

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

AMALGAMATION OF DIVERSIFIED STREAMS ON BUILDING ACADEMIC GLOBALIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF LIMKOKWING UNIVERSITY'S POST GRADUATE CENTRE

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Keywords: Academic Globalization, Limkokwing University, Education Management

ABSTRACT:

The term academic globalization describes the increasing interaction among academic aspirants for integration of the activities related to education around the world (Michael Mussa, 2003). In simple terms, it is an approach to integrate multi-national people under multi-disciplinary faculties for the purpose of knowledge sharing. This research paper discusses more of academic globalisation that results from increasing integration through international-knowledge-exposure — a process that is generally seen as bringing important improvements in students' career prospects as well as raising academic quality in research output.

Furthermore, a discussion of merits of academic globalization in the lens of an exclusive department in an institution — for this purpose a case study of the Centre of Post Graduate Studies and Professional Development (PGC) of Limkokwing University is being studied here in this research paper. With more than one thousand students from across the world, PGC stands as an institution on its own. Students are empowered through high exposure on practical knowledge, theoretical skills, superlative wisdom etc. Globalization in general terms refers to the interconnectedness of people across the world that influences global cultural, political and economic integration. Enabling this in an academic arena is a meritorious strategy. Limkokwing University is highly successful in this roadmap graduating several hundreds of students from PGC so far. This research paper shall deal about the academic globalization from a success model of Limkokwing University's post graduate centre.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Academic Globalization

“Just as free trade in manufacturing or call-centre support provides the lowest-cost goods and services, benefiting both consumers and the most efficient producers, global academic competition is making free movement of people and ideas, on the basis of merit, more and more the norm, with enormously positive consequences for individuals, for universities, and for nations. Today’s swirling patterns of mobility and knowledge transmission constitute a new kind of free trade: free trade in minds.”

Ben Wildavsky

In an article titled *Academic Globalisation Should Be Welcomed, Not Feared* published in January 15, 2010

Globalization is not a new phenomenon. People have traversed continents and crossed seas and oceans for over thousands of years. They went in search of a better life, for knowledge, for truth and even out of curiosity. But today this activity has grown by leaps and bounds as fast trains and planes and the global thirst for goods and services have turned the world into a village. Everything is available and just a plane ride away. Due to the increased demand in the high-tech industry around the world, business and industry have potential for huge profits working globally. So in today’s world, globalization is an important concept for students in higher education to understand and appreciate because of the demand in business and industry to hire people who can work with people of other nations and cultures and if need be can travel independently internationally to promote their business or industry. In addition, the world faces global challenges that will take interdisciplinary groups to solve these challenges; providing access to clean water for everyone on this planet and making clean renewable energy affordable just to name a few. These global challenges will need to be solved through the gathering and sharing of knowledge across disciplines, institutions, and other entities institutions on a global scale. Creating meaningful relationships that work globally is in itself challenging.

“International higher education plays an unprecedented role in the globalising world. The rapid development of globalisation gives international higher education a valuable mission. Educators have to foster global, multi-cultural citizens who can participate in social issues that require critical thinking.”

Extracted from a blog by Elizabeth Liu, McGill University, Canada, on *Academic Freedom In A Time Of Globalisation*, 19 December 2014.

In this chapter, we will look at global challenges, the makeup of model collaborative international teams; the importance of teaching globalization in higher education, how to best teach globalization, and discuss best practices in this area. The first force to dramatically flatten the world was on 11/9/89, the fall of the Berlin Wall. Freidman calls this, *The New Age of Creativity: When the Walls Came Down and the Windows Went Up*.

Over the last century, amazing inventions and innovations have transformed all our lives around the world, they include: the airplane; automobile; radio and television; electrification; water supply and distribution; electronics;

telephony; air condition and refrigeration; highways; spacecrafts; computers; Internet; imaging; household appliances; health technologies; petroleum and petroleum technologies; laser and fibre optics; nuclear technologies; and high performance materials (Constable & Somerville, 2003). The best way to solve global challenges is for mathematicians, scientists, engineers, medical researchers and technologists all over the world to work on these global challenges together, some of which is happening now, but not to the extent that it could or should be. Unfortunately, in the U.S. higher education institutions are more focused on becoming the best research institutions.

