INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF THAILAND AND MALAYSIA

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Abstract: Due to the growth of globalization and the knowledge based economy together with the impact of GATS and ASEAN declaration of ASEAN community, internationalization of higher education in Thailand has developed into a very significant area that should be considered as an important agenda item at the level of ASEAN. To achieve a resilient, dynamic and sustained ASEAN Community, all parties in ASEAN member countries agreed to treat education cooperation as a priority in the process of community building. To succeed in these commitments, the education sector in every member nation needs to be very well prepared and more prepared to open their doors and to learn from each other proactively. Thailand has positioned itself as a hub of higher education in the Southeast Asian countries and aims to develop higher education quality that meets international standards in order to strengthen major manpower and enable to compete with the other countries. Malaysia a neighboring country to Thailand has also a national objective to become an education hub in the region.

This study aims to find the answers to the following questions. Whether government as key actors in both Thailand and Malaysia exercise policies that use good practices to enhance and sustain the quality of internationalization for higher education? Whether applying the guidelines on "Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education", based on United Nations and UNESCO principles and instruments will secure quality of internationalization of higher education and enhance the education hub policy? How far have Thailand and Malaysia progressed in achieving their goals on internationalization of Higher Education? What are the success stories of internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Thailand and Malaysia and what challenges have they faced and are still facing in this area?

This study is designed by using a mixture of methods through case studies, interviewing Thai and Malaysian administrators, and surveying some administrators and staff of selected international universities in Thailand and Malaysia to find out the answers to the above questions.

Keyword: Internationalization of Higher Education, Guidelines on "Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education", International universities in Thailand and Malaysia, Good practice

Introduction

Higher education has become increasingly international in the past decade. This growth is the result of several different, but not mutually exclusive, driving forces: a desire to promote mutual understanding; the migration of skilled workers in a globalized economy; the desire of the institutions to generate additional revenues; or the need to build a more educated work force in the home countries, which are generally as emerging economies. (OECD, 2004)

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has used the term "internationalization of higher education" to cover many forms of international exchanges and distinguishes between student, program and institutional mobility to characterize the different forms of this exchange. Others refer to cross-border, transnational, offshore or borderless education. In 2010, the 16th Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) Summit concluded in Hanoi with a chairperson's statement that showed strong commitments of all member countries to build a sustained ASEAN Community in 2015. To achieve a resilient, dynamic and sustained ASEAN Community, all parties agreed to give education cooperation as a priority in the process of community building. To succeed those commitments, education sectors in every ASEAN member nation needs to be very well organized and more prepared to learn from each other proactively.

In 2005, UNESCO and OECD have developed guidelines on "Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education", based on United Nations and UNESCO principles and instruments, as an educational response to growing commercialization of higher education. The objective of the Guidelines are to propose tools and a synthesis of best practices that can assist Member States in assessing the quality and relevance of higher education provided across borders and to protect students and other stakeholders in higher education from low-quality higher education provision. In 2007, Office of Higher Education Commission, Thailand has provided translation of the guidelines and published for the Thai Higher Education Institutions and agencies involved utilizing. Thailand has positioned itself as a hub of higher education in the Southeast Asian countries and aims to develop quality of higher education that meet international standards in order to strengthen major manpower and enable to compete with the other countries. Malaysia as a Thai neighboring country has also a national objective to become an educational hub in the region.

Under the circumstances above, one interesting question is whether government as key actors in both Thailand and Malaysia exercise their policies by using good practices to enhance and sustain the quality of internationalization for higher education. Whether applying the guidelines on "Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education", based on United Nations and UNESCO principles and instruments would secure quality of internationalization of higher education and enhance the education hub policy. How far do they both work to achieve their goals on internationalization of Higher

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Education? What are the success stories of internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Thailand and Malaysia? Beside these, are there some challenges regarding to internationalize higher education in their respective countries?

Research Objectives

1. To explore critical components of internationalization in higher education.
2. To determine good practices on the internationalization in higher education at the institutional level: case study of Thailand and Malaysia.
3. To identify the factors those effectively enhance the achievement of Internationalization in higher education from the good practices.
4. To create a good practice model of internationalization in higher education in Thailand.
5. To validate a good practice model of internationalization in higher education in Thailand.

