How does Globalization and Internationalization Influence Kuwait's Higher Education

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Internationalization of education is a growing phenomenon and has become an important dimension in the development of higher education policy at the institutional, national level and global level. Internationalization of higher education is viewed as a response to globalization and is considered to be closely related to the challenges posed by increasing globalization, which is having increasing affects on higher education sectors across the globe (Marijk and Wende, 2001).

The terms globalization and internationalization are two closely linked inter-related expressions, which are often used interchangeably. As with globalization, there are varied and wide ranging definitions of the concept of internationalization. Regarding education, Knight and De Wit (1995) defines it as: "the process of intergrating international dimensions into teaching, research and service of higher education", more recently Knight (2003) has proposed an updated definition of internationalization as: "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education".

David Held, professor of Political science at the London School of Economics, has added that globalization is:

A process, which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their expensity, intensity, velocity and impact-generating transcontinental or interregional flows

and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power. (in Steger, 2003:10) .According to some academics (Green, 1997; Buelens, 1999 cited in Mrijk and Wende, 2001), globalization is a process that will eventually turn nation states into powerless units and predict that finally their roles will disappear. Whereas Scott (1998 cited in Marijk and Wende, 2001), refers more positively to globalization as the cooperation between states regarding cross border activities and rather reflects a world order in which individual states play an important role. Despite the differences regarding the definitions of internationalization, it is possible to deduce from all definitions and theories regarding internationalization and higher education, that internationalization of higher education can be understood as any activity involving post-compulsory education, and academic and extracurricular activities that have been impacted or effected by global factors or international influences such as, curricular development and innovation student and faculty exchange, technological assistance, intercultural training, education of international students and joint research initiatives (Knight and De Wit, 1995).

Therefore, this essay will explore some theories which explain globalization. In addition, it sets out to highlight the importance of internationalization of higher education and assess how globalization and internationalization has influenced higher education in the State of Kuwait.

An overview of globalization theories:

There are three theories that attempt to explain globalization in terms of processes, assumptions and views. The 'World System Theory' has sought to explain perspectives on globalization and internationalization as being closely linked to imperialism and capitalism (Lechner, 2011). Wallerstein (1974) mentions that according to the

world system theory, globalization can be defined as: 'A unit with a single division of labor and multiple cultural systems'.(Wallerstien, 1974a: 390).

It purports that globalization involves the building of a world economy, where there is free movement of capital across orders in order to make profit for sales of goods (Wallerstein 1974b: 349-50).

On the other hand, the 'World polity theory' explains globalization in terms of the growth of a shared world culture. Its cultural models often start in developed nation states and are adopted or enacted by other countries. One of its key objectives is to establish familiarity between nations in order to develop a shared set of ideals and values, leading to structural similarity. In other words, internationalization of world models can lead the development of similar constitutional forms, such as public educational systems (Boli et al., 1997:152:3). Meyer (1980:111-2, cited in Lechner, 2001) explains that a polity is a "system of creating value through the collective conferral of authority"

On the other hand, globalization according to the World culture theory involves the world becoming a single place in thought and action, while still maintaining diversity (Robertson, 1992:27). Robertson rightly points out that this theory refers to globalization as "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness" (1992:8).

Despite the number of theories regarding globalization, what is clear, is that both internationalization and globalization are terms used to indicate increasing international activities in order to enhance higher education globally. Therefore, globalization and internationalization will have significant on the global market for higher education, and this will be discussed further in the next section.

The impact of globalization and internationalization on the global market for higher education :

Wende (1999, Cited in Wende, 2001:235) explains that many European universities consider globalization as a process that cannot be influenced at the institutional level, but rather see globalization as an external socio-economic process affecting and being effected at the macro level. Whereas, they view internationalization as a policy based internal response that can be formed and affected at the higher education institutional level.

Significantly, universities and colleges around the world are increasingly under pressure to compete in the global capitalist market and engage in 'entrepreneurial' activity to sustain themselves in an increasingly uncertain world (Chinnammai, 2005). In 1999, the Bologna declaration was made; one of its major aims was to address the increasing international competition in higher education, generally, and in Dutch higher education institutions in particular. While, the US, the UK and Australia represent the first three of the five most popular destinations for study abroad (Marijk and Wende, 2001).

