

Developing and Maintaining an International Climate among Philippine Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Every higher education institution aims to deliver quality instruction, student services, research outputs and community extension programs to its customers and clients. It serves as a marketing tool especially for private institutions to promote their image as universities with high standards of education that would be able to compete with foreign universities while maintaining international climate from its home country. This article reviewed the studies and literature pertaining to some initiatives and practices of Philippine Tertiary Education. Institutional vision of the Philippine Higher Education Institutions clearly reflects their aspiration of moving towards internationalization through its graduates and accreditation initiatives. The university tri-fold function must be sustained with highly qualified and dedicated human resources who will support the activities of the school management in delivering the strategic plans and attaining the specific objectives of internationalization. Government plays a significant role in supporting the initiatives of HEIs in terms of educational programs and projects for student and faculty mobility as well as quality assurance in accordance with the ASEAN Integration which assist the local academic institutions in reaching the goal of globalization.

Keywords: Quality Assurance, Accreditation, Higher Education, Philippines

1. Introduction

The birth of globalization drives the economy to sustain the organizations' capability to compete and survive as significant part of international business sector like educational institutions. Yemini (2014) describes globalization with increasing social, economic, financial, cultural, and technological integration of different countries and regions. Cambridge and Thompson (2004) emphasized that the "pragmatic 'globalist' current of international education may be identified with the processes of economic and cultural globalization, expressed in terms of satisfying the increasing demands for educational qualifications that are portable between schools and transferable between education systems, as well as the spread of global quality standards through quality assurance processes such as accreditation". The quest for internationalization of education has been a primordial concern (Rosaroso, Yap & Gador, 2015) as a revolutionary development (Mitra, 2010) with aspiration for global competitiveness (Pascual, 2014) among higher education institutions from external and domestic forces (Lavankura, 2013).

The process of internationalization has vitalized the economic survival of the countries and has led to increased the opportunities for students to enhance their potential at the international standards (Wadhwa & Jha, 2014) and served as a tool to provide youth with cosmopolitan capital and relevant capabilities for the future (Yemini, 2012). The world-wide expansion of access to higher education has also created an increasing national and global demand for consumer information on academic quality (Dill & Soo, 2005) where quality has become a key theme starting in the early 1980s (Jung, Wong & Belawati, 2013). The possibility of maintaining quality is no longer being seen as an option (Jung et al., 2013) in a dynamic environment.

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The concept of internationalization on this review is anchored in providing best products and services as a business model of quality in higher education which is now viewed as fast becoming a global business (Naidoo, 2006) and witnessing rapid changes, such as the shift from an elitist system to ‘massification’ (Jung, Wong & Belawati, 2013). Previous studies are generally unconcerned with the larger context of internationalization of education but rather focused on analysis of its cultural and societal structures (Dolby & Rahman, 2008).

Well over 90 percent of the approximately two million international students worldwide are shared among only five Western nations: the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France and Australia (Howe, 2009). Over 80% of all study-abroad students from the United States are wealthy middle class while foreign students in Canada pay twice or thrice the tuition fees of local students while in Japan, Chinese students on scholarships pay *less* than their Japanese peers (Howe, 2009). It is the role of Japan to become the Asian Gateway of international student mobility in their international strategy (Ninomiya, 2009). Japan’s internationalization, a focus of educational reforms for decades, is mainly driven by neo-liberal globalism while most Canadian institutions indicate the main purpose of internationalization is to prepare graduates for the global workplace (Howe, 2009).

A 2013 UNESCO report mentioned that the number of outbound Filipino students increased from 6,974 in 2004 to 8,443 in 2008 (Pajayon-Berse, 2015). In the Philippines, Immigration Commissioner Ricardo David Jr. said the Bureau of Immigration (BI) student desk approved in 2012 a total of 47,478 applications for student visa and special study permit (SSP), which is 14 percent higher than the 41,443 aliens who applied in 2011 (Tubeza, 2013). If there is a total of 3,033,967 students enrolled during AY 2011-2012 based on the enrollment data nationwide from CHED, there is a rough estimate of 1.56 percent of the students in the Philippine HEIs are foreign students. Based on the data of Global flow of tertiary-level students from UNESCO, the rise in internationally mobile students reflects growing university enrolment around the world. In 2012, at least 4 million students went abroad to study. Therefore, it is nearly only 1 percent of the market share of international students in the world chose to study in the Philippines while majority of them went to United States, United Kingdom, France, Australia and Germany.