The university's traditional rewards for faculty engaged in research are for individual accomplishments. While lip service is given to rewarding faculty who collaborate in research, collaborating doesn't get a faculty member promoted or tenured at research universities. There has been a call to change the way university's reward faculty, however, there has been no change in the way faculties are tenured and promoted. It probably will take a world crisis for America's best and brightest to realize the potential for working with others globally in a range of fields to solve the world's greatest challenges.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the largest charitable foundation in the world, is among the outstanding examples that have invested billions into research involving scientists from across the world to find solutions. BMGF came into existence in 2000 when the William H. Gates Foundation, founded in 1994, merged with the Gates Learning Foundation, founded in 1997. The Grand Challenges for Global Health (GCGH) initiative started by the BMGF in 2003 envisioned a way "to identify research areas with the greatest promise for saving and improving lives in the developing world; to fund novel, interdisciplinary approaches among researchers seeking solutions; and to get the 'rich-world' scientific community to apply its experience to pivotal health questions of the developing world".

"National borders simply don't have the symbolic or practical meaning they once did, which bodes well for academic quality on all sides. Already, the degree of international collaboration on scientific papers has risen substantially. And there is early evidence that the most influential scholars are particularly likely to have international research experience: Well over half the highly cited researchers based in Australia, Canada, Italy, and Switzerland have spent time outside their home countries at some point during their academic careers, according to a 2005 study."

Ben Wildavsky

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POST GRADUATE CENTRE OPERATIONS: A CASE OF LIMKOKWING UNIVERSITY'S DIVISION

Centre of Post Graduate Studies and Professional Development (PGC) has a significant structure in Limkokwing University. There are 18 Masters Programs and 2 PhD programs. With the quantum of 1500 students this particular department has got multi-racial, multi-national, multi ethnicity students pursuing their post graduate studies. Though every University

operates distinctly with their uniqueness, here at Limkokwing University the operations are predominantly unique for the purpose of serving 'exposure'. A modular approach is being adhered whereby it means that a student can take one module for one month as per their syllabus. This allows the student to engage themselves to be as a fulltime student and at the same time exert as a part timer. It is understood that MVBA program cannot be taught part time however the philosophy is to give a corporate exposure to every post graduate student. The statistics claims that majority of these students have become entrepreneurs or secured a high-profile job in their country (Tracer Study, 2018)

With the consortium of 30000+ students studying at Limkokwing University's various faculties, all these students have progressed to one particular centre for their post graduate studies, that is, PGC. Thus PGC becomes a strategic business unit of Limkokwing University to accommodate all the master level students. With limited resource of lecturers and at same time which is adequate for delivering a transparent pedagogy this PGC has been phenomenal in showing the progress. The purpose of education is to train the mind to think (Albert Einstein). This is being followed as a road map by every lecturer in PGC. The notes, materials, assignments, tutorials, case studies etc. are above standards which makes a student ready for a corporate task. Few programs like MBA in project management, MBA general management, MBA HRM has been well received in the market. Usually every Universities combines all the master programs under single MBA, whereas in Limkokwing University these programs are broken into clusters with different module codes. This proves the importance given by the management based on its speciality. These programs are approved by MQA (Malaysian Qualification Agency).

The infrastructure of PGC is wide and rigid. Students when they enter into the class room they feel like entering into a corporate board room. The materials such as slides and case studies makes the students empowered with real know-how of corporate life. The lecturers are trained to induce every student with a spark either through their case studies or through their lecture deliveries. So it is clear that PGC is not theoretical but practical in delivering their classes. The tracer study report admits that more than 78% of PGC students have obtained a job or into business before their graduation. This outcome has proven the operations of PGC has been successful.

2.1 Academic Globalization at PGC

While doing a comparative study for this research it was found that no private University in Malaysia has got these many international students. Leading Universities such as Monash, Segi, Taylors, Sunway, MMU etc. has got significant number of students but still lack in international students. In Limkokwing University, it is found that a class room of 80 students will have 60 nationalities as minimum. This is like a mini UN. The exposure is herculean-learning for every student who enrolls at Limkokwing University's PGC. This spirit has enabled the division to grow faster and today it is being confirmed by the University sources that PGC is the leading division on revenue mobilization. Though the credit may not go only for its globalization agenda, there are multiple strategies that makes PGC as a significant division of Limkokwing University.

