



## AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF STUDENT TEACHERS' INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

This investigation is an effort to assess the awareness and attitude of Student teachers towards internationalization of higher education. The participants consisted of 47 student teachers of Physical Science. Whatsapp was used for data collection. The findings indicated that the majority of the participants were aware of the concept of Internationalization of Higher Education and its benefits and risks.

**KEYWORDS :** Internationalisation, Higher Education, Whatsapp, Attitude

### Introduction

From time immemorial, Education has been seen as a crucial tool for national development. It is considered to work towards eliminating poverty, increasing the health of the people of the nation and playing a key role in the socio- economic development of the country. Internationalization has been considered as a major trend in the field of Higher education over the past years and has helped to achieve a broad range of goals from helping students to learn abroad, helping to get better job opportunity and expand the nature of higher education to help in personal skill development, inculcate new ways of thinking and enhance the academic knowledge.

### What is internationalization?

Internationalization of education can be considered as the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the various aspects of teaching - learning, research, and service functions of the institutions.

The internationalisation of higher education can be understood from six major approaches:

- the activity approach (involving discrete activities),
- the competency approach (the development of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values),
- the ethos approach (fostering a campus-based culture of internationalisation),
- the process approach (the integration of an international dimension into teaching, research and services) (Knight, 1999),
- the business approach (an emphasis on student fees for income), and
- the market approach (stress on competition, market domination and deregulation) (Meek, 2007).

Based on these approaches, the internationalisation of higher education is defined as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2003).

The internationalisation of higher education benefits from the positive initiatives of collaborative projects, of cross-border educational exchange. These processes have contributed to the development of individuals, institutions, nations and the world at large. While study abroad and other international experiences are widely considered to be valuable for students, and to develop a wide range of soft skills such as inter-cultural communication, openness to new challenges, problem-solving and decision-making skills in returnees, there has not always been a strong empirical evidence base to support efforts to broaden student internationalisation.

According to the results of the 2005 International Association of Universities (IAU) Survey there is overwhelming agreement (96 percent of responding institutions from 95 countries) that internationalization brings benefits to higher education. Yet, this consensus is qualified by the fact that 70 percent also believe there are

substantial risks associated with the international dimension of higher education. (Information on the 2005 IAU Global Survey Report on the Internationalization of Higher Education: New Directions)

### Research questions

- Are the Student teachers aware of the concept of Internationalisation of Higher Education?
- What is their perception on Internationalisation of Higher Education?

### Methodology

#### Participants

The study was carried out on 47 Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) students of Physical Science who were pursuing their two year Teacher Education ( B.Ed) programme in the Department of Education, Avinashilingam University, Coimbatore.

### Research Instrument

In order to find answers to the two research questions mentioned above, three open ended questions were asked to the students. The Questions were

- i. What do you understand by Internationalisation of Higher Education?
- ii. What are the benefits of Internationalisation of Higher Education?
- iii. What are the risks of Internationalisation of Higher Education?

### Data Collection and Data Analysis

First the students were asked orally to explain what they understand by Internationalisation of Higher Education. Then the students were asked to message their perception on the benefits and risks of Internationalisation of Higher Education by whatsapp and the collected response were counted, categorized and percentage analysis was done.

### Results and Discussion

An attempt was made to find out perception and understanding of Student teachers' on Internationalisation of Higher Education and the responses obtained from the 47 Student teachers were analysed and is presented in Table 1, 2 and 3.

**Table .1. Respondents' idea on Internationalisation**

S.No	Response by the students	Number	Percentage
1	A common system of higher education for all the people in the world	39	83
2	Can study in any higher education institution anywhere in the world	8	17

From Table.1 it could be seen that majority of the Student teachers (83%) had the idea that Internationalisation of Higher Education refers to a common system of Education.

### Benefits of Internationalization as per the Student teachers

All the students were asked to give at least three benefits of Internationalization of Higher Education. These responses were sent through Whats App (Figure. 1) and the researcher has gone through all the responses and classified and tabulated. Table: 2 portray the results obtained.

**Table. 2. Benefits of Internationalization as per the Student teachers**

S.No	Student perception on Benefits of Internationalisation	Number*	%
1.	The dream of getting higher education abroad becomes a reality for the students	45	95.7
2.	Improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and research.	40	85.1
3.	More opportunities for the students of developing and underdeveloped countries.	40	85.1
4.	Students will be better prepared as national and global citizens and global integration happens	38	80.9
5.	Curriculum gets updated according to international standard	35	74.5
6.	Student becomes aware of education system in different countries	34	72.3
7.	Standardised and homogeneous evaluation process	34	72.3
8.	Helps in Improving institutional policy-making, outreach, quality, etc. through collaborative experience sharing	30	63.9
9.	Enhancing opportunities for faculty improvement and decreasing the danger of 'academic inbreeding'	28	59.6
10.	Giving institutions an opportunity to learn from international good practices	24	51.1
11.	Cultural exchange happens	24	51.1
12.	Faculty exchange programmes are done easily	21	44.7
13.	Student mobility enhanced	20	42.6
14.	Brings out mutual benefits to different countries	18	38.3

\*Multiple response

A high percentage of student teachers (95.7) revealed that it is dream come true of learning in foreign institutions and 85.1 percent feels that quality of instruction and research gets enhanced and opines that underdeveloped and developing countries will be benefitted.

**Risk of internationalization as per the Student teachers**

The Student teachers were asked to list out the risks if any they feel in internationalising higher education and their responses are listed out in Table. 3

**Table . 3. Risk of internationalization as per the Student teachers**

S.No	Risks of Internationalisation as perceived by the Student teachers	Number	%
1	Initially has to struggle a lot due to difference in language and culture	40	97.6
2	Unaware of the opportunities makes internationalization a failure	37	90.2
3	Quality and standard of education may not be uniform	37	90.2
4	Competition may lead to unethical practices in selection of students when considering international student recruitment	36	87.8
5	Culture of a country may get mixed up and the originality may be gone from the nation	35	85.4

6	Deterioration of the capacity of HE in developing countries through the brain drain.	34	82.9
7	Education becomes a market commodity	33	73.3
8	As there are differences in the culture it becomes difficult to have the same syllabus.	28	68.3
9	Benchmarking of large countries for internationalization may pose many challenges for small and underdeveloped countries	27	65.9

The percentage analysis reports that majority of the Student teachers (97.6) feels that there will be difficulty with language and culture and 90.2 per cent feels if the opportunities are not made known the whole process of internationalization goes in vain and even they perceive that institutions in different countries possess different quality in Higher Education which may be an obstacle for Internationalization of Higher Education.

**Conclusion**

The two most important benefits identified by the students are higher education institutions are more approachable and quality improvement in teaching learning and research as they could learn from internationally oriented staff and improved academic quality Even though there are many benefits to higher education, it is clear that there are serious risks associated with this complex and growing phenomenon of Internationalisation.

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