At least 1,530 South Korean students had acquired student visas to pursue higher education in the country as of May 26, 2014 BI data showed. The four other top foreign enrollees are: Indian nationals with 1,069 enrollees; Iranians, 1,032; Chinese, 1,000; and Nepalese, 561. Most of the foreign students in the country were taking up Bachelor of arts and medical courses, including dentistry. Most of these foreign students are studying in Metro Manila schools—Centro Escolar University, Adventist University of the Philippines, University of the East, Far Eastern University, Manila Central University, University of Santo Tomas, Jose Rizal University and De La Salle University (Santos, 2014).

The most common measure of internationalization continues to be numbers of international students (Howe, 2009). Although some commentators argue that the international student flow has been slowing down in recent years, student mobility still accounts for a significant source of international exchange throughout the world (Naidoo, 2006). A survey conducted by the International Association of Universities listed Student and Faculty Mobility as one of the most important component of Internationalization (Flores, 2012). It is then expected from UP and other Philippine HEIs to have greater mobility of faculty and students, to have international quality programs and more collaborative research and curricular activities, and to meet higher employer standards (Azanza, 2014).

Given that student mobility has been made easier in recent years by developments in communications, faster information flows, and proactive student recruitment policies in many host countries (Tremblay, 2005) but still most Philippine HEIs would not be able to recruit good number of international students in spite of their rigid marketing strategies and initiatives. In order to be attractive, the kind and quality of programs offered in the Philippines need to be responsive and relevant to the current and emerging national, regional and international development goals, which is one of the vital elements of competitiveness (Cruz, 2014).

This article used literature research methodology to read through, analyze and sort literatures in order to identify the essential attribute of materials to indirectly access information from a variety of literatures,

which is generally referred to as "non-contact method" (Lin, 2009). Some of the Memoranda from the Commission on Higher Education and intellectual forums related to internationalization were reviewed as well as published research studies from international journals and relate them to the local situations. Internationalization is based on the local circumstances within the international context (Yang, 2005) where everything must start at home by creating an international climate on campus which supports and promotes intercultural initiatives (Knight, 1999). The development of people and practices until the implementation and measurement of individual and institutional performance must demonstrate exceptional quality that is beyond national requirements and comparable to the world-class habit and culture of excellence.

Objectives

This study aims to describe the development of Philippine higher education institutions in establishing and maintaining an international climate at home. It specifically provides an overview on how to sustain the quality of inputs, processes and outputs of Philippine higher education institutions. The result of the study could provide substantial information towards internationalization.

2. Results and Discussion

The schools are considered the second home for the students and the importance of having clear Philosophy and Objectives on how children will be honed by the second parents relies on the hands of effective management. Practitioners and administrators have been the primary audiences for research in the field of internationalization of education (Dolby & Rahman, 2008). Accreditation bodies give emphasis on the assessment of the Philosophy and Objectives of the institution where all the strategies are focused on achieving its vision and mission. Ensuring the connections and links of each component and activity of the organization towards the attainment of its goals, vision and mission is an important responsibility of everyone in the academic community where measurement of institutional performance should be in place periodically.

Continuous evaluation of processes for improvement is being done where everyone is involved in the development and implementation of quality standards to maintain an international climate at home. Internal evaluation is necessary to daily monitor the attributes of processing the input to make a desirable output that will serve as substantial information and contribution to the achievement of vision and mission of the organization and even for the national and international affairs.

