Internationalization of Higher Education: Current Realities, Challenges, and Future Opportunities

Iman Rabah
Doctor of Education: Management, Leadership, and Policy
Modern University for Business and Science (MUBS)

Abstract

The new trend in contemporary universities is the level of internationalization. Globalization increased the pace of internationalization under the influence of diversification, expansion, privatization, and marketization. Since neoliberalism ideology states minimal interference of governments and restraining public funds, it had a great impact on higher education. Universities were encouraged to admit full-fee-paying students including foreign students increase income. Consequently, this resulted in the increase of the number of students and therefore the expansion of the university and the growing diversity of students due to international student mobility from less developed and poor countries to developed and rich countries. Higher education internationalization is considered as a soft power tool to enhance and maintain status in the system of the world knowledge. It started with mobility and then developed into a diffusion of innovations dynamics within the world knowledge system. According to this paper some eastern universities, programs and academics may have a high value to add to westerns counterparts if internationalization is deployed in a balanced way leading to exchange of cultures, languages, ideologies, and benchmarks. In fact, it is about time for universities to review their social function, visions, quality and role in excellence ideology production from cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary, and collaborative perspectives, as a society microcosm. It is pivotal for universities and employers to ensure that the higher education experience prepares graduates to work and live in a globally interconnected society. Encouraging and supporting a disposition that values connectedness can nurture students to make global sense of responsibility and learn skills and knowledge that secures a better world.

Keywords: Higher Education; Internationalization; Globalization; Challenges; Opportunities

Introduction

International cooperation in higher education is not a new phenomenon. The original European universities that were found in Bologna and Paris in the 13th century expanded to other European parts (Altbach and Teichler, 2001); the Latin language was adopted as a common language to teach students of different nationalities by international professors. In earlier centuries, the Arab, Greek, Indian, and Chinese scholars had significantly contributed to Engineering, Astronomy, Geography, Biology, and Mathematics without having the privilege of accessing the Internet or even printed material, connecting and communicating with colleagues, and attending international conferences (Knight and de Wit, 1995; Strong, 2002). The new trend in contemporary universities is the level of internationalization.Yang (2000, p. 320) defines internationalization of higher education as " the exchange of people, ideas, goods and services between two or more nations and cultural identities". Internationalization assumes a relationship between countries in terms of priorities, resources, culture, and history (Lingard and Rizvi, 1998).Globalization increased the pace of internationalization under the influence of marketization, privatization, expansion, and diversification (Altbach &Teichler, 2001). Furthermore, marketization and massification have led to severe competition of funds, faculty, and students in the past few decades (Chan, 2004).

In 1970, former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and former U.S. President Ronald Reagan were the first to advocate the neoliberalism creed as a response to stagflation or inflation accompanied by the rise of unemployment (Friedman, 2002; Harvey, 2005).

Neoliberalism promptly spread to the seven wealthiest countries on the globe: The US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, and Japan (Harvey, 2005; Taylor, 2009). Besides the promotion of free trade and free markets, neoliberalism involved economical and political practices of deregulation and privatization (Friedman, 2002; Harvey, 2005; Schumpeter, 1996; Taylor, 2009). Since neoliberalism ideology states restraining public funds, it had a great impact on higher education due to minimal interference of governments (Harvey, 2005; Schumpeter, 1996). For instance, in 1992 in Australia, the financing of universities was deregulated in order to reduce future government liability for old age pensions and to increase national savings (Harvey, 2005). The repayable loan system Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) required from Australian students to contribute to university fees, and universities were encouraged to increase income by admitting full-fee-paying students including foreign students (Harvey, 2005). Consequently, this resulted in the increase of the number of students and therefore the expansion of the university and the growing diversity of students due to international student mobility to developed and rich countries from less developed and poor countries (Maringe and Foskett, 2010).