At present, education systems face the dual challenges of providing students with new knowledge, skills and values necessary to compete in a global market, while also producing graduates who are responsible adults and good citizens both of their country and of the world (Chinnammai, 2005). It is evident that the role of education has become increasingly linked to globally competitive positions, encouraging universities to implement "direct, entrepreneurial activity to sustain themselves" (Chinnamai, 2005). This, in turn, produces a change in institutional approaches to the development of overseas education, particularly, with the growing number of students in the

1990s and beyond, who are searching for higher education outside of their own countries (Chinnammai, 2005).

In the global market, a university's curriculum's international dimension is considered a major indicator of the quality of higher education today. Universities must develop their curriculums in order to cope with the accelerated changes of the significant requirements of globalization, which is driven mainly by completion within the multi-billion dollar international market for higher education. Therefore, many universities are seeking to market their educational market for higher education. Consequently, many universities are seeking to market their educational provision internationally by developing new curricula that serve global rather than national priorities, where student from all sources share equal opportunities for advancement in an inclusive learning environment and also to serve long distance students to the requests of an increasingly multinational world of work (Haigh, 2002).

Due to the increase in global completion, many developed countries, including Kuwait, have taken a leading role in order to provide higher education offering good quality education for Kuwaiti students. Their aim is to raise standards of living for individual families and also to reduce dependence on oil, replacing it with greater dependence on skill-intensive production. Therefore, kuwait's government has started the expansion of educational facilities in order to be more competitive in the global market, including schemes to improve the literacy level in the country, scholarship programs for students to study in leading universities abroad and the establishment of new international universities in Kuwait (Alfadly, 2007). The government of Kuwait aims to have one of the most progressive and successful education systems to match those found in particular in the United Kingdom (UK), the

United States (USA), and Australia (The Ministry of Education of Kuwait MOE, 1998). The next section will discuss the educational performs taking place in Kuwait in further detail.

Kuwaiti government's educational reform:

Since Kuwait's liberation in 1961, the Ministry of education (MOE) began to develop and renovate its education system in order to cope with accelerated changes driven by the increasing globalization and internationalization-taking place throughout the world as a whole. The government of Kuwait aims to develop one of the most modern and successful education systems, to match those in developed countries (MOE, 1998).

In 2005, the Kuwaiti government set out its vision for education for the next twenty years. A report by Alfadly (2007) decribes the public educational strategy from 2005 to 2025, which was approved by the Minister's council. The strategy sets out five main points and most of them are clearly a result of globalization, or at least, have been influenced by globalization. The strategies are as follows:

1) To participate in achieving coherence with the current age through free thinking and dynamic change in community culture. It involves different programmes such as 'thinking creatively' by learner and teacher and developing thinking styles through, for example, brainstorming. In particular, it focuses on supporting the learning of foreign languages, mainly English, and the increased use of computers and modern technology for students.

2) The strategy also aims to close the gap between the reality of current state education and advanced technological requirements in different fields, through increasing computer skills for teacher, staff and

managers (MOE, 2003). This is clearly linked to globalization and the technological revolution, which has witnessed the increasing importance ofhteuse of modern technology in order to remain competitive and be considered as progressive.

3) To participate in supporting faith values (with important discussions groups) and respect for the human rights of learner, and promote democracy. This strategy reflects the World culture theory of globalization, in that Kuwait, a Middle Easter country, has emulated and adopted the typically "western" ideology of democracy.

4) To stabilize wealth and productivity; to preserve the environment and national resources. This is in line with many progressive western countries, which focus heavily on protecting the environment and avoidance of wasting resources. Like the UK national curriculum's geography unit 'Why do we recycle at home', and the 'Water' unit, which explores issues surrounding the value of water and the seriousness of wasting water (DfES, 2009). The aims of this strategy support the World polity theory of globalization, showing that Kuwait is recognizing global expectations and standards regarding environmental issues and conservation.

5) To stress the basic requirement of state school curricular; to ensure the achievement of national goals. Here, Kuwait is raising standards of education in the aim of achieving high standards of education expected in developed nations. As Robertson (1995a: 41) states, the world culture theory involves countries emulating others, emulation takes the form of selectively incorporating ideas from a global arsenal. Clearly, globalization has had an impact on the most recent

strategies laid out by the Kuwaiti government regarding educational reform for the next twenty years. Evidently, these strategies aim to increase Kuwait's educational productivity, and, therefore, raise the educational standards of all its young citizens. As bloom (2007:2) rightly points out "Education gives a capacity to adapt to change". It can be said, that this capacity is at the individual, national and global level. These reforms represent the positive impact of globalization, in that their implementation will produce positive results and benefit Kuwait's Learners.