3. Institutional Vision

Moussa and Somjai (2015) support the effective analysis of institution's environment and vision with clearly define current strategies and develop action plans with some differentiation strategies. It is a strategy to help achieve the vision of the University of the Philippines as a great university that has assumed leadership in helping develop a globally competitive Philippines ("Internationalizing the National University...", 2014). Internationalization initiatives are also reflected in some parts of the vision and mission of the Philippine HEIs that is to become globally competitive (PUP), be a recognized university in the Asia-Pacific region (LPU), be a university of choice in Asia (FEU), leader and dominant provider of relevant globally recognized IT-based education (AMA), be among the best universities in the world (MAPUA), become a leading institution nationally and globally in the integral formation of the youth (DLSU-D), be an educational leader recognized in the Philippines and abroad (Baliuag Univ), premier State University in Asia (BenSU), and be a World-Class University producing leaders (Bicol Univ). These are some of the significant phrases from the vision and mission of the Philippine HEIs that directly state their goal of putting their respective institutions in the world map of universities particularly in Asia which is one of the key indicators of internationalization as a result of globalization and competition.

The fairly new concept of Internationalisation at Home has been slow to impact on internationalisation activities (Kajberg, 2004). This is reflected in one of the goals of Silliman University which aims to have a

quality faculty comparable to Asian standards. Other universities aimed to provide global community of lifelong learning graduates (APC), to shape a global Filipino (BatSU) and to promote quality and relevant educational programs that meet international standards (BulSU).

Furthermore, the vision of the organization must be customer-focused according to The Certified Quality Engineer Handbook (2009) that reflects the total commitment of the institution to the development of their clients being directly served. Ateneo de Manila University's priority is to produce new generation of leaders who will be "at the service of others". Catholic universities say that working to improve their showing in the THES-QS indicators might not be in keeping with their avowed missions ("RP universities get low rankings", 2008). Internationalization is not directly evident in the vision and mission of the Philippine top universities anymore, just because they have already attained the spot of enjoying the benefit of being recognized internationally at some points.

The habit of excellence must occupy a large space in the organizational vision and mission to sustain the production of high quality outputs. The true essence of quality is not merely compliance to standards. Developing regularity with time to mature until it becomes a habit that reflects institutional and national priorities (Jung, Wong & Belawati, 2013) is a manifestation of consistency, sincerity, credibility and true commitment to quality based on their vision.

Morris (2009) indicated prime constituents for guiding strategic planning for internationalization as follows: clearness and precision are fundamental criteria in executing a genuine plan; carry out major planning tasks; and flexibility in modifying and adjusting the plan whenever required. University strategic plans, national policy statements, international declarations, and academic articles all indicate the centrality of internationalization in the world of higher education (Knight, 2012).

Establishment of international organizations, consortia of universities and internationalization of curricula (Huang, 2007) could strengthen the process of addressing the gap of globalization. Collaborations and linkages to various international organizations may still be part of the process in keeping with service activities that would cater to the needs of people in diverse communities especially in the ASEAN region. It is part of the educational strategies of Philippine HEIs to address the needs of ASEAN Economic Community in order to sustain greater opportunity for collaborations. ASEAN shall continue current efforts to promote regional mobility and reciprocal recognition of professional credentials, talents, and skills progress (Moussa & Somjai, 2015). Continuous growth and expansion of local and international industry linkages will provide more possibilities to acquire the universal knowledge, live the core values and apply the valuable skills of first world countries in the delivery of instruction inside the university through adapting the outcomes-based curriculum towards ASEAN integration (Laguador, Villas & Delgado, 2014).

Asean integration will mobilize the free flow of goods, services, investments and capital which will signify a creation of single market in the region. Therefore, Philippine HEIs must ensure that their curricula is aligned with the ASEAN 2015 qualification framework requirements to let their graduates compete with the professionals from other ASEAN countries in the labor market. The internationalisation of higher education brings out a need for supranational external quality monitoring (accreditation and evaluation) and increasing pressure for international or cross-national recognition of qualifications (Harvey, 2004). Ensure that the graduates would be able to assume leadership responsibilities in international setting equipped with core competencies and qualifications in order to enter and sustain the competitive work environment in the region. The contribution of the HEIs through their graduates takes a huge part in national development.

