Internationalisation of the Curriculum in Higher Education – Perception of Cambodian Learners

Assoc. Prof. Diep Seiha & Prof. (Dr.) Tapas R. Dash

BUILD BRIGHT UNIVERSITY
Cambodia
In the rapidly changing globalised economy countries are facing tremendous challenges to meet the demand for higher education made by an increasingly growing population in search for better knowledge and skills.

This demands a new approach to curriculum development responsive to the diverse nature of the global environment.
In addition, the increased interconnectedness of the world to-day has resulted in the growing significance of relations among nations which in turn necessitate universities to infuse the curriculum with international content.

Internationalising the curriculum is proposed as a strategy for the internationalisation of higher education.

It is also considered as an effective means of providing an academic environment to support the diverse cultural needs of international students.
It is therefore necessary to renovate the curriculum as in the absence of such it is not likely to equip students with necessary knowledge and motivation to respond to global issues.

The integration of Cambodia into the ASEAN as well as global community strongly requires international orientation to the curriculum to meet the global labour market need.
Objective of the Study

To understand the perceptions of the learners towards internationalisation of curriculum in their programme of study
Methodology of the Study

- Purposively the largest private university, i.e., Build Bright University (BBU) was taken into account.

- BBU has its eight campuses located in different parts of Cambodia and around 25,000 students were pursuing their studies.
A convenience sample of graduate students in the Business Management programme was taken as:

- it had the highest number of enrolment (564) among other programmes (779 in total) in 2013.
- a nationality mix of teachers involved in academic activities in the programme.
Methodology of the Study

- Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were utilised, where students’ perceptions were collected through a cross-sectional survey.
- Primary data for the study were gathered through a self-administered questionnaire.
- The survey instrument included Likert-type scale questions.
- Open-ended questions were also included.
- Secondary data were also collected from the university.
Scope of the Study

In this study the intent of an internationalised curriculum is confined to introducing an international, intercultural or global dimension into the course contents and materials.
Findings of the Study

Representation of gender in the survey (%)

- Male: 75.6%
- Female: 24.4%

Total respondents participated in the survey (%): 20.4%
- Total: 100%
- Participated: 20.4%
Learners’ Actual Perception on Internationalisation of Curriculum

Among the 17 selected areas of curriculum internationalization, on the scale from 1 to 5, only three areas had a mean higher than 3 such as:

i. Inclusion of materials from international and intergovernmental organisations (including international research) to broaden the learning experience and knowledge base of students and academic staff.
ii. Encouragement of learning second language by students and staff as a basis for appreciating the challenges of self-experience in language other than one’s mother-tongue.

iii. Openness to own local and indigenous cultures and cultures of other communities.
The areas which had mean values less than 2 were:

i. Provision to reflect cultural diversities of organizations.

ii. Inclusion of lectures/presentations from guest lecturers using their international experience.
Learners’ Desired Perception on Internationalisation of Curriculum

To understand what would be the internationalisation of curriculum, all the 17 selected areas had high rating, with the highest rated areas were:

i. Provision of continuous review, improvement and self-evaluation of curriculum.
ii. Inclusion of materials from international and intergovernmental organisations (including international research) to broaden the learning experience and knowledge base of students and academic staff.

iii. Inclusion of innovative international contents in the curriculum, i.e., international as well as national case studies.
Comparison of Desired and Actual Perception on Internationalisation of Curriculum

- All the means for the items in the category desired perception were higher than the means for items in the actual perception.

- In all the 17 selected areas, the mean differences were found to be significant at one per cent level.

- Higher mean difference was found in the –
  i. Provision of flexibilities in the curriculum to meet the global need.
ii. Provision of continuous review, improvement and self-evaluation of curriculum.

iii. Provision to broaden learners’ global knowledge, skills and understanding.

To successfully carry out internationalisation of curriculum majority of the respondents (86 per cent) shared the requirements of:

i. An active leadership

ii. Adequate provision of funds to internationalisation efforts

iii. Wide participation from faculty and administration

iv. Clear establishment of strategic framework to govern these efforts
Conclusion

Among all the selected areas of curriculum internationalisation more focus is required on:

- Provision of flexibilities in the curriculum to meet the global need.
- Provision of continuous review, improvement and self-evaluation of curriculum.
- Provision to broaden learners’ global knowledge, skills and understanding.
➢ Inclusion of lectures/presentations from guest lecturers using their international experience.

➢ Inclusion of innovative international contents in the curriculum (international as well as national case studies).
To ensure internationalisation of curriculum to work successfully, as suggested the requirements were:

- An active leadership
- Adequate provision of funds to internationalisation efforts
- Wide participation from faculty and administration
- Clear establishment of strategic framework to govern these efforts
- Development of international partnerships.
Thank you for your kind attention!