

MAIN FOCUSES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALIZATION (HEI) AT GLOBAL AND LOCAL LEVELS.

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Universities' vision of global tendencies supports the study of internationalization phenomenon at institutional level, although stakeholders are different but the goals are similar. At institutional level, there is a steady increase of interest in HEI. Most institutions continue to use strategic approaches to HEI. The most important forms are student mobility, strategic partnerships and international research cooperation. Assessment of internationalization is becoming common practice for universities, but only some of them use integrated approach.

Many universities around the world consider HEI as a goal. However, dutch scientist Hans De Wit does not share this opinion. In his scientific work, he argues that internationalization is mistakenly taken as the goal itself, rather than means of education quality improvement. Internationalization should improve education and research for both students and lectors and make significant contribution to society development. The researcher highlighted such contradictory focuses as mass character on the one hand and knowledge economy on the other; contradiction of autonomy and academic freedom and reputation and ratings, as well as changes in economic and political climate [2].

Canadian scientist John Hudzik suggests taking a more centralized, holistic and systematic approach to HEI. The researcher introduces the concept of "comprehensive internationalization", which provides intentional friendliness and actions aimed at incorporation and integration of international, global and comparative content, as well as prospects in learning, teaching and research. He emphasizes that this integrated approach is a comprehensive intention to integrate internationalization into the basis of institutional ethos, values and missions [3]. As we can see, understanding of higher education internationalization is changing from reactive to proactive. At present stage,

for most universities, higher education internationalization is not just a declaration, concept or statement but action and reality. Initiatives vary from imitation to attempts of acting and staying on the same line with successful universities, taking into account own characteristics.

However, there are contradictions between understanding, declarations and implementation. Thus, in one of her recent studies of global situation concerning HEI, german researcher Daniela Crăciun stated that only 11% of the world's countries have official internationalization strategies, and in addition, mostly well-developed countries. Leaders are European countries that promote strategic thinking about internationalization at the national level. Two thirds of all national strategies in the world belong to European countries, and their Erasmus + and Horizon 2020 programs which have led to further harmonization of higher education systems [1].

According to IAU data, the presence of international faculty at universities is considered to be an important dimension of higher education internationalization in the global knowledge economy. However, they take only a small percentage of the total staff. 20% of higher education institutions do not have international lecturers at all, and 34% of them have less than 5% of international lecturers out of total number of teaching staff. Regionally, the lowest rates are in Latin America and the Caribbean, while the highest in Asia, the Pacific and North America [4].

Another important dimension of the phenomenon is internationalization of research, as it requires international cooperation and competition. Long-term planning of research infrastructure, number increasing of research papers, developing new research platforms and better coordination between research units require more strategic approach to increasing the number of research and international research policies. Increasing funding, number of patents, publications and citations require the development of research groups of global origin. Therefore, it can be argued that main HEI rationales of universities are the ratings and indicators on which they are based: number of foreign students, lecturers and publications with international co-authors.

In Ukraine, universities do not have sufficient autonomy and depend on the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine concerning curricula, and therefore they can only internationalize the content of education through transformation of working academic programs and individual disciplines. The picture by regions of Ukraine has its differences. The object of our scientific interests is Sumy region, as a region of residence and work.

According to interviews with the heads of departments of foreign affairs from three universities of Sumy region, namely: Sumy State University (SSU), Sumy National Agrarian University (SNAU) and Sumy State Pedagogical University (SSPU), as well as to analysis of strategic documents on HEI, we can outline some internationalization focuses. These universities are involved in the process of internationalization with different level of devotion. All have strategic documents of internationalization. (SSU - strategy 2019-2025, SDPU - plan of higher education, SNAU - statements on internationalization) and have departments dealing with internationalization. Among the main focuses are international cooperation, research and publications, as they have the greatest impact on international rankings of universities. Student mobility is also important for all three universities. Recruitment of international students remains one of the main tasks. The overall percentage (13.7%) of foreign students in the region suggests that all three universities are quite attractive to foreigners. It is also confirmed by the level of university attractiveness for foreigners, established on the basis of anonymous questionnaires fulfilled by foreign students.

At the same time, percentage of local students going to study abroad is quite low - 1-2%. It is explained by financial barriers and low incomes of most Ukrainian families who cannot afford studying abroad. The percentage of international lecturers in Sumy region is quite low, reaching 1.5%, and lecturers with intercultural experience compose about 4% of the total staff.

In the pandemic, development of international online learning is particularly relevant. We consider this focus to be the main one. It ensures the creation of multicultural educational environment for development of intercultural competence.

Joint international online learning through innovative online pedagogy combines the basic dimensions of virtual mobility: joint practice for students and teachers, applied use of online technologies and interaction, international dimensions, integrity in the educational process.

Thus, the main focuses of HEI at modern stage are strengthening of global competition for foreign students; growing need for internationalization of curricula, teaching and learning outcomes, further development of international research cooperation. The issue of HEI evaluation requires in-depth and detailed study, as there is a need for development of highly effective methods for evaluating the results of internationalization for efficient resource allocation.

References:

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