Theoretical Framework

This research is based on a number of theoretical frameworks, which are as follow:

1. The three phases of internationalization process

Internationalization process implies three major phases (Ayoubi, 2006, p. 261). The first phase is to set up the design of internationalization (this would be mainly represented by the strategic intent, mission statement, strategic vision, corporate strategy and strategic plan). The second phase is to choose the best ways to activate the design with real actions (this is represented by the organizational steps taken by management to implement the design). The third phase is to evaluate this process by comparing the design with the implementation (this could be done by comparing real internationalization achievements with the intended initial strategy design.

2. Three waves of internationalization in education. (Mazzarol, T., Soutar, G.T., & Seng, M.S.T., 2008, 90) Three distinct waves of globalization can be identified in the internationalization education industry. The first involved students traveling to a host nation to study at a chosen institution. The second involved institutions moving forward into the export channel – usually through an alliance or coalition- and establishing a presence in international markets through "twinning" program (Smart, 1988. citing from Mazzarol, T., Soutar, G.T., & Seng, M.S.T., 2008, 90). This process of "forward integration" has become common in Asia throughout the 1990s, with many privately owned colleges providing outlet for students to study a foreign degree in their home country (Prystay, 1996 citing from Mazzarol, T., Soutar, G.T., & Seng, M.S.T., 2008, 90). The third approaches which have emerged recently involve the creation of branch campuses in foreign markets and the development of "on-line" delivery of courses through information and communications technologies(ICT)(Mazzarol, 1998 citing from Mazzarol, T., Soutar, G.T., & Seng, M.S.T. ,2008, 90).Whether this is a single third wave or two separate waves is unclear at this stage.

3. Internationalization from Hayle's study in Queen's University Kingston

The three perspectives are described in the literature of Hayle's study as academic capitalism, academic colonialism, and the development of global competence, and can work independently, or in combination with each other.

Academic capitalism describes the phenomenon of universities' and faculty is increasing attention to market-like behaviors to secure external funds (Rhodes, 2005 citing from Hayle, E, M. 2008).

Scholars of the second view take the position that internationalization has strengthened Western intellectual imperialism (academic colonialism) and the dependency status of higher education institutions and research in Third World countries (Murphy, 2007; Selvaratnam, 1988 citing from Hayle., E, M. 2008).

Supporters of the third perspective - the development of global competence, see internationalization as important in enriching the learning experience of students by educating them to develop knowledge about other nations and cultures, and enhance their abilities to function as global citizens in the global marketplace (Bartell, 2003; Ellingboe, 1998; Hayward, 2000; IAU, 2005; Queen's University Strategic Plan, 2006).

4. Four Approaches to internationalization for Higher Education (De Wit, 2002)

De Wit's categorize definition of internationalization to be the four approaches to internationalization: the activity approach, the rationale approach (purposes and intended outcomes), the competency approach (learning competencies, career competences, global competence, transnational competence and international competence), and the process approach (integration/infusion of activities, academics, policies and procedures, and strategies) (de Wit, 2002, p. 117-118). Definitions frequently reflect one or more of these approaches in defining internationalization; de Wit considers the process approach to be the most comprehensive and holistic. To gain a better understanding of internationalization, it is important to examine the various elements that most often comprise internationalization strategies at institutions of higher education.

5. The Glonacol Agency Heuristic Approach

Simon Marginson and Gary Rhodes from Finland present their critique of some existing modes of thought in comparative higher education research and offer a new approach: A Glonacal Agency Heuristic. Their model "encourage a focus on specific organizations and collective action rather than over-generalized conceptions of polities and states, economies and markets, or higher education systems and institutions"

The "glonacal" part in heuristic model refers to the "intersections, interactions, mutual determinations of global, national and local level". The second part is an attempt to bring in the agent with his agency and try to ask

who or what the different agents playing in the higher education field really are, and what are the specific global, national and local mechanisms and process operating in the field.