Therefore, preserving the balance of supply and demand of graduates who will join the workforce in various industries and sectors of the Asean economic community is very important issue between national and international policies and agreements. The internationalization of higher education has become a vital tactic both to awaken professionals working in higher education institutions themselves to new challenges, as well as to generate skilled graduates for individual countries around the world (Moussa & Somjai, 2015). The demand of the world-class graduates would be realized through applying international standards to the tri-fold function of the university.

4. University Tri-fold Function

Innovation and development of instruction, curriculum, physical plant and facilities, student services, human resources and other aspects involved in providing quality education may be supported by research. The mandate of internationalization of higher education has changed over the period from a mechanism of human exchange to joint research activities, more inclined to economic calculation (Wadhwa & Jha, 2014). Scientific process of identifying the problem and providing solutions for making decisions would provide systematic approach to various circumstances in offering empirical answers to situations.

Research activities would help to sustain various quality assurance mechanisms especially the program accreditation as it is one of the criteria for evaluation but it would also provide broad experience to teachers to keep them abreast with new trends and updates in their respective discipline through scientific investigation and experiments. They would have the privilege and be given the opportunity to present the findings of their researches in national and international conferences where they can get connected with different educational institutions. Howe (2009) stressed that it is up to internationally minded teachers to lead the way. Many foreign authors are also looking for research partners from another country where they can establish research projects on similarities and differences of human behaviour, educational practices and pedagogies, content of curricula, student development programs and among others. Filipino authors must be very active in getting connections from attended conferences and even from the published papers of foreign authors when they can send email and communicate if they can work on a research paper from the same discipline.

Furthermore, Howe (2009) also noted that teachers are increasingly under pressure to cover 'core' content material at the expense of global citizenship education and social issues. Laguador (2014) emphasized that student-centered teaching and learning is the recommended approach to modern day pedagogy especially in the Outcomes-based Education where the teachers served as the facilitator of learning activities rather than performing the traditional lecture method. But in most cases, professors teaching technical subjects do not have enough background on various teaching methodologies that call for in-depth training and development. They might have the best knowledge and skills but if they don't know how to share this information and transfer the knowledge to the students, they could not build strong castles out of sand. Addressing the issue of teaching effectiveness should be settled down by the institutions to get the best result out of their great teaching workforce.

Moussa and Somjai (2015) mentioned some strategies that would enable the institutions to promote the internationalization of education such as the development teaching methods and techniques, being active and proactive to skills required for labor markets, develop strategies to exchange students and staff, curriculum development, build our brand, sufficient budget for international recruitment, promote gradual development philosophies, enhance collaboration, and develop networks. Yemini (2014) noted that E-learning, collaborative learning, and usage of social networks can facilitate internationalization in school. The fragmented nature of the teaching-learning process in distance education has always lent itself to the adoption of external processes to ensure the quality of learning (Jung, Wong & Belawati, 2013).

Developing a community with utmost necessity to get some assistance from different agencies like academic institutions is an act of fulfilling the mission of helping people to uplift not only the standards of living of those underprivileged but it would also provide greater impact to the character and values of the students and employees who take part on this worthy undertaking (Laguador & Chavez, 2013). Extending support of the university to the less fortunate citizens of the country through adapting and building a strong community that would serve as valuable part of society is considered a noble achievement of the host institution. Recognition of greatness must start within the community. It is easier said in the strategic plans of the institutions but making it possible would be hard to achieve without human resources who have expertise or maybe training and experience in the social work.

5. Capability of Human Resources

International attribute of the educational institution according to Moussa and Somjai (2015) is having an effective HR and compensation systems to provide essential quality of life to the lecturers as well as satisfaction (Bay, An & Laguador, 2014) to minimize ethical problems that negatively affect the teaching and the learning environment. Maintaining highly motivated and dedicated people with goals of bearing the vision and mission of the institution in leading towards international standards is one of the strategies that work in maintaining and sustaining international climate. Having the right people with the right commitment, dedication and work engagement (Deligero & Laguador, 2014) in the preparation of documents before the visit for exhibit makes the university very grateful for the contributions of its human resources. Arcelo (2003) emphasized that the “starting point in the accreditation process is the democratic and participatory involvement of the members of the academic community in analyzing strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities”.