The research generated by this department is mammoth. However, exhibiting this has been a suppressive issue. If exhibited all their student's research outcome, this undoubtedly can turn as best research centre of Malaysia. This is again achieved through their internationalism. A culture of one nation is entirely different from other nations. So if there are only few nationality's students then it can be expected to have narrowed view of research topics. But since they possess multiple nationality students, all the researches are diversified.

2.3 Framework Model

Following were the main elements found for supporting PGC's growth while interviewing the internal staffs and personnel of PGC. This research paper as mediocre literature review, as the majority of the findings are from secondary research data, since this is a case study research. Elements like exposure, infrastructure, pedagogy, internationalism and empowerment when combined with University policies the entire department got flourished with triumph. This is depicted as model herewith.

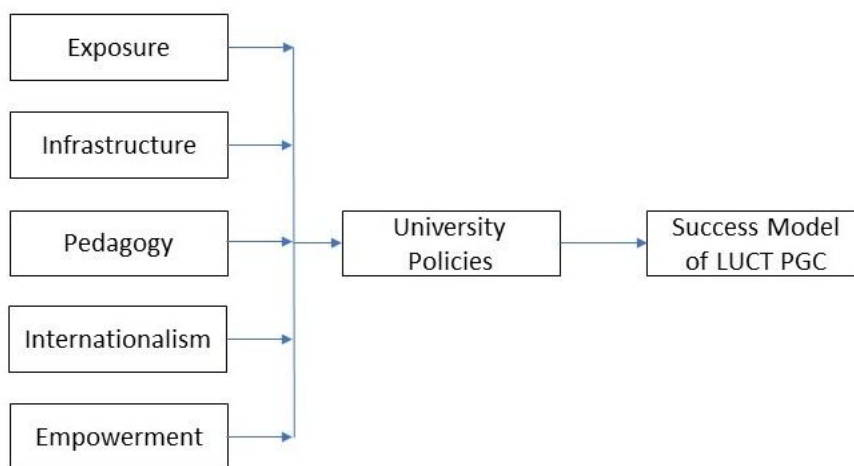


Figure 1.1: LUCT-PGC Success Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this research paper, a quantitative research is been executed. Sample size of 84 post graduate students were taken based on Raosoft sample size calculator. These 84 students were contacted electronically. Due to Covid-19 outbreak, the researcher was unable to have a direct contact with respondents. These 84 respondents were from institutions in Cyberjaya, Putrajaya and Dengkil. Due to research ethics the names of students and their Universities are withheld in this report. Moreover, it would not be appropriate to disclose other University's operation in researcher's point of view due to conflict of interest.

A questionnaire was distributed to these students electronically. After receiving them it was analysed through SPSS version 27.

DATA ANALYSIS - MEASUREMENT MODEL ASSESSMENT AND CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (CFA)

Table 1 shows the overall model fit of this study, indicates that RAMSEA, CFA, TLI and other indicators are acceptable (Kline and Rosenberg 2010); (Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2016), GFI and AGFI are also fit. The Absolute fit indices show that the chi-square is not significant (p value should be > 0.5). Although the chi-square is not significant, the model still fits because Chi-Square statistic nearly always rejects the model when large samples are used (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1993) ; (Bentler and Bonett 1980). The chi-square sensitive to sample size >80 (Byrne 2016), and the sample size for this study is 84. Therefore, the psychometric properties of the measurement model could now be evaluated in terms of construct and indicator reliability, convergent and discriminant validity (Kline 2010); (Steiger 1990); (Bollen and Stine 1990); (Tucker and Lewis 1973); (Byrne 2016); (Medsker, Williams, and Holahan 1994); (James, Mulaik, and Brett 1982).

