TRENDS AND FEATURES OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS A MAJOR FACTOR OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

In this paper are analyzed the features of higher educational institutions internationalization; key tasks for the development of the European higher education space are highlighted and characterized; the focus is on mobility, scientific collaboration and distance learning - important factors of higher educational institutions development; also key components and established priority areas of indicated ways of internationalization are defined and analyzed and the problems in the context of improving higher education system are solved.

Keywords: internationalization, educational space, international strategy of internationalization, mobility, distance learning, scientific cooperation.

1 INTRODUCTION

Internationalization of higher education is gaining increasing importance within the development of society. First of all, this trend involves the exchange of information among countries leading to new forms and approaches to the organization of higher education, enhance cooperation between researchers from different countries, significant qualitative and quantitative increase of academic mobility and the development of universities of a new type. Internationalization of higher education includes student and teaching-staff mobility, reform of educational programs and curricula, cooperation in the field of research, the possibility of distance learning, productive institutions cooperation.

The idea of internationalization requires the mobilization of academic resources. The advantages of internationalization: the pooling of resources, updating topics of research, creation of an effective system of quality education and system of education quality control. The presence of foreign students and teaching-staff in the university has a positive impact both on the receiving side, and on the "guests" of universities. Internationalization of higher education is one of the most important areas of policy for higher education institutions worldwide. However, universities are international in nature, the necessity of promotion of quality education of an international character contributed to the internationalization that is in the focus of researchers.

2 ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of internationalization of higher education today is widely represented in the literature. One of the most comprehensive contributions to this subject was made by German researchers, who focused on the basic aspects of internationalization, such as [1, 2, 9-14]: students and teaching-staff mobility, mutual influence of higher education, internationalization of nature of teaching, learning process and research, institutional internationalization strategies, experience exchange, cooperation and competition [3, 4]. The academic component of internationalization, which is directly related to the expansion of educational process and achievements of excellence in research and scientific activities, is highlighted in [5-7].

Other authors consider internationalization as:

- multidimensional phenomenon of modern time, including international exchange programs, joint research projects, specifically focused studies in higher educational institutions of other countries, second-language skills, advanced communication network via the Internet, internationalized curricula (Hans de Wit);
• the economic component of the successful operation of the modern university, which includes profit from educational services of higher educational institution that spawned a global educational competition (S. Groennings and D. Wiley);

• international, intercultural dimension in teaching, learning, research (K. Beck, J. Davies, A. Olsen). The most concise and structured definition is offered by American researcher John Knight: "Internationalization is the process of implementation of international component into research, educational and administrative functions of higher education" [2].

The article aims to identify the trends and characteristics of the internationalization of higher education taking into account modern trends and needs of universities.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to understand why all universities tend to seek internationalization, it is necessary to study the justification of internationalization and its aspects. Justification can be described as motivation to integrate an international aspect in higher education. Internationalization of higher education is a large-scale phenomenon, comprising various aspects of life of the university. The development of this process has several quality levels. The first level - international cultural and educational contacts, which are episodic, an integrated system of partnership is poor and international cooperation is fragmented. This level includes the exchange of teaching-staff and students; international conferences, seminars, forums, workshops, etc. The second level - scientific, pedagogical and educational cooperation - has a more profound content and organizational-institutional design of international relations. It involves: development of intercultural educational programs, construction of new educational technologies; joint research; education of foreign students; mutual participation of students in teaching practice abroad; use of global quality systems.

International strategic partnership is a prerequisite for achieving the highest level of internationalization of higher education. The partnership of educational organizations may use different forms of integration aimed at internationalization such as cooperation based on a treaty, establishment of associations or consortiums. All these forms are traditional, as they involve conservation of legal and economic independence of partners in carrying out joint activities. The aims of the partnership can be both regional and global.

Let’s consider, for example, the community Universitas21, which brings together 26 universities from 17 countries. The structure of the educational network includes universities from the UK, USA, Australia, Canada, China, Chile, India, Hong Kong, Japan, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden and the Netherlands. The main activity of the community is the preparation of students for life in a global world; development of academic mobility; stimulating collective thinking; transfer of positive experience; promotion of innovations in education. [15]

An example of regional cooperation in education and science is an international European cooperation The Baltic University Programme, focused on issues of environmental protection and sustainable development in the Baltic region and consolidated over 200 universities and organizations from 14 countries. Program participants are coastal countries (Germany, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Finland, Sweden and Estonia and the countries of the catchment area of the Baltic Sea - Belarus, Norway, Slovakia, Ukraine and the Czech Republic) that implement and coordinate joint research projects and develop educational courses using modern educational technology.