The following section will discuss the roles that developed nations have played in the internationalization of Kuwait's higher education system.

Developed nation's role in the internationalization of Kuwait's Higher Education.

Kuwait is one of the richest countries in the Arabian Gulf region, enclosed by Saudi Arabia in the south and Iraq in the north. Kuwait sits on an estimated nine per cent of the world's oil reserves, a high percentage of which are easily extracted. For this reason, internationalization of higher education can be linked to several changes in the international system. Many developing countries, such as Kuwait, have experienced growth in the educational facilities available to them due to the entry of institutions from the west. One example of a European country which has established an institution of higher education in Kuwait is the Netherlands. In fact the Netherlands has had a significant impact on the internationalization of Kuwait's higher education, replacing the bachelor-master system in 2000 in order to attract more foreign students. This type of master's program is expected to provide better opportunities for flexibility and lifelong learning. Consequently, institutional autonomy will be increased, in order to help

the Netherland's institution respond to international challenges such as, internationalizing the curriculum and offering instruction in other languages, such as English (Wende and Marijk, 2001)

As part of its vision to increase higher education facilities, Kuwait's Ministry of Higher Education, has given land to international countries without charge, in order to build private universities (Kuna 2005). The reason behind this move was that Kuwait University's capacity was not enough to accept the expected increased numbers of Kuwaiti students in the future. There are ten private international insitiutions currently established or being built in Kuwait, providing educational courses in English.

Although the UK does not have a university branch in the state of Kuwait, there is a UK Higher Education International Unit, which has been established to coordinate, promote and undertake activities designed to support the UK's higher education institutions in a globally competitive world. The British council is one of various branches in the Middle East. One of the roles of the British council in Kuwait is to export education services. They have been working for more that thirty years to help create awareness of the quality of higher education in the UK, and to connect the local community to British educational opportunities, available both in the UK and the Middle East (www.britishcouncil.org/me.htm).

In addition, the American University of Kuwait (AUK) is an example of an independent, private, equal opportunity, and co-educational liberal institution of higher education. The educational, cultural, and administrative structure, methods and standards of AUK are based on the American model of higher learning (www.kuwaitculturaloffice.com). The USA's HE presence in Kuwait has ensured that their "interests as an industry, both for the domestic information

purposes and for international trade negations" are accomplished (NCITE, 2000 cited in Marijk and Wende, 2001).

Another positive aspect of the internationalization of higher education, as a process of globalization, is the increased cooperation and collaboration between nations, such as the creation of twinning projects, between the 'western' university and non-western university, like the 'Kuwait-Maastricht Business School' (Channammai, 2005). In 2003, the 'Kuwait Maastricht Business School' was launched, a private Netherland University, in order to bring superior quality educational facilities to Kuwait, in collaboration with an internationally recognized institution (Kuna, 2005). Likewise, the British council are building research capacity, which aims to identify UK-Kuwait opportunities for research co-operation, alliances, partnerships and potential collaborative models ahead of the lauch of a regional research capacity building project in 2009 (britishcouncil.com).

Despite the establishment of international institutions of higher education in Kuwait, Dr. Alharbi (Kuna, 2005) claims that the standards of education offered are not equivalent with that offered abroad. Unfortunately, these private institutions only offer two year courses in specialized subjects, such as aviation, business and economics. Therefore, Kuwaiti students studying in these institutions do not acquire the same level of knowledge as those who travel abroad to study. It is possible that these private institutions do not offer the same courses as they offer at home, so as to not threaten their own market of foreign student applicants. Indeed, given the option, many students would prefer to stay in their own country to study, if they felt that the standard and choice was equivalent to that found abroad. It would seem that the economic rationale was, and still is, the driving force behind the

establishment of these international universities, rather that offering high quality education of Kuwaitis. As the world system theory indicates, the internationalization of higher education has the potential to see the exploitation of developing, oil-rich nations by the more dominate nations.