One factor of having a good set of human resource is to hire graduates from their own university or college. They know already the culture and practices in the environment and they would not be stranger at all in the operations and processes of the institution. If they still need more information and skills to learn, the experience in performing their duties and responsibilities will teach them the philosophies, principles and beliefs of making the good employees and future leaders.

Exposing them to various tasks related to the implementation of various global standards and accreditation preparation would give them the taste of different ingredients needed to create a unique identity in international competition. Equipping them more than knowledge and skills is the appropriate values and attitude towards the importance of their role and the usefulness of their outputs sealed with eminence and compassion. This would establish a kind of environment with a workforce full of devoted and supportive employees. As members of the organization who build the structure of an absolute image of success in educational institutions, it is important to make them realize that they are significant part of one family who works together in unity and rides in one vision gearing towards excellence. Strengthening the human resources and keeping them very satisfied would make a sustainable higher education institution more dynamic and progressive in maintaining the Quality Management System.

There is a need to have a visionary university president or chairman of the board to get into the picture of living the future with greatness and significance. His ideals will also serve as guiding principles among employees to work with concern and consistency which is true to the mission of the university to bring its people to greater heights and opportunities.

6. Government Support towards Internationalization

Globalization has led governments to promote international education to strengthen students' cultural integration and international perspective (Chen, 2015). The services they deliver in terms of instruction, research and community extension must be marked with quality. Jung, Wong and Belawati (2013) stated that “the recent emphasis on quality assurance (QA) in education can be attributed, on the one hand, to government interest in the demonstration of ‘responsible and relevant activities undertaken with the tax payer’s money’ and, on the other hand, to the growing doubts about the possibility of maintaining quality in changing circumstances”. Quality assessment is used to meet the challenges of the government’s steering capacity and policy effectiveness in the process of reforming higher education (Li, 2010).

Government plays a significant role in supporting the initiatives of HEIs towards Internationalization. Educational programs and projects for student and faculty mobility as well as quality assurance in accordance with the ASEAN Integration assist the local academic institutions in reaching the goal of globalization. At the level of the national system, rankings lock into the role of government as global competition state (Marginson, 2009). Japan’s *internationalization* has been largely driven by government rhetoric and market economics (Howe, 2009). The systematic pattern of the process of internationalization has been revamped according to the forces of globalization, still recognizing the premise of the nation state

(Wadhwa & Jha, 2014). The support of the government in the initiatives of Educational institutions in establishing quality on the delivery of its services to the people may come a long way to strengthen the internationalization programs. The continuing influence of the state on regulatory mechanisms pushes to remain the major funding source in higher education and also to display a commitment to higher education (Jung et al., 2013). Education policy has been heaved up highly on to national and international political agendas that have triggered intense debates about the goals and means of education (Wadhwa & Jha, 2014).

The Thai government chose to support the liberalization of the market and offered no resistance to internationalization (Lavankura, 2013). Apart from such imperative trends, the changing political and socioeconomic situation of the country served as another key factor driving the government's efforts to formulate an internationalization policy (Lavankura, 2013) while the Minister of Australia stressed the importance of international considerations in the implementation of QA system (McBurnie, 2000).

Meanwhile, South Korea is actively promoting the internationalization of higher education. Significant government financial support is provided to universities to internationalize. International education programmes include inter-university study-abroad agreements. There have been significant increases in bilateral agreements between South Korean universities and other institutions in Asia, Europe and North America (Howe, 2009).

In the Philippines, K-12 implementation is one of the answers to internationalization of HEIs as it will complete the required number of years of education comparable to other countries. Harmonization of Philippine educational system and policies with the ASEAN integration by the end of 2015 would take one step forward towards the realization of future goals of having strong economy through having competitive graduates as human capital.

