Internationalising the Curriculum: A Review of the Main Teaching and Learning Approaches in Leading Business Management Programmes

Abstract:

The aim of this study is to identify the main approaches and activities undertaken by leading business schools across the UK and US in support of internationalisation. It synthesises how curriculum internationalisation is operationalised in the business management context and identifies examples of international best practices utilised to engage international students. Then, it demonstrates the empirical and epistemological value of these findings to LJMU's BA (Hons) Business Management programmmes. Thus, it contributes to practical recommendations regarding to curriculum internationalisation. To achieve the study's aim, a systematic literature review following Tranfield et al.'s (2003) approach is undertaken. The Higher Education literature relevant to internationalisation and in particular, the pedagogic approaches that influence business schools and business management programmes' curriculum design are examined. The findings indicate that business management programmes employ polymorphous teaching and learning approaches and activities in their efforts to holistically embed curriculum internationalisation. However, when considered in light of Edwards et al.'s typology (2003) of curriculum internationalisation, the plethora of the activities currently undertaken are focusing on "international awareness" and "international expertise". This demonstrates that many programs overlook "international competence". As a result, students may not be adequately prepared for "international expertise" which leads to shortage of global leaders and professionals. Finally, this research demonstrates the need for a further strategic analysis to fully embrace curriculum internationalisation across the discipline of business management. It catalytically reveals internationalisation parameters ensuring that students are properly skilled to address the seismic changes of managing business in a dynamic global environment.

Keywords:

Curriculum internationalisation; teaching and learning; business program

Introduction

Over the last decade the UK Higher Education (HE) landscape is experiencing significant changes. It is observing a substantial increase in the international student population with the latest higher education statistics agency report (HESA, 2015) indicating that there are now over 430,000 non-UK domiciled students participating in higher education institutions (HEIs) across the UK. Simultaneously, and in part necessitated by this global shift in student demographics, UK HEIs are shifting their didactic focus from teaching centred to student centred approaches. Students are now seen primarily as "active participants" and "partners" (Kay, Dunne and Hutchinson, 2010). These changing characteristics are affecting traditional pedagogic practice. Focus is now placed on the need to develop a truly international value-added curriculum in order to effectively engage a progressively diverse and multicultural student population.

It is important that all disciplines embrace this novel environment, primarily business management students and instructors. Business management as a discipline has been heavily criticised in recent years for disconeecting reality and practice (Ghoshal, 2005). It fails to provide and develop managers with a global perspective and appropriate skillset (Kedia and Englis, 2011; Pfefferman, 2011; Kedia et al., 2001). Therefore, there is a prominent need for business schools and the business management discipline, to address these issues and cultivate and deliver a cross cultural engaging educational experience (AACSB, 2011).

These factors are stimulating much discussion surrounding the developmental need of internationally oriented curriculums, primarily within the context of business management programs. However, as highlighted by Grosling et al. (2008, p. 107) the concept "curriculum internationalisation" is multidimensional and it is approached in many different ways. Reflecting this, a diverse yet substantial literature base is emerging. Most of these studies focus on: i) the issues of concept definitions; ii) factor identification influencing adoption; iii) developing internationalisation models and frameworks; and iv) on the development of internationalisation strategies at an institutional level (Caruana and Spurling 2007). However, as discussed by Svensson and Wilhborg (2010) despite the growing literature base, limited attention is being placed on how the internationalisation of HE is operationalised and carried out by its key stakeholders. Current studies tend to focus on the experience of single or few institutions (Crosling et al., 2008; Warwick, 2014). Thereby, the current literature lacks a holistic perspective of how the sector is responding to this everchanging environment. Alternatively, they attempt to provide an all-encompassing UK HE perspective and thereby, are generic in nature (Luxon and Peelo, 2009). While in recent years there is an increased recognition of the importance of differentiating between the practices of each discipline (Becher and Trowler, 2001; Neumann et al. 2002), comprehensive research focusing on identifying best practice within specific disciplines remains scarce (Leask and Bridge, 2013). Such research is crucial to increase understanding of how the overarching goal of internationalisation may be translated into everyday practice within specific disciplines and thus, to enable effective management of the process.

Focusing on business management programs, this study addresses this gap by systematically reviewing and critically discussing the different approaches and activities that are adopted in

leading business schools across the UK and US to embrace internationalisation. It identifies examples of international best practices utilised to provide curriculum internationalisation. It demonstrates its value by considering the findings in light of LJMU's BA (Hons) Business Management programme and draws valuable conclusions regarding its attempt to internationalise the curriculum.

Literature Review

Defining Curriculum Internationalisation

There has been much discussion within the literature domain about the concept of curriculum internationalisation in HE and specifically in the business school context. However, a lack of consensus regarding the semantics of the term "curriculum internationalisation" persists. As a result of much discourse, a variety of definitions now exist. The most commonly adopted is Knight's (2003, p.2) definition: *"the process of integrating an international, intercultural and/or global dimension into the purpose, functions (teaching, research and service) and delivery of post-secondary education"*. Given that, various definitions are available, it is important at the outset to clarify what is the meaning of the term "internationalisation" in the context of this study. This study broadly adopts Leask's (2009, p.209) definition: *"the incorporation of an international dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning arrangements and support services of the program of study"*. This definition is adopted, as highlighted by Leask and Bridge (2013), as it is broad in nature. It recognises that internationalisation of the curriculum is not solely about its content but also about wider aspects of teaching and learning.

