to other institutions based on the data and analysis gathered from the HEIs that had notably been successful in its internationalization process. Further findings would challenge all stakeholders to work better and improve their internationalization programs.

Research Questions

The main aim of this study was to identify the internationalization initiatives of the HEIs in Baguio and Benguet, as a strategic response to globalization. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of implementation of the internationalization initiatives of the HEIs as perceived by:
 - 1.1 administrators;
 - 1.2 faculty; and
 - 1.3 students?
2. What is the level of the benefits derived from the internationalization of the HEIs as perceived by:
 - 2.1 administrators;
 - 2.2 faculty; and
 - 2.3 students?
3. What is the degree of seriousness of the problems



encountered in the implementation of the internationalization initiatives of the universities as perceived by

- 3.1 administrators;
- 3.2 faculty; and
- 3.3 students?

Methodology

Research Design and Methodology

The research design was descriptive in nature using Survey Method and Qualitative Method. In survey method research, participants answer questions administered through questionnaires. After participants have answered the questions, the researcher describes the responses given. In order for the survey to be both reliable and valid, it is important that the questions are constructed properly. In qualitative research, the research questions, data creation/collection and analysis are so intrinsically linked that it is unwise to plan one without considering the others. The research topic first needs to be located before refining it, having reviewed the literature qualitatively, into the research questions that will lead to methodology being more easily defined. Good qualitative research is consistent: the question goes with the method, which fits data collection, data handling, and analysis techniques (Morse & Richards, 2002). Descriptive method was used because it is best to describe the internationalization initiatives of the institutions and the extent of implementation of readiness, benefits and degree of seriousness. It also helps the researcher understand, account for and conceptualize internationalization initiatives in the Higher Education Institutions in Baguio and Benguet.

Population and Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Baguio City and La Trinidad Benguet through the two Universities, namely, University of the Cordilleras and Benguet State University. The two institutions were identified from the original six institutions in the Cordilleras which were recommended as potential respondents after the four others became unresponsive to the researcher's request to gather initial data and permission to conduct research. The two institutions

through their internationalizing colleges or departments, therefore served as the respondents of the study representing Baguio and Benguet. There was no intention to compare or contrast the institutions based on the findings from the data gathered.

The respondents of the study were the administrators, faculty and students. Identification of faculty and student respondents were done through a random sampling method after acquiring initial data on the total population of the target respondents within each of the college or department implementing internationalization initiatives. Meanwhile, all administrators were requested to answer the questionnaires since there were only a few of them.

Table 1. *Distribution of Respondents in UC*

Internationalizing College	Administrators	Faculty	Students	Total
College of Engineering and Architecture (CEA)	1	2	136	139
College of Information and Computing Sciences (CICTS)	1	13	22	36
College of Nursing (CON)	1	9	46	56
College of Hotel and Tourism Management (CHIM)	1	15	85	101
OVERALL TOTAL				332

Table 2. *Distribution of Respondents in BSU*

Internationalizing College	Administrators	Faculty	Students	Total
College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM)	1	5	11	17
College of Engineering and Applied Technology (CEA)	1	8	12	21
College of Nursing (CON)	1	12	11	24
College of Teacher Education (CTE)	1	4	96	101
OVERALL TOTAL				163

Data Gathering Tools

Information needed to identify the internationalization initiatives was gathered using a self-made questionnaire using a Likert-Scale type. The questionnaire was based on CMO No. 55, s. 2016 or the Policy Framework and Strategies on the



Internationalization of Philippine Higher Education issued by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The questionnaire covers three parts: I) Extent of implementation of internationalization initiatives; II) Level of benefits derived from internationalization and III) Problems encountered in the implementation of internationalization initiatives.

The first part covers the initiatives of the institutions in terms of Program Strategies and Organization Strategies. Program strategies include the Academic Programs, Research and Scholarly Collaboration, External Relations: Domestic and Cross-border and Extracurricular activities. Meanwhile, the Organization Strategies include Governance, Operations, Services and Human Resources. The second part enumerates the institutional benefits derived from internationalization in terms of Social/Cultural, Political, Economic and Academic aspects. The third part identifies the problems encountered in the implementation of internationalization initiatives in terms of Student, Faculty and Staff Mobility, Internationalizing Curricula, Research Collaborations, International Networks, International Distance Education and International Quality Assurance Systems.

The questionnaire was content - validated by one member of the Commission on Higher Education – Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), one College Dean involved in internationalization process in the institutional level in the City of Baguio and one Program Chair of an internationalizing program of an HEI during the month of July 2017 by checking its content, comprehensiveness and readability of items. To further gather qualitative data, document analysis and desktop research through the institutions’ websites were utilized. This helped the researcher track and analyze the existing internationalization initiatives of the HEIs.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher obtained approval of the conduct of the research from the HEIs’ Presidents. After approval, the researcher proceeded to the respective College Deans from the eight internationalizing colleges of the institutions to obtain initial data on the total population of currently enrolled students and number of faculty members. This is to determine the sample population which would serve as the respondents of the study. After the determination of the sample population, the approved questionnaire was administered to and collected from the respondents through the assistance of the respective secretaries of each HEI’s college

initiating internationalization. The researcher also checked each questionnaire to see if there were items unanswered by the respondents. To enrich the data gathered, the researcher conducted a document analysis and website research from the HEI respondents. This served as other sources to augment the available data from the survey questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data on the extent of implementation of internationalization initiatives of the universities, level of benefits derived from internationalization and the degree of seriousness on the problems encountered in the implementation of internationalization initiatives.