Considerable changes had happened in universities due to the increase in the international mobility of graduates and academic staff within the graduate labour market (Rabah, 2015).Currently, heterogeneous global systems have a great impact on universities where higher education is subject to international covenants and laws, and international organizations like the World Bank and the UNESCO are exporting practices from the west to the east where political validity of this perspective is questioned (Menand, 1996). The decline in public funding has led universities to facing an increasing competition for student tuition resources, staff resources, and funding in general causing universities to focus on global citizenship (Rabah, 2015). For example, the UK government has increased the competition between institutions in order to expand the number of participants and encourage a more educated workforce, leading to the marketization of higher education and redefining students as consumers (Molesworth, Scullion, and Nixon, 2011). The new corporate style of university governance has a great impact on the relationship of universities with their faculty members, staff, and students (Rabah, 2015). The new environment of higher education forces universities to set investing and marketing strategies (Rochford, 2003).

Higher Education Internationalization Realities

The functions and the character of higher education have witnessed a dramatic change in most of the countries due to the evolution of the knowledge-based economy and globalization (Mok, 2005). In order to become more globally competitive, universities in Asia had adopted the Anglo-Saxon paradigm along with internationalization within its restructuring and reforming trends (Mok, 2005).There is a significant difference between learning policy and copying policy. When policies are copied without proper contextualization and careful adaptation, the result would be a reproduction of learning experience that does not necessarily suit the political and cultural environment. The western practices and standards could not be coherently adapted to cultures and traditions. The changes of management systems due to neoliberalism had an impact not only on western universities, but also in the east (Mok and Lee, 2000). This had consequently impacted education and research along with the introduction of competition accompanied with functional and strategic management of the national universities (Mok and Yonezawa, 2005). Ministries of education and higher education or equivalent government administrative bodies are allowing more autonomy and flexibility in managing and governing public and private universities. To enhance competitiveness, eastern universities are highly considering benchmarking with western models, university ranking, and internationalization. Internationalization has been placed by eastern governments on the top of their educational development and improvement agendas, leading to international collaborations through international exchange of scholars and students (Mok, 2005). Higher education institutes are focusing on creating a student-learning culture where the emphasis is on engaging students instead of requiring them to acquire more information. Accordingly, students are encouraged to be engaged in self-directed learning, be more independent, and are motivated to work in teams. Hence, practicums, work placements, internships, problem-solving skills, and international exchanges have all become more popular in higher education in order to strengthen their international outlook.

Significant restructuring shifted university curricula from the conventional teacher-oriented approach to a student-oriented approach. Students were prepared and trained to become self-directed and independent based on believing that innovation and creativity are essential factors to evaluate students' abilities (Cox, 2005). Through self-actualization, high determination and motivation, students should become rich resources for themselves and others at an international level. Arab universities are reviewing the curriculum design of higher education programs to equip and prepare students for globalization challenges. Focusing on creativity and critical thinking, more innovation ways of teaching and assessment have been introduced including knowledge creation through multidisciplinary research initiatives (Lee and Gopinathan, 2001).

Since internationalization is one of the main agendas of higher education in Asia. Universities in Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong are keen to expand their international student exchange programs including sending students to international partnerships and recruiting overseas students (Tin et al., 2005). In addition to mobility of staff and students, the Japanese universities take international benchmarking very seriously, and develop evaluation criteria to assess the internationalization of their programs, encourage global research teams based in Japan, and invite for international symposiums to reflect the international dimensions of Japanese universities (Osaka University Report, 2006).Student exchanges and studying abroad are considered powerful in higher education internationalizations, yet students' learning experiences is greatly enriched when education is combined with work experience in an international context (Burn, 2002). In recent years, international academic exchange of staff along with students has become very popular in Asian countries.

Innovations, norms, culture, knowledge, and higher education models are either exported on imported between countries through internationalization of higher education. Wu and Zha (2018) proposes a typology of higher education internationalization that is either 'inward-oriented' that implies learning foreign norms, higher education models, culture, and knowledge; or 'outward-oriented' that implies exporting these domestic soft powers as transcultural diffusion of innovations. Innovation is defined by Rogers (1962, p.11) as " an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by a … unit of adoption".

Some countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, and Singapore are keenly importing western innovations within higher education internationalization to improve competency and attract more international students. Other countries such as India, China, and South Korea traditionally used to import foreign innovations within the world knowledge system. Currently, these countries are presenting their innovations to the world through internationalization of higher education.