An example of international cooperation may be European University Association (EUA) that consolidates more than 850 participants from 47 countries. This organization holds various conferences and seminars, deals with post-graduate education and estimation of universities, etc.

A large number of consortia forms under the Erasmus+. It is a program of the European Union for the period 2014-2020. It supports projects, partnerships, events and mobility in education, training, youth and sport. The program provides the opportunity to study, undergo training or teaching in another country participating in the program. The European Commission called Erasmus the most successful educational program of the EU and an important tool to overcome youth unemployment.

The analysis of the abovementioned forms of cooperation turned out to be very interesting. The largest number of participants is typical for associations, while cooperation under the agreement or the consortium is limited by resource base and the conditions under the agreement. On the other hand the aim of cooperation is more defined in the consortium and partnership agreements and generally defined in associations. Precise coordination of cooperation is observed in the consortium while in
associations and agreements it is not clearly defined. It should be noted that the work performed by consortium and universities partners on harmonization of educational standards promotes the idea of internationalization of higher education. In such programs the issues of quality control are resolved by university offering its own program abroad. As it is not easy to exercise such control in practice there are specific accreditation systems for such programs exercised by national and international organizations.

The experience of such cooperation clearly confirms that:

- Internationalization of higher education is one of the key tasks for the development of the European Higher Education Area by 2020;
- The main focus of the internationalization of higher education is made on real communication (mobility, training abroad);
- online learning (E-Learning) is developing;
- specification of forms, methods and tools of internationalization becomes evident on the level of universities and teaching-staff;
- universities continue to search for a suitable forms and methods of internationalization.

In recent years, higher educational institutions in Ukraine transferred from traditional forms of experience exchange to implementation of joint projects aimed at internationalization of the main activities of the university. Such approach enriches the learning process due to the development and modernization of competitive educational programs, provides the flexibility of specialists training taking into account the requirements of the international labor market, and widens the world view of teaching staff and students through academic mobility. According to UNESCO the level of international mobility of students has increased over the last 25 years by 300%. According to experts, by 2025 the number of students (studying abroad) will reach 4.9 million people.

The experience of collaborative learning with students from other countries leads to an understanding of other people's thinking, widens the world view, provides better contact with foreign partners in the future. This is especially true for specialists in foreign trade, international law, and export industries. Studying abroad - at least for a year - enables students to learn foreign language. This in itself is an important career advantage. Europe has been traditionally considered the best place to train students in higher educational institutions outside their country of origin. It takes 48% of students. North America - 21% of all international students, and in Asia - 18%. The number of foreign students in the Pacific almost tripled since 2000, although the region receives less than 10% of all foreign students. Other regions, such as Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, are also beginning to count the increasing number of international students. Such large share of international or foreign students may reflect the attractiveness of advanced research programs in these countries, or the tendency to enroll more difficult educational programs, because of their potential contribution to the domestic research and development.

The most popular is double degree program, and many factors prove that. First, the students are interested in the prestigious foreign university diploma. Second, students can learn the unique educational disciplines that are not presented in the local market of educational services. Third, such programs promote not only the development of cooperation of scientific, educational, informational and other fields, but also the expansion of relations in order to solve complex scientific and regional challenges and contribute to the development of the university.

Studying in a foreign university, students receive access to its well-developed research infrastructure. It becomes possible to use rich libraries, which provide access to hundreds of international scientific journals and databases. In many cases, the study also provides practical training. Often such training component is a prologue to the work in a large international company.