Overall Extent of Implementation of Internationalization Initiatives as perceived by Administrators, Faculty and Students

Table 3 shows the extent of implementation of Internationalization initiatives as perceived by the administrators, faculty and students. In general, the respondents perceive the extent of implementation of Program Strategies to be moderately implemented as supported by the computed overall mean rating of 2.89.

Table 3. Overall Extent of Implementation of Program Strategies

Indicator	Administrators	Faculty	Students	Ave mean	DE
Academic Programs	2.76	2.55	2.89	2.73	MI
Research and Scholarly Collaboration	2.75	2.74	2.84	2.78	MI
External Relations	2.90	2.98	3.25	3.04	MI
Extracurricular	2.88	2.91	3.20	3.00	MI
	2.82	2.80	3.05		
			Overall	2.89	MI

Legend:
 HI- Highly Implemented
 MI - Moderately Implemented
 SI - Slightly Implemented
 NI - Not Implemented

Among the indicators for Program Strategies, the external relations got the highest mean of 3.04 which is interpreted as having moderately implemented. This implies that the administrators, faculty members and students are engaged in the activities to initiate external relations, specifically, the domestic activities, as part of their institution’s internationalization process.

Meanwhile, under the Academic Programs,



specifically the Joint-double-degree program, got the lowest computed mean rating of 2.33 which is interpreted as slightly implemented. This implies that the respondents agree that institutions are not ready in implementing a Joint-double-degree program due to some factors that hinder immediate implementation like the expensive cost of the program, limited partnership with other local or foreign universities and difficulty of securing permits and complying with the requirements from the Commission on Higher Education.

Overall Extent of Implementation of Organizational Strategies by Administrators, Faculty and Students

Table 4 shows the extent of implementation of Internationalization initiatives as perceived by the administrators, faculty members and students.

In general, the respondents perceive the extent of implementation of Organizational Strategies to be moderately implemented (3.01). This implies that there is a moderate extent of implementation and moderate extent of achievement and commitment in terms of the quality, technical skills, knowledge, ingenuity, creativity and initiative in the identified activities.

Table 4. Overall Extent of Implementation of Organizational Strategies

Indicator	Administrators	Faculty	Students	Ave mean	DE
Governance	3.38	2.74	3.00	3.04	MI
Operations	3.03	2.69	2.95	2.89	MI
Services	3.33	2.88	3.13	3.11	MI
Human Resources	3.25	2.78	2.95	2.99	MI
	3.25	2.77	3.01		
			Overall	3.01	MI

Legend:
 HI- Highly Implemented
 MI - Moderately Implemented
 SI - Slightly Implemented
 NI - Not Implemented

Among the indicators for Organizational Strategies, the initiative on services got the highest mean of 3.11 which is interpreted as moderately implemented. This means that the respondents perceive their institutions to have provided a good quality of services to help in their internationalization process. It also means that the institutions have more opportunities to improve on their services in terms of support from institution – wide service units, involvement of academic support units and student support services for incoming and outgoing students to make it truly international.

Meanwhile, the Operations got the lowest mean rating of 2.89 and is interpreted as moderately implemented. This implies that the respondents perceive a need for the institutions to improve on systematizing the flow of transactions, information dissemination, planning, budgetary requirements and management of internationalization within their campuses.

Specifically, the item on “Adequate financial support and resource allocation systems” got the lowest mean of 2.80 among the initiatives for operations. This rating is interpreted as having the program moderately implemented as part of the internationalization process. Knight (2007) proposed that Funding is crucial to the internationalization of higher education to sustain the academic motives. Even if the main motivation is not financial, the issue of internationalization’s sustainability requires funds side by side with constant commitment to succeed.

Overall Level of Benefits Derived from Internationalization

Table 5 shows the extent of implementation of Internationalization initiatives.

In general, administrators, faculty members and students perceive the extent of implementation of Organizational Strategies to be moderately implemented as supported by the computed overall mean rating of 3.28.