To maintain their worldwide status and influence, western European countries tend to export domestic innovations. After the end of the Cold War, the overreliance on hard power was not the path to winning and the idea to win minds and hearts has become more prominent(Nye, 2008). The updated definition of national power is based on soft power "… to affect what other countries want, [and] tends to be associated with intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions" (Nye, 1990, pp.166-167).Before the 1980s, the United Kingdom was enhancing the recruitment of international students to strengthen the ties between citizens from commonwealth countries (Tsang, Wang, and Lin, 2009, p. 76; Habu, 2000). During the current century, Western nations want to enhance their worldwide influence. For example, Portugal initiated the Camoes Institute in 1992 to promote the Portuguese culture and language through initiating cooperation between foreign higher education institutes like The Center for Portuguese Language-Instituto Camoes at the University of Massachusetts Boston and the Camoes Center for the Portuguese Language and Culture under the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at King's College London. Another example is the British Council sponsored by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office described as the international organization for culture relations and educational opportunities. It is responsible for holding the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exams conjointly with Cambridge English Language Assessment and International Development Program (IDP), IELTS Australia, and IELTS Academic test required for students to enroll in undergraduate and postgraduate programs in the United Kingdom and other English- speaking countries. The Istituto Cervantes established by Spain in 1991 and earlier the Japanese Foundation created in 1972 are similar functional units. France has also exported its higher education model to China with higher education cooperation through the French Grande Ecole. The outstanding Engineers Training Plan gave fruitful results of higher engineering education cooperation between the French and the Chinese (Qui and Pu, 2016, p.70).In addition, the developed countries initiated massive open online course platforms to enhance their influence and image in China;top universities such as Harvard, Oxford, Stanford, and Yale provided these open courses.

Higher education internationalization is considered as a soft power tool to enhance and maintain status in the system of the world knowledge. It started with mobility and then developed into a diffusion of innovations dynamics within the world knowledge system. In 1950s, India accepted international support from the United States, West Germany, and the Soviet Union while establishing the Indian Institutions of Technology in Kanpur, Madras, and Bombay reflecting the academic traditions of the countries from whom they received technical support (Indiresan and Nigam, 1993, p.343).Back in 1908, the United States of America had the Boxer Rebellion Indemnity Scholarship Program to attract exceptional students from China to join American universities for the sake of enhancing its influence in China (Liu, 2010). Some countries such as China and South Korea that used to import higher education programs started promoting their innovations including norms, higher education models, and knowledge overseas within higher education internationalization. For instance, South Korea has started in 2012 a new program in cultural diplomacy in 58 countries using English language in teaching in its higher education institutions for raising competitiveness(Cho, 2012).China's importing of higher education program for capacity building and attracting international students, started considering outward orientation by going global in their development through China's cultural diplomacy programs (Wang, 2014).By the end of 2016, China has established more than 500 Confucius Institutions in 130 different countries (Hanban, n.d).After the United States and the United Kingdom, China became the third largest destination country of overseas studies planning to recruit 500,000 international students by 2020 (Ren, 2016).

The higher education strategy in some countries such as Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates is based on learning from foreign innovations including higher education models, norms, culture, and knowledge to build capacity and promote economic development through recruiting higher education providers and programs and building effective universities to attract international students. Singapore developed its national higher education system for the purpose of soft power development by attracting student from different countries in the world (Wu and Zha,2018).Singapore is developing itself into a global higher education hub and enhancing its higher education and research capacity through importing foreign innovation via recruiting higher education providers (Olds, 2007). Western universities such as Johns Hopkins University, Duke University, Georgia Tech, etc. were funded to provide graduate level education in Singapore (Sidhu, Ho, and Yeoh, 2011).The national strategic plan of Malaysia reflects its role of higher education by becoming the regional education hub with a high-income economy driven by innovation and knowledge (Knight and Morshidi, 2011, p. 602-603). Since the 1990 and 2000, branch campuses from Australia and the United Kingdom has opened in Malaysia such as Monash University and the University of Nottingham (Knight and Morshidi, 2011, p. 603). The United Arab Emirates recruited foreign higher education providers within importing innovations.