Therefore, in order to become a globally competitive and progressive country, the Kuwaiti government has an ambitious foreign scholarship programe, which supports the top Kuwaiti students with scholarships to study in the USA, the UK, Australia and Dutch Universities. The UK views higher education as "the mobility to make the UK a more internationally competitive trading nation by selling educational services to paying customers" (Elliot 1998:32. Cited in Marjk and Wende, 2001). The evidence seems to be strong that British universities are now competing with Higher Education institutions from Australia, Canada, France, Germany and the United States to establish an in-country presence particularly in the GCC (Gulf Cooperation councils) states.

Another example of the role that developed countries have on the internationalization of higher education for Kuwaiti citizens is the provision for students study at universities in Australia, the third most popular study destination in the English-speaking world, with more than 200,000 international students in Australian institution across all education sectors to gain top-quality education overseas.Studying in Australia may be very different to studying in other countries, where the education providers encourage in dependent learning in order to obtain better prepares to a student to work in today's global marketplace. The IDP Education Australia is Astralia's leading international education and development organization, which has some 70 offices globally with activities in more than 50 countries, including Kuwait; where trained

counselors provide support and advice to students in local languages about studying in Australia (www.australiangraduate.com)

Developed nations have played a significant role in making higher education available to Kuwaiti citizens, by establishing private universities to the country, and by marketing their own higher education. Indeed, Kuwait has also, helped to facilitate this internationalization of higher education in the country by providing land free of charge for the institutions to be built on, and by developing its scholarship programme, allowing the brightest students from all backgrounds the opportunity to study abroad.

The following section will evaluate the effectiveness of internationalization on Kuwait's higher education.

The impact of internationalization on Higher Education in Kuwait:

The spread of education internationally, as a result of globalization, has clearly had effects on the culture, politics and economy of Kuwaiti higher education. Despite the economic, political, cultural and societal differences between the developed world and developing and the third world countries, Kuwait has adopted educational ideals from western thought as a symbol of modernity and development to their own population, an estimated three and a gulf million people (www.mapsofword.com). This is in line with the world culture theory of globalization, where ideals and ideologies permeate boundaries and are emulated by different countries.

In response to globalization, many institutions of HE are adapting their objectives to become more focused on meeting market demands and to create a market for a variety of educational products. Therefore, the internationalization of HE can be linked to various internal and external changes in Kuwait's economical and

educational systems. The internal changes were focused on the Kuwaiti labour market demands, which have called for more knowledgeable and skilled workers with deeper understandings of international languages, cultures and business methods (Chinnammai, 2005).

Significantly, the lack of regulation in Kuwait's institutions of higher education can be seen as a major internal issue with the globalization of HE because private institutions have not met the Kuwaiti government's vision for the future. As a result, they might be changes to colleges rather than universities (Kuna, 2005). It must, therefore, be recognized that scholarships for Kuwaiti students to study in developed countries will be method of facilitating global educational development.

Education is becoming more invaluable to individuals. In today's environment, HE provides individual with a better chance of employment, which leads to internal changes to a better life, power and status. Through globalization of education skills, capabilities of students will be improved (Chinnammai, 2005). The good quality of HE for all Kuwaitis is essential, not only to sustain rising standards of living for individual families, but also to reduce with greater dependence on skill-intensive production within, rather than the petroleum sector (Alsebeeh, 2008).

Another internal problem facing the Kuwaiti government is the length of time it takes for Kuwaiti graduates to find work this can sometimes be as long as two or three years wait. Although globalization facilitates the movement of workers to other countries, allowing them to improve their prospects and find employment, conversely, it leads to dwindling numbers of well-educated, skilled Kuwaitis that would be an asset to the country. The consequences of this process of human capital flight

threaten the hopes of sustainable development and technological capacity-building, which will enable Kuwait to pursue global development (Mohamed, 2005).

Undoubtedly, the external effects of globalization reflect on Kuwait's HE cultures particularly, the value and knowledge which can change the role of students and teachers within the rapid developments in technology and communications (Chinnammai, 2005). While education becomes a life-long learning and training process, the need for developing transferable skills will depend on the use of technology and a modern curriculum (Chinnammai, 2005). This indicates, therefore, that the use of modern technology, such as the internet, has been essential in changing the field of HE systems, where both students and teachers have been impacted.