Table 5. Overall Level of Benefits Derived from Internationalization

Indicator	Administrators	Faculty	Students	Ave mean	DE
Social/Cultural	3.60	3.24	3.29	3.38	VMB
Political	3.25	3.19	3.19	3.21	MB
Economic	3.25	3.18	3.14	3.19	MB
Academic	3.59	3.18	3.21	3.33	VMB
	3.42	3.20	3.21		
			Overall	3.28	VMB

Legend:
 VMB - Very Much Beneficial
 MB - Moderately Beneficial
 SB - Slightly Beneficial
 NB - Not Beneficial

Among the indicators for the benefits derived from internationalization, “Social / Cultural” got the highest mean rating or 3.38 which can be interpreted to be very much beneficial to the institutions. This means that the respondents have the same perception on the positive impact of internationalization in intercultural understanding, citizenship training and social and community development.



This is followed by the academic aspect having a computed mean rating of 3.33 which is interpreted to be very much beneficial to the institutions. This implies that the respondents agree on the positive impact of internationalization dimension to research and teaching (3.32), extension of academic horizon (3.25), institutional building (3.28), international branding, profile and status (3.32), international academic standards (3.33), student and staff development (3.41), strategic alliances (3.37) and knowledge production (3.32).

Overall Degree of Seriousness on the Problems encountered in the Implementation of Internationalization Initiatives

Table 6 shows the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered in the implementation of internationalization initiatives.

In general, administrators, faculty members and students perceive the degree of seriousness of the problems encountered by the institutions in internationalization to be moderately serious (2.65). This implies that the respondents face challenges in implementing internationalization initiatives which require strong collaboration and cooperation among the stakeholders. This also represents a moderate degree of seriousness on the problems encountered in the implementation of internationalization initiatives in the institutional level.

Table 6. *Overall Degree of Seriousness on the Problems encountered in the Implementation of Internationalization Initiatives*

Indicator	Admin	Faculty	Students	Ave mean	DE
Student, Faculty and Staff Mobility	2.58	2.75	2.69	2.67	MS
Internationalizing Curricula	1.88	2.81	2.95	2.55	MS
Research Collaborations	2.31	2.74	2.92	2.66	MS
International Networks	2.25	2.90	2.99	2.71	MS
International Distance Education	2.19	2.73	2.73	2.55	MS
International Quality Assurance Systems	2.25	3.20	2.87	2.77	MS
	2.24	2.86	2.86		
	Overall			2.65	MS

Legend:
 VS - Very Serious
 MS - Moderately Serious
 SS - Slightly Serious
 NS - Not Serious

Among all the indicators for the problems encountered in internationalization, the item on “International Quality Assurance Systems” got the highest mean of 2.77 which is interpreted as having moderately serious impact to the institutions as perceived by administrators, faculty and students.

Meanwhile, the items on Internationalizing Curricula and International Distance Education got the lowest

mean of 2.55 which is interpreted as having moderately serious degree. This also means that the respondents perceive the need for their institutions to improve on putting international dimension in their curricula, training faculty members who will develop effective international programs and providing adequate facilities in order to have internationalized curricula.

This is followed by the Student, Faculty and Staff Mobility (2.67) where administrators, faculty and students find the problem on “limited number of study-abroad and student exchange programs” (2.79) (see Appendix A) to be on top of the list among the indicators which suggests that institutions need more scholarship opportunities for students, faculty and staff in terms of study-abroad and student exchange programs to fulfill its requirement on academic mobility as part of internationalization initiatives.

CHED acknowledges that there are limited resources for student mobility programs especially for publicly – funded diploma mobility. Due to this, CHED in its CMO No. 55, S. 2016, encourages HEIs to promote unsponsored credit and other short-term mobility as part of their internationalization programs and to encourage students to include an international component as part of their degree. HEIs are also encouraged to establish institutional linkages and networks to promote student exchange, study abroad, study tours and international attachments that will provide opportunities for outbound mobility of Filipino students.

Moreover, it would be costly as they need to prepare huge amount of money for the travelling and daily expenses while completing the designated period of time for the program.

Conclusion

In light of the findings of the study, the following are the conclusions: (1) The HEIs are initiating internationalization initiatives both in Academic Programs and Organization Strategies to catch up with the growing demands of internationalization. (2) The HEIs understand the paramount importance of internationalization in their campuses in terms of Social/Cultural, Political, Economic and Academic aspects. (3) The institutions face difficulties encountered in the implementation of internationalization initiatives in terms of Student, Faculty and Staff Mobility, Internationalizing Curricula, Research Collaborations, International



Networks, International Distance Education and International Quality Assurance Systems.

In relation with the conclusions of this research, the following are recommended: (1) It is essential to provide incentives to participants such as the faculty, staff and students and initiate programs such as provision of internal seed funding and enhance international student experience that could facilitate the entire process of internationalization. (2) Institutions have to strengthen their role in Political, Economic and Academic aspects alongside the benefits derived from these initiatives. Institutions have to increase the quality and accessibility of student learning and support services such as ICT infrastructure and facilities, library, computing services, meeting rooms, virtual learning environment and learning management systems. (3) Quality improvement has to be a primary consideration in engaging international higher education. Specifically, addressing issues related to the focus of quality improvement, the status of local institutions in international partnerships, and the strengthening of local networks.

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