The mobility of teaching-staff is the second most important form of internationalization of higher education. Traditionally, international mobility of teaching-staff is determined by scientific activities or international training of young researchers and teaching-staff. Mobility of graduate students and scholars is mainly their personal choice (opportunity to gain experience abroad is often taken as a value itself), but also may be encouraged by state and international programs and agreements aimed at facilitating the exchange of researchers, as high mobility is one of the indicators of a healthy and innovative higher education and science.
Commission's Green Paper claims that governments and institutions should promote national and international mobility of graduate students and scholars, as an essential element of the European Research Area (ERA) - bringing together the scientific community, business and citizens - has the following characteristics: an adequate flow of competent researchers with high level of mobility between institutions, fields of study and production, countries; world-class research infrastructure, integrated, accessible network for research teams from across Europe and the world, especially with the new generations of electronic communication infrastructures; the best research institutions engaged in effective public-private cooperation and partnerships, forming the core of research and innovation "clusters" including "virtual research communities", which mainly specializes in interdisciplinary research and attracting a critical mass of people and financial resources; effective exchange of research results, particularly between researchers and industry, and generally the public; well-coordinated research programs and priorities, including a significant amount of joint programs with intergovernmental funding at European level taking into account general priorities; wide openness of the European Research Area to the world with special emphasis on neighboring countries and focus on addressing global challenges with partners in Europe. [16, 17] Executing the research programs, graduate students may visit foreign universities and laboratories to collect data or perform experiments not available in their country. But the main achievements are related to their personal, cultural and scientific growth, which they can get under the influence of various scientific and educational environments. The main positive factor of scientists' mobility is their presence in high-skilled working environment in which they get quality results and free access to resources and scientific equipment.

Programs of students and teaching-staff mobility stimulate the internationalization of curricula, i.e. the introduction of changes into the curricula of partner-university. However, even in a united Europe there is a large diversity of national systems of higher education, the desire to internationalize curricula and bring into them the common European elements could only be implemented through mobility projects. It definitely makes a positive impact on the quality of education in general.

The development of the Internet has significantly expanded the potential of internationalization due to the fact that it became possible to conduct a full exchange of information flows without physical transporting of people. In Europe, many universities successfully implement projects on E-Learning, to assess the quality of such training in Brussels was founded the association, whose members are: E-Learning Center der Universität Zürich, Switzerland; Estonian eUniversity, Estonia; Eurasian Opening Institute, Russia; European Distance and E-Learning Network (EDEN), United Kingdom; IOU, Intercultural Open University, The Netherlands; Madrid Open University, Spain; METID - Politecnico di Milano, Italy; and other.

Distance education includes distance teaching (role of teaching-staff in the learning process) and distance learning (student’s role in the learning process). Two-way communication, according to British scientists, is a compulsory and significant component of distance education. Its goal: to maintain motivation and interest of students using contacts with tutors and academic mentor, advisor; support and promote learning, helping students apply knowledge and skills with the help of tutor’s explanations, suggestions and comments; evaluate the progress of students to enable them to assess their own educational growth, needs [18].

The main advantages of the new model of electronic education internationalization through cooperation is: students can engage into the virtual group to study the subject, geographically being in any part of the world; the number of students per tutor thanks to the format E-Learning 2.0 is practically unlimited; E-Learning 2.0 has maximum flexibility, limited only by the search for the optimal way of communication of a virtual group, taking into account that its members can be in different time zones; simultaneous learning and interaction with foreign students during work automatically create a natural competitive environment, which positively affects the interest of students; simultaneous training with international students increases the level of language skills; thanks to the E-Learning 2.0 the received skills will be used by students in the future (to conduct conferences in transnational corporations); during joint training with foreign students home students get the unique experience of communication, which is especially important for professionals in the field of Management. Further development of communications, increasing network capacity, the use of web-2 allows organizing the work of students on educational and research projects in virtual groups in real time. Due to these measures it becomes possible to carry out collective projects of students of different universities under the guidance of a tutor [19].
4 CONCLUSION

The main advantages of internationalization of higher education are: diversification of the learning environment, increase of the number of enrolling students by attracting the best international students and graduates; preparation of graduates who are familiar with international and cross-cultural features; solution of problems of an increasing interdependence of the world, thus contributing to better understanding between people; formation of resources for the development of other international activities; contribution to the international status of universities.

Thus the issue of internationalization of higher education and development are closely related as the process of internationalization of universities and their coming out to the international market contributes to improving education quality. At the same time the process of internationalization should be viewed not only as a goal in itself but rather as a tool to improve the quality of higher education. In this respect, the international strategic partnership deepens the knowledge base of universities, increases their competitiveness in the market of scientific and educational services, and promotes a comprehensive professional-personal development of teaching-staff and students.

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