The European seeks to make its HE intelligible as a single system, through compatible degree structures to enhance student mobility between countries, the alignment of national quality assurance systems, a credit transfer system, and a common way of describing qualifications (Brooks & Waters, 2009). The increased international validity and portability of European qualifications as a result of the Bologna convention will lead to an increased competitive intensity in the international education market place (Naidoo, 2006).

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education is supporting the Higher Education Sector in addressing the challenges posted by the initiatives of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) which include: membership to ASEAN University Network (AUN), consideration of ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRf), adoption of ASEAN International Mobility for Students Program [AIMS] (CMO 11, s. 2014) with recognition of UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme [UCTS] (CMO 33, s. 2013), and understanding of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) Project. AQAN concentrates on building the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for higher education through discussions and sharing of QA best practices and experiences

Considering the aforesaid ASEAN-centered programs and networks, the main factors which significantly affect national HE sectors and the regional HE system are credit transfer schemes for student and professional mobility, qualifications referencing and compatibility, and quality assurance. These are where reforms are concentrated. AIMS, AUN, and AQRf all complement the region's efforts to enhance quality assurance systems in the long run (Macabangun-Milla, 2014).

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

Internationalisation of education becomes a more common phenomenon in local schools and a growing systems currently taking place worldwide (Tremblay, 2005; Yemini, 2012) with high emphasis on accreditation that supports the academic institutions to pursue higher level of achievements and accomplishments in global perspective. The increasing effects of globalization and demanding efforts of universities and colleges to internationalize in every sphere of life suggest that internationalization does not suddenly emerge in tertiary education but rather continues from the bottom levels in secondary schools and even earlier (Yemini, 2014). Bringing international practices, attitude and outlook to the training grounds of

the Philippines universities and colleges would make a difference in the future of the Filipino youth in the ASEAN Economic Community. Making them fit to work with appropriate skills and competencies would let them explore every possibility of success in every corner of the world.

The true identity of Filipinos must never be taken apart from its best practices as HEIs assume internationalization activities with foreign nationalities and universities. The kind of thinking that should be developed in innovating the quality of Filipino products and services in a form of human capital and traveling with progress in culture, ethnicity, customs and humanity.

It is also good to note that the vision and mission of the Philippine HEIs must be a customer-focus and result oriented within the scope of internalization of education. How can HEIs attract international students or put up international campuses, if they could not be able to generate globally competitive graduates from their home country who can assume leadership roles (Laguador, Velasquez & Forendo, 2013). Ensuring that the graduates could demonstrate higher level of skills and competence to contribute to the national, regional and international development, this can be considered that Philippines HEIs actually performed their obligations to the community. The universities might also establish a program their graduates to be employed abroad (Orence & Laguador, 2013; Laguador & Dotong, 2013).

Most linkages and collaborations are being done through promoting outstanding example of international research partnership (Moussa & Sonjai, 2015), student internship (Laguador, 2013) and faculty and student exchange program. Teachers need more international and intercultural experiences to draw upon in order to nurture global citizens (Howe, 2009). School memberships to international organization would also gain networks through attending seminars and conferences that served as a good venue for collaboration and marketing activities. Ensure that every time faculty members will present a paper in an international conference, they could build a good linkage or new research collaboration for them to work on with foreign authors on their next research project.

Continuous benchmarking visit to Higher Education Institutions abroad included in the QS World University Rankings especially in Taiwan, South Korea and Japan with the most number of universities in WU Rankings where noted.

Practicing truly internationalization is not only through instruction and research, but also in community service. Sharing of resources if being rendered locally within the vicinity of the university must be felt nationally and recognized internationally. No matter how small the things had been given in a very meaningful way can create a big impact in a larger scale. Strong background of active university participation in developing people from underprivileged society would make a difference in the educational philosophy of teaching the students the value of sharing the gift of being one who is giving.

The Philippine Government may actively host international conferences that would attract faculty researchers from foreign universities to present their papers in the country to create harmoniously collaboration with the local researchers.

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