For example, the Dubai Knowledge Park was established in 2003 in an attempt to "develop the region's talent pool and establish the UAE as a knowledge-based economy" (DKP, 2020). Based on the success of DKP the UAE established the Dubai International Academic City (DIAC) in 2007 identifying it "as the world's largest free Zone dedicated to higher education and the pursuit of intellectual growth" (DIAC, 2020). The DKP and the DIAC are sponsored and owned by Tecom Investment a subsidiary of Dubai Holdings, with the mission to create and manage " business clusters that contribute to the development of knowledge-based industries: (Knight, 2011, p. 214). These higher education zones were developed through recruiting " reputable international higher education institutions that can…offer their already established academic programs…and provide experienced faculty to teach national and international students" (Knight, 2011, p. 214). There are more than 25 foreign higher education institutions in these two hubs in Dubai such as Murdoch University, Rochester Institute of Technology, London Business School, Boston University, Petersburg State University of Engineering and Economics, University of Wollongong, etc. To enhance the ability of attracting high-caliber foreign higher education resources, the UAE guaranteed that higher education providers are not subject to the Emirates Law or federal UAE (Knight, 2011, p. 125). Other Arab countries like Bahrain and Qatar are also implementing such strategies to enhance their higher education systems through importing international program.

In Lebanon, the context of higher education is unique. Higher education in Lebanon is characterized by important characteristics given the historical nature and openness to the international development in education and the acquisition of skills and abilities (Alami a, 2019). This allowed the Lebanese higher education to be in a prestigious and competitive position compared to other Arab countries in light of the increasing demand for higher education, which promoted the public as well as the private educational institutions (Alami a, 2019). The country represents a unique model that reflects its forms and components in higher education including the educational environment, the Lebanese communities, and its impact on the field of education (Alami a, 2019). The new law of higher education developed legislations that raise the question of the new positioning of higher education institutions and its possible harmony with the challenges of the twenty-first century (Alami a, 2019). There is also a concern about the extent and impact of the interaction between the work of the regulatory bodies; these bodies that represent the spirit of public order and responsibility through setting up frameworks for governance, guidance and development (Alami a, 2019). This is happening at a time when the question is about the ability of higher education institutions to overcome the increasing challenges and sustainability requirements on the long term (Alami a, 2019).The future of higher education in Lebanon faces challenges about the correlations between the legal text and the transformations that are required in higher education institutions to face sustainability testing (Alami a, 2019).The developments of the past decades have proven that globalization is an unavoidable fact. Higher education institutions have been characterized by openness to deal with globalization. This is reflected through higher education student mobility, affiliations, agreements between universities in different continents, and many other initiatives (Alami a, 2019).

Along with the emphasis to benefit individuals, the focus of internationalization according to some governments is to benefit the society as the main goal rather than focusing on mobility (De Wit and Hunter, 2015, p.3). Cross-border higher education internationalization includes "… the movement of people, programs, providers, policies, knowledge, ideas, projects, and services across national boundaries" (Knight, 2012, p. 11). At-home higher education internationalization refers to "the intercultural and international dimensions in the teaching/learning process, research, extracurricular activities, relationships with local cultural and ethnic community groups, and integration of foreign students and scholars" (Knight, 2012, p.10).According to Knight (2008, p.22), in all cases higher education internationalization has three main components: Purpose that includes the overall role of higher education; function that refer to the essential tasks of higher education including teaching, research, and society service; and the notion of delivery that refers to the education offering either in other countries or domestically.

Higher Education Internationalization Challenges

In the 1980s and 1990s the increase in technology expenses and the expansion of university systems to accommodate a larger percentage of the population going to university accompanied with the financial constrictions and the confused relationship between universities and governments all reduced the self-confidence of the academic profession in its dedication to its calling (Shils, 1997, p.7).