In other words, dealing with knowledge in an international context develops deeper understanding and raises the quality of learning. Thus, it could be concluded that globalization increases the use of information as international networks, which were numerous before the issues of internationalization became subjected to the formal discussion. Hence, academic study needs an international approach to avoid 'parochialism' in scholarships and research collaborations, and in order to stimulate critical thinking, which is one of Kuwait's future ambitions. Also, an international approach stimulates 'enquiry' about complex issues and concerns that bear on the relations among nation and groups (Young, 2002).

Over 2,500 Kuwaiti students are studying in the United States, distributed among several universities in various U.S. states. However, this number is steadily reducing. No, doubt, the terrorist atrocities of September 11th (2001) has affected the Kuwaiti-American relationship.

The United states has strict laws relating to immigration and residence for all foreign students, causing frustration and annoyance as many Kuwaiti students were refused students visas. Therefore, Kuwait MOE has transferred the majority of scholarship students to other popular destinations for international students such as, the UK and Australian (Kuna, 2007). A senior official at Kuwait's Ministry of Education also announced that a number of distinguished high school graduates will be sent abroad to German and Indian universities by 2010 (Kuna, 2007).

Challenges and risks of internationalization of Higher Education:

An exploratory study was conducted in six universities in the UK (Maringe, 2008). In order to understand the challenges caused by increasing internationalization. The study identified that many foreign students are attracted to universities in the UK because of the English language (Maringe, Lumby and Morisson, 2007). With increasing numbers of European universities delivering courses in English, particularly since the Bologna declaration in 1999, the numbers of international students studying in the top three countries (UK, USA and Australia) is likely to diminish in favour of other countries, such as Germany, the Netherlands and India.

The study also identified that increased internationalization raises challenges for universities to successfully manage diversity on UK campuses (Maringe, 2008). Haigh (2002) recognized that increasing diversity may be difficult for the old-fashioned lecturers. Furthermore, universities must design curriculums that serve global rather than national priorities where students from all over the world can share in equal opportunities. Lidstoe (2001:2, cited in Haigh, 2002) argues that universities may need: "New ways of conceptualizing

places and regions, which require a common global approach to democracy and citizenship".

However, Maringe (2008) points out that while universities work hard to internationalize their education in global markets, there is a risk that they may neglect the national market and possibly compromise on the services that they offer to local students.

In support of these findings, a recent study on the 'National policies for the Internationalization of Higher Education in Europe" by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (1997) looked at universities in Northern Europe, Australia, the UK and the Netherlands. This study indicated a shift from the educational, cultural and political to the economic, as a dominant rationale for internationalization (De Wit, 2008). This study identified that the challenges that increasingly internationalized universities might face, will be the growing competition from other universities for international students. This could, potentially, have a negative impact both on the quality of the education, due to lower selection standards, and on the basic finance of higher education institutions for the training of local students, based on funding resulting from recruitment of foreign students. Despite this, many of these entrepreneurial universities feel under pressure to become ever-more international, since higher education has become more diverse in its income sources, deregulated, privatized and more market oriented (De Wit, 2008).

Conclusion:

This essay has highlighted some of the theories regarding globalization, and has clearly demonstrated that there is not a single, agreed upon definition regarding globalization and internationalization. However, it does seem possible to conclude that globalization and internationalization involves cooperation between countries,

allowing closer connections to be established and relationships to be formed.

Kuwait has witnessed significant changes, as the Kuwaiti government attempt to enhance and improve the education system in Kuwait in an effort to make create a world class education system, to match that found in developed countries. Kuwait's oil reserves have provided Kuwait with the finances to achieve their goals, but this source is depletable. Therefore, Kuwait's ambition to improve the education system is an attempt to improve the skills based capital of its citizens, so as to reduce dependence on oil-based income. A large part of the educational reforms involve internationalization. In fact, the input of the internationalization of developed countries higher education has played a critical role in enhancing the opportunities of Kuwait's citizens.

Although there are some disadvantages to the internationalization of global higher education, clearly there are significant advantages, particularly for developing countries like Kuwait, where increasing inter nationalization provides the population with enhanced educational opportunities and the chance to improve themselves. This improvement will have a positive and extensive impact at the individual level; and, in turn, will significantly impact social, economic and political affairs at the national and global level.

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