Table 1 :Goodness-of-fit indices for the measurement model

| Fit Index | Cited | Admissibility | Result | Fit (Yes/No) |
|--------------|---|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| X^2 | | | 241.485 | |
| DF | | | 202 | |
| P value | | $>.05$ | .030 | No |
| X^2/DF | (Kline, 2010) | 1.00 - 5.00 | 1.195 | Yes |
| RMSEA | (Steiger, 1990) | $<.08$ | .021 | Yes |
| GFI | (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993) | $>.90$ | .956 | Yes |
| AGFI | (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993) | $>.80$ | .945 | Yes |
| NFI | (Bentler & G.Bonnet, 1980) | $>.80$ | .960 | Yes |
| PNFI | (Bentler & G.Bonnet, 1980) | $>.05$ | .839 | Yes |
| IFI | (Bollen, 1990) | $>.90$ | .993 | Yes |
| TLI | (Tucker & Lewis, 1973) | $>.90$ | .992 | Yes |
| CFI | (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Byrne, 2010; Medsker, Williams, & Holahan, 1994) | $>.90$ | .993 | Yes |
| PGFI | (James, Muliak, & Brett, 1982) | $>.50$ | .763 | Yes |

Note: X^2 = Chi Square, DF = Degree of freedom, GFI = Goodness-of-fit, NFI = Normed fit index, IFI = the increment fit index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis coefficient Index, CFI = Comparative-fit-index, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, SRMR: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual, PNFI = Parsimony Normed Fit Index, AGFI =Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index

- The indexes in bold are recommended since they are frequently reported in literature(Awang, 2014)

As shown above in Table 1, the measurement Model yielded a fairly good fit with to these collected data ($\chi^2 = 241.485$, $df = 202$, $p < .03$; $\chi^2/ df = 1.195$, $AGFI = 0.945$; $CFI = .993$; $NFI = .960$, $RMSEA = 0.021$). The indexes in bold are recommended since they are frequently reported in literature (Awang 2014).

For the purpose of simplifying the results, only three elements were considered to conclude the validity of data. Exposure, Infrastructure and Empowerment were alone been focused herewith. Thus, out of all items in questionnaire the researcher has taken out the data of these elements and analysed. This can be found in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of discriminant validity by fornell-larcker criterion for the model

| | <i>Factors</i> | <i>Correlations of Constructs</i> | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-----------------------------------|------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | Means | SD | AVE | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | EX | 4.16 | 1.20 | 0.58 | 0.78 | | |
| 2 | INF | 4.17 | 1.17 | 0.61 | 0.33 | 0.78 | |
| 3 | EM | 4.25 | 1.30 | 0.63 | 0.39 | 0.47 | 0.78 |

Note: Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the average variance extracted while the other entries represent the correlations.

Key: EX: Exposure, INF: Infrastructure, EM:Empowerment.

DISCUSSION

In this descriptive study, the proposed model was analysed, which addressed the effect of exposure, infrastructure, empowerment on success of PGC through University policies within the Limkokwing University’s Post Graduate centre. The variance explained for the model is given in Figure 1. Where University Policies can explain 11% of the variance in of Exposure whereas infrastructure and empowerment explain 89% of the variance in success of the division. This proves that PGC has been outstanding by the measures taken in its structure on infrastructure and empowerment.

5.1 Future Scope

This research was done based on secondary data available within the University. Thus, only five main aspects were considered as elements viz. Exposure, infrastructure, empowerment, pedagogy and internationalism. There may be other factors that researcher could have missed, and this entitles to become a future study.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that a University is a knowledge hub of an economy. Academic globalization underscores higher diversity of research outcomes as well as broadening the scope of students’ research activities.The more productive the

educational institution, the more an economy can become pro-active and diversified in raising its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This philosophy is fully embraced by the Post Graduate Centre of Limkokwing University. Though this paper should not be considered as marketing material of institution, the researcher has taken efforts to be equipoised on facts that were gathered. With such facts, a quantitative research has been done by the researcher. It is understood by the data analysis, that infrastructure and empowerment of a division enables the unit to progress well. Academic Globalization is highly successful in Limkokwing University's PGC because of this reason and highly recommended as a model to be adopted to produce graduates able to work with multicultural competency in a world that demands such a mindset.

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