Chapter 2

A Discussion on Transnationality and Globalness of HEI Internationalization

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ABSTRACT

The internationalization of higher education institutions (HEIs) involve a set of activities aimed at providing an educational experience in an environment that integrates a global perspective. The internationalization of HEIs incorporates a diverse set of academic and extracurricular activities with emphasis on the development and innovation of curricula, academic/student/faculty exchange programs, technological assistance, intercultural training, international student recruitment, and joint research initiatives. Despite the several studies on the internationalization of HEIs, no single study addresses issues like local responsiveness and global integration. As such, the authors discuss how the internationalization of HEIs has evolved and how Bartlett and Ghoshal’s strategies fit in the internationalization path of HEIs.

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INTRODUCTION

With the globalization, the world witnessed a rapid increase in the level of international trade. International business has increased since the end of World War II, and currently it is known that the economy is arguably more international than ever before and has acquired characteristics of great turbulence, forcing companies to be more attentive and to adapt to more often and unexpected changes (Dicken, 2011). Recently, international education has also been growing steadily.

Internationalization is a very broad theme that has evolved over time, under various prisms, based on well-differentiated theories and different understandings (Moreira, 2009; Ribau, Moreira, & Raoso, 2015, 2018; Ietto-Gillies, 2012). If, over time, internationalization was analyzed from the macro viewpoint for hundreds of years, until the 1960s it was based on a strong conceptual base of the theoretical foundations of multinational corporations. If since the 1960s small and medium-sized enterprises have begun to be the center of attention, it is at the beginning of this century that there is a significant influx of work on the internationalization of higher education and the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). As referred by Ribau et al. (2015, 2016), the literature on business internationalization is vast, somewhat fragmented and dispersed. Over time, not only the globalization of business activity has evolved, but scholars’ interpretations have also changed (Moreira, 2009; Ribau et al., 2015, 2018).

Internationalization represents the development and improvement of institutions skills and competences that seek to exploit their competitive advantages in international markets.

In a time of globalization, international business is gaining ground and it is often heard that companies and HEIs must compete internationally, or else they are likely to fade away and die. But in spite of this, it is important that organizations first know themselves and all their stakeholders, so that subsequently, in accordance with their strengths and weaknesses, they can move on to international grounds and thus be able to act in accordance with their capabilities.

Internationalization involves the deployment of the firms’ main strategic added-value activities abroad (Meyer, 2006). However, although some companies do not opt for internationalization, they end up feeling the effects of the internationalization of other companies due to the existing exchange of goods and services worldwide.

In their internationalization process, organizations can opt for multiple operations worldwide. Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989) identified four possible generic strategies at the corporate level, according to global integration and local adaptation: Global;
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