Those changes had a great impact on the management systems in the universities, thus leading to the erosion of professional autonomy, academic freedom, and the collegial model including shared governance and academic tenure (Rabah, 2017). Suddenly, new management concepts and issues emerged like revenues, productivity, employment flexibility, moderate evaluation of students, pedagogical issues and many others (Rochford, 2003). The change from a collegial model to business models was not the choice of higher education, when public funds were restricted, universities had to use marketing strategies to attract funds (Rabah, 2017).According to Samier, "Since the late 1970s, public bureaucracies in a number of industrialized countries, predominantly the UK, New Zealand, Canada, Australia and, to a lesser extent the US, have undergone a number of structural and managerial changes inspired by private-sector practices, generally referred to as the New Public Management (NPM)" (2001, p. 235).

The new public management concept is an administrative ideology that was adopted from the private sector to the public sector, thus running public organizations that adopt it including higher education on market theories (Samier, 2001; Savoie, 1994).

A number of issues are caused as a result of neoliberalism, the market model, academic labour and capitalism, commercialisation of education, corporatisation of the university, in addition to globalization and the university (Dunleavy et al, 2006; Haque 2001; Hood 1991; Thompson, 2006). According to Clarke (2004), attempts to privatise and marketise the public sector are facing a lot of resistance, and this shows that the outcomes do not match what neo-liberal assumptions imagine the world to be like.There is a paradox in the relationship between dealing with the challenges of education in the logic of the past and carefully devoted to its effects, and the rapid developments. These developments directs to a different future and invites to adopt new patterns especially in light of the openness of the institutions and the youth population to global advancements (Alami, 2019).

Educational research has always been based on a relevant history to contemporary realities (Altpach and De Wit, 2015), fundamentally conducted in an internationalmanner (McCulloch, 2016). Currently, privatization, massification, expansion, and globalization have a major role in internationalization of higher education policy and significantly affecting universities at a global level leading to a radical change in national higher education systems (Dobbins and Kwiek, 2017). Internationalization is one of the strategic priorities across the world(EUA, 2013;Jones et al., 2016). In 2010 and as a response to the economic crisis, Europe launched the 2020 Growth Strategy highlighting smartness and sustainability of European higher education as policy drivers. In 2013, the European Commission Communication 'European Higher Education in the World' entitled quality improvements in European higher education along with the development of more comprehensive internationalization strategies promoting mobility and cooperation between higher education institutes in Europe and non-Europe countries (Mok, 2007). The internationalization experience is a continuation of new public management as a result of neoliberalism inline with scholars such as Rizvi and Lingard (2010). Massification and marketization have led to severe funds competition, leading consequently not only to changes in governance systems but also shifting strategies where internationalization became prominent.

Educational research directions and educational policy development were driven by internationalization and neoliberal interpretations (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010).Governments have increasingly considered higher education as a service industry governed by national policies regarding income generation and growth through internationalization (Connell, 2013; Matthews, 2014). These internationalization strategies that are driven by broader competitive factors and economic imperatives, are translated through inward and outward transnational mobility of staff and students. Universities are now seeking publications and research partnerships on a strategic international level, along with determined targets for international student and staff recruitment. These factors are considered as indicators of the success of the higher education institute and a reflection of a prestige culture (West and Rich, 2012). Connell (2013, p. 23) states, " A first-order effect of the neoliberal turn is to instrumentalize research and teaching. Research that benefits a corporate or organizational interest, or fits a politician's definition of national priorities, is encouraged."

On the other hand, internationalization is considered a dynamic movement by some scholar such as Barnett (2016), De Wit et al. (2015), Knight (2014), Marginson (2010). Marginson et al. (2010), Peters (2012, 2014), Peters and Britez (2010), and Zhou (2016). Internationalization is defended by the valuable addition to the quality of teaching, learning, and research. It is considered an enhancement to the understanding and experience with students and staff. Furthermore, it tackles societal matters such as inclusion, cross-cultural awareness, and social justice. This contradiction in addressing internationalization across the higher education sector is a concern that requires a comprehensive process in case of selecting the choice of internationalization. This unevenness in response explains the results of the Fifth Global Survey of the International Association of Universities concluding that while some higher education institutes seek to broadly increase research activities, teaching, and community engagement endeavors, other institutes do not regard internationalization as a priority (Marinoni and De Wit, 2019). If internationalization is interpreted as a values-based movement that improves the quality of teaching, learning and research, enhances the experience and understandings of staff and students, and addresses societal issues to improve cross-cultural understanding, inclusion and social justice; then this unevenness of response across the sector is a concern (Robson& Wihlborg, 2019).