6. Internationalization as a continuous cycle

An alternative approach to the development of organization models is to consider the internationalization process as a continuous cycle, not a linear or static process. The proposed "Internationalization Cycle: From Innovation to Institutionalization" attempts to identify the steps or phases in the process of integrating the international dimension into the university/college culture and systems. The proposed cycle has six phases (awareness, commitment, planning, operating, review, reinforcement) which an institution would move through at its own pace. While it is clear that there is a sequence to the six phases, it is also important to acknowledge the two-way flow that will occur between the different steps. (Knight, J & De wit, 2010)

7. Components of Internationalization by using Kurr model

Those components according to Kurr model are students, scholars, curriculum, and knowledge. In his model, Kerr (1987 citing from Courts, A, D (2004, 3-11) referred to a "flow" within each of the four areas which are students, scholars, curriculum, and knowledge. The "flow of students" includes both the external flow of local students who study abroad and the internal flow of international students who come to that country to study. The "flow of scholars" has a two-fold meaning. It implies both the necessity of institutional faculty to explore international collaborative opportunities for themselves, and to utilize the resources of international faculty teaching within local institutions. Knowledge referred research and service activities with international emphases can be thought of as both an "import" as well as an "export" product of the "flow of knowledge" from higher education. Importing ideas from abroad and exporting them to the greater international community. The curriculum regards, as the content of the curriculum is an obvious and important area for expanding the international proficiency of an institution.

8. Ellington's conceptual model of successful internationalization.

Ellingboe developed a conceptual model of successful internationalization through her qualitative, in-depth research of the University of Minnesota's internationalization efforts. Through this research, Ellingboe concludes that in order to achieve comprehensive, successful internationalization, six factors must be present. Those are as follow:

The first factor is college leadership, by which Ellingboe means that internationalization has become a priority for the university as evidenced by rhetorical and financial commitment from upper administration (president, vice president, deans) and by inclusion of internationalization within strategic plans and hiring decisions.

The second factor is faculty involvement in international activities. This factor includes faculty promoting international study options to students, traveling abroad to lead international study programs or collaborate with international colleges in research activities, and a high level of contact on campus with international faculty members and scholars.

The third factor is an internationalized curriculum meaning the inclusion of international concepts into all disciplines within the curriculum, the existence of resources such as web resources and travel grants to encourage faculty to include international components in all classes and majors.

The forth factor is international opportunities for students that include various types of international activities such as study abroad, research abroad, and internships abroad.

The fifth factor is the integration of international students and scholars into the everyday campus life, which can be achieved through special programming across campus and a concerted effort to structure activities for international students and scholars to interact with their peers and produce a true sense of international understanding between individuals.

The six factor is the existence of international co-curricular units and activities which includes campus-wide programming to heighten the campus's awareness of international issues and more explicit marketing of international options(both on and off campus) for students and faculty. (Espiritu, K., M., 2009)

9. Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education.

The guidelines elaborated by UNESCO and OECD propose tools and a synthesis of best practices that can assist Member States in assessing the quality and relevance of higher education provided across borders and to protect students and other stakeholders in higher education from low-quality higher education provision. The guidelines address six stakeholders in higher education (government, higher education institutions/providers including academic staff, student bodies, quality assurance and accreditation bodies, academic recognition bodies, and professional bodies), provide a set of orientations to practitioners, and seek to promote mutual trust and international cooperation between providers and receivers of cross-border higher education.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework of this study is shown in the figure 1:

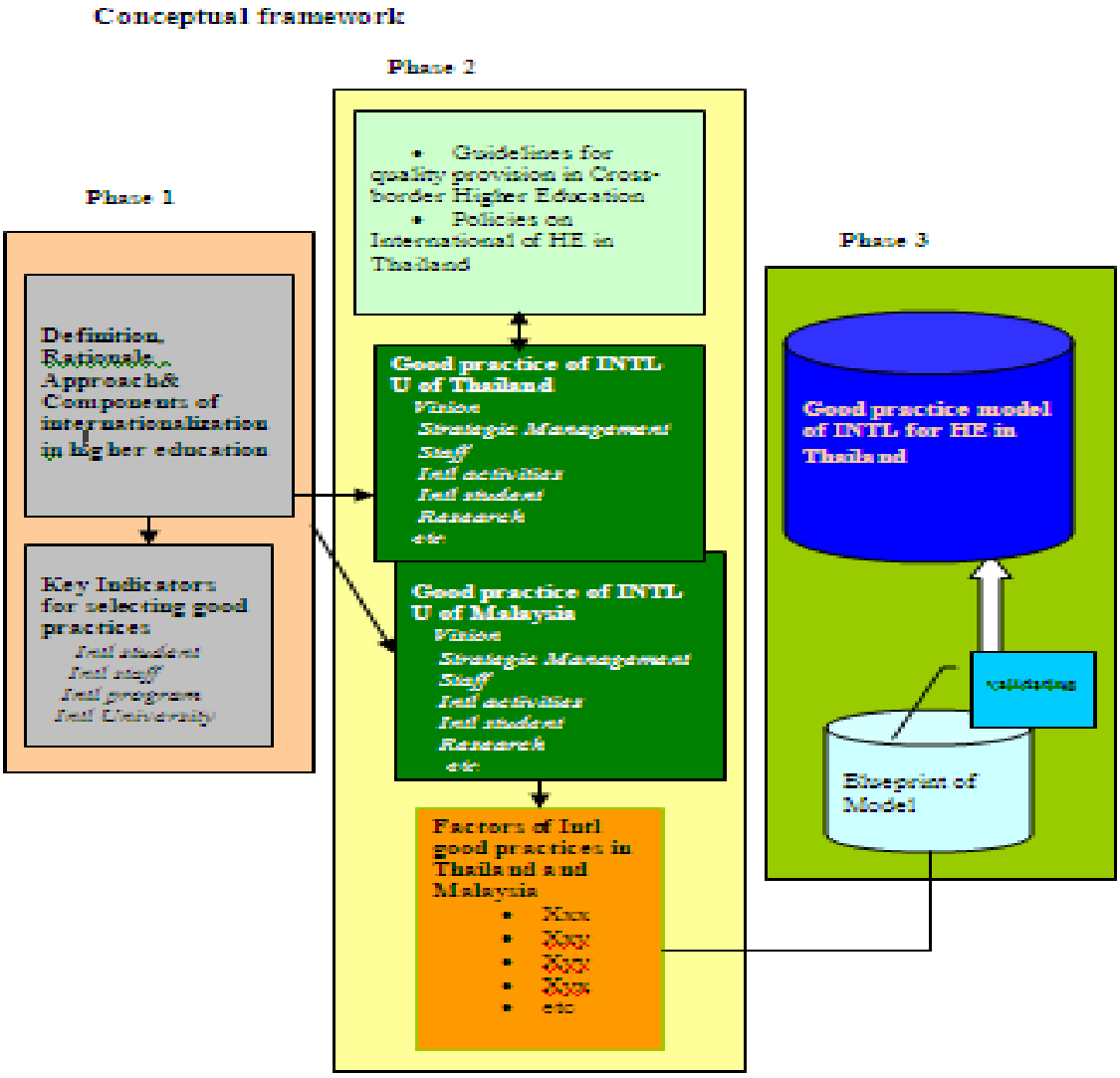

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

The methodology employed in this research is that of a case study approach. It uses documentary study to identify key indicators for selecting good practices: one international university in Thailand and another one of international university in Malaysia are researched. The research process will be divided to be 4 phases as follows:

- Phase one: reviewing literature
- Phase two: developing indicators
- Phase three: selecting case studies from the result of phase two to select the good practices of internationalization higher education institutions then using case studies by interviewing, observations, and documentary studies.
- Phase four: developing a model and validating the model by expert group.

By the end of this study, the researcher expects to conduct a good practice model of internationalization for higher education in Thailand. Hopefully the result of this study will guide the higher education sector in Thailand in improving their qualities in internationalization.

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