Internationalization aids in developing global perspectives in students and staff that satisfies universities' visions of preparing graduates to become high quality global labors (Harrison, 2015). According to the Council of Europe (2016, p. 8), internationalization also contributes to the society by enabling individuals to acquire a wider range of democratic principles, dispositions, skills, attitude, knowledge, and values. Students and staff exchange along with different academic cooperation play a vital role in improving and maintaining relationships between nations during troubling political and economical stages, it is also an essential mechanism to keep active dialogue and communication. (Altbach and De Wit , 2015).

The international dimension introduced to higher education has to do with the process of integrating a global, intercultural, and international dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of a university or college (Knight and de Wit, 1995, p. 15).

As a response to globalization challenges, Saunders and Ramirez (2017) argue that it is about time for universities to review their quality, visions, social function, and role in excellence ideology production from cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary, and collaborative perspectives, as a society microcosm. According to Elkin, Devjee, and Farnsworth (2005, p. 326), " internationalization is not something that is either achieved or not achieved: rather it is an engagement with the range of dimensions". Internationalization of education has different definitions and understandings to different people; its complexity shouldn't be oversimplified. Higher education internationalization may take different forms including mobility of students, or delivery of teaching in other countries through different types of arrangements, or just curriculum-related changes (De Wit, 2006; Knight 2004; Teichler 2004). We should not underestimate this complexity of the internationalization process or focus on competition or trade as the driving rationale for internationalization. However, before the attempt to make the higher education system more internationalized in response to the growing impact of globalization, we should have a clear understanding of internationalization of higher education by giving a serious though to and deeply reflecting in the following questions:

- What is the purpose of internationalizing higher education?
- Who is going to benefit from internationalizing higher education?
- What is the purpose of contemporary universities existence?
- Why should internationalization be adopted in contemporary universities?
- Does internationalization matter to stakeholders and specifically to students in the society?
- What type or system of higher education should we believe in and commit ourselves to?

Most importantly, we should ask ourselves if higher education internationalization would really improve the quality of education and enrich and enhance students' learning experience.

Another challenge that internationalization faces and hinders it in achieving its positive purpose of collaboration, cultural awareness, and openness to different knowledge perspectives and ideologies is the lack of balance in exchanging programs between the eastern and western nations of the globe. Mostly Asian universities are keen for international benchmarking, eagerly engaging in the quest for world-class universities, and competing for better ranking among other national universities. These universities are bounded by international benchmarks or global standards dominated by western academic paradigms. Accordingly, criteria for university performance and particularly teaching and research are determined by Anglo-Saxon practices and traditions. In this case and instead of policy learning, policy copying is taking place without proper criteria reflection and proper adaptation. Many academics complain that this restructuring process has only produced more administration and paperwork than creating conducive environment for research, teaching, and learning (Welch, 2004). Consequently, this had a counter repercussion on professional autonomy including academic freedom in teaching and research. The publish-or-perish phenomenon became problematic for academics in the west same as in the east, and local research is ignored since such kinds are hard to be published in internationally recognized journals. Ironically, publishing in local languages and national venues might be read by more audience and may significantly impact local socioeconomic developments and policy formation. Systems and standards should promote rich cultural traditions and preserve national heritage. On the other hand, some eastern universities, programs and academics may have a high value to add to westerns counterparts if internationalization is deployed in a balanced way leading to exchange of cultures, languages, ideologies, and benchmarks. The question raised in this regard is to Eastern and specifically Arab universities and scholars:

- What innovations including knowledge, cultures, and norms you want to share with and add value to western cultures?
- How would you encourage western universities ask to import your programs and curriculums?
- Do you acknowledge your ancestors' contributions to learning, knowledge, and education?
- Do you have the confidence that you can add more blocks to the pyramid of knowledge and values they initially constructed?
- Do you trust that you can create policy instead of copying it?

Globalization has made the world a huge but one community that requires a high level of balance between nations to lead to a healthy system governing the relations and interactions. This is a chance for the ignorant to learn from the educated, it is also a chance for the strong to guide the weak in building his own strength, and most importantly it is a golden chance for those who lost confidence to regain this self-confidence and contribute to the innovations of those who preceded them.

Future Opportunities and Concluding Remark

Under the pressure to improve the global competence of higher education graduates, national governments all over the world have to expand enrollments on one hand and assure a high quality of teaching and research on the other hand in order to compete globally and internationally (Varghese, 2004). Modern universities are looking for a global competitive advantage that will differentiate their higher educational system.

Based on the concepts of sustainable development and the agreement on a wide range of goals and indicators that vary in importance between countries according to the level of socio-economic development and the nature of the political systems and regulations, higher education institutions should face the challenges in order to adopt sustainable development (Alami b, 2019). The new age requires transformation of higher education through adjustments in the curricula of education and training along with finding competent calibers who are capable of teaching and conducting research, and who have proficiency in using advanced technology to support scientific research and create an institutional research environment (Alami b, 2019). This can only happen through continuous efforts for development and adoption of inventory systems to create a pioneering education, chances to find better jobs, and disseminating a culture of innovation-based projects (Alami b, 2019).

The formation of various types of international university alliances and research networks, the emphasis on global research collaborations, the trend of international curriculum dimension, and the increase in faculty and student mobility have become increasingly popular (Mok, 2005; Postiglione, 2005; Taylor, 2004). Internationalization may not only be international mobility, it may also be a broader higher education experience (Robson et al., 2018) through curriculum internationalization (Leask, 2015) and technology advances (Jiang, 2008). International mobility opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaboration are not always available to everyone in the academic community. Indisputably, universities developed more sustainable and inclusive approaches in regards of internationalization (Shiel and Jones, 2016). Students can gain international experiences and intercultural mindsets even at their home countries through learning and practicing social activities in diverse cultural settings within formal or informal curriculum without traveling abroad (Beelen and Jones, 2015; Wachter, 2003). A complex range of aspects influence the person's professional, academic, and personal identity (Lim, 2016; Sanderson, 2008). Thinking and discussing about 'what we do, and what we are' is important to internationalize the mindsets and outlook of staff and students including non-mobile international students (Ball 2015; Lim, 2016). Internationalization prepares students to engage in global citizenship (Hanson, 2010, p. 70).

It is important for universities and employers to ensure that the higher education experience prepares graduates to live and work in a globally interconnected society (Jones, 2010). There is a high variation in the level to which students embrace opportunities to develop global perspectives and intercultural competences (Harrison, 2015). Focusing on global citizenship with internationalizations of higher education institutes help in demonstrating ethical responsibilities through global sustainable development goals. Cross-cultural dialogue within a diverse cohort of students and the discussion of meaningful constitutions of cultural communities and practices engage students in global issues, allow them to relate the local to the global, and reflect upon when the responsibility lies for educational transformation(Robson & Wihlborg, 2019).

Innovative forms of collaboration and communication across nations, institutions, and disciplines (Pashby and De Oliveira Andreotti, 2016) such as teaching and research, higher education institutes' community engagement, the relation between the local and the global, and sustainable development are pivotal to establish a better understanding of internationalization. It may not be possible to predict how the demographic, economic, and geopolitical realities will direct the higher education agenda in the current circumstances. Consequently, the facilitation and sustainability of cooperation and dialogue within internationalization of higher education is significantly challenging. The policy goals of internationalization, competitiveness, economical gains and growth, and employment prospects should not hinder embracing transformative pedagogies supporting the cross-cultural learning of higher education students, global connectedness sense (Hanson, 2010), and connecting personal understanding about education to wider debates. Encouraging and supporting a disposition that values connectedness can nurture students to make global sense of responsibility (De Oliveira Andreotti et al., 2016; Tikly, 2015) and learn skills and knowledge that secures a better world.

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