Internationalisation in Business Schools

Contrary to the lack of agreement over defining the concept, the importance of internationalisation in the context of business management is widely acknowledged (McGowan and Potter, 2008; Killick, 2008; Elkin et al., 2008; Lipsett, 2009). This is reflected in the increasing number of institutions that in recent years engage in the process motivated by either pragmatic or ideological considerations (Schecther, 1993; De Vita, 2007; Chan and Dimmock, 2008, Caruana and Spurling, 2007; Ayoubi and Massoud, 2007). However, while there is agreement on the benefits to be derived from engaging in the process, implementation varies significantly across institutions.

There are two prominent schools of thought regarding international business pedagogy involving students and academics, as well as their interaction (Thomas, 2007; Hawawini, 2005). The first is the strategic framework introduced by Porter (2008). This framework introduces the pedagogic approach and practice of "thinking local and acting global". Porter (2008) proposes that each business school should consider the best local students and a few from overseas and then, introduce to them a globalised pedagogic perspective. The same principle is proposed for academic staff, that is, to select the best local academics and few international ones exposing them to international developmental experiences. Alternatively, academic staff could possess empiricism, besides their academic credentials, from the globalised markets. Thus, both students and staff will be integrated in an international oriented environment accelerating curriculum internationalisation. The second diametrically

opposing framework is that attributed to Omhae (1989) where the notion is to "think global and act local". According to this model, curriculum internationalisation should primarily focus on the best teaching and learning methods with regard to their origin and then adapt them to local practices. This approach also considers the global business macrocosm of the Porter (2008) framework but it filters it through a locally oriented microcosm (Ghoshal, 2005). As such, there are fundamental differences between each approach and depending on which approach is adopted, business schools may adopt different philosophies (Caruana and Hanstock, 2003; Fielden 2006; Koutsantoni, 2006a; Koutsantoni, 2006b).

Similarly, as discussed by Bennet and Kane (2011) at an operational or curriculum level, the concept "curriculum internationalisation" is associated with a variety of activities and methods related to teaching and learning. For example, the inclusion of international materials to pre-existing curriculums, modules or as standalone units (Avila, 2007; Sharma and Roy, 1996), engagement in cross cultural collaborative cases, projects and/or assessments (Robinson and Lee, 2007), technology enhanced collaborative learning experiences (Crossman and Bordia, 2011) and the incorporation of opportunities to study or work abroad (Edwards et al., 2003) have all previously been deemed to constitute curriculum internationalisation practices. Therefore, it is evident that while the literature makes reference to a number of "international" activities, their disparate nature demonstrates that understanding of the concept fundamentally differs from institution to institution, not only across disciplines but also within disciplines. As a result, there is a clear need for further research that examines how a curriculum may be internationalised at the discipline level to provide guidance on best practice. This study aims to assist in bridging this gap by focusing specifically on the discipline of business management and utilising Edwards et al.'s (2003) typology of curriculum internationalisation as a framework for the analysis.

Edwards et al. (2003) Typology of Curriculum Internationalisation

Edwards et al.'s (2003) typology proposes a staged approach to curriculum internationalisation consisting of three levels, each of which have distinct aims, teaching strategies and methods and learning outcomes. The first phase "international awareness" focuses on developing students' recognition and appreciation of different cultures and perspectives through integrating international case studies and examples into the curriculum (Edwards et al., 2003). Such activities are considered important to create awareness through highlighting and exposing students to differing cultural settings, viewpoints and interpretations relative to subject matter. The second phase "international competence" aims to increase the ability of students to function in international settings (Edwards et al., 2003). This may be achieved through engaging local and international students in cross border interactions often facilitated through ICT. These cross border activities allow students to operate in conjunction with internationals and thereby, enables them to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the differing cultures, contexts and value systems their international partners operate within. The third and final phase of Edwards et al.'s (2003) typology "international expertise" focuses on immersing the students in a global setting through participation in schemes such as studying abroad or international placement opportunities. Through engaging in this final stage, students further strengthen the skills

learned in phase one and two and, ultimately become global citizens capable of functioning in internationally diverse environments.

While Edwards et al.'s (2003) framework may be applicable to a variety of disciplines, it was originally developed in relation to the internationalisation of business education and as such, is directly relevant to this study. When considering the prominent activities undertaken by leading business schools in relation to the business management discipline, it provides a useful benchmark to determine which areas are currently sufficiently addressed or otherwise, across this discipline.

Research Methodology

To explore the main approaches and activities adopted by leading business schools in support of internationalisation, a systematic empirical review is undertaken. Following Tranfield et al.'s (2003) approach, the HE literature of internationalisation, international student engagement and in particular, the pedagogic approaches that influence business schools and business management programs' curriculum design are examined. The adopted approach ensures transparency and thus increases the rigour of the study (Cook et al., 1997).

Under this approach, initially a scoping study of the research area is conducted prior to commencement to refine the parameters of the review. Then, the data sources are agreed upon and the search criteria and strings are defined. Various electronic databases and libraries are searched including: Emerald, EBSCO, Business Source Premier and ScienceDirect. These sources are selected because a large proportion of rigorous studies are available within these. As a result, several high quality sources are investigated including various HE journals, HE reports and reviews. Key search terms and search strings include "internationalisation of higher education", "higher education pedagogy", "internationalisation of business schools", "business school student engagement", "business school curriculum internationalisation" and "business curriculum innovation in higher education". These key words and terms are selected on the basis of empiricism and the initial literature search. Inclusion and exclusion criteria are then established. Given, the vast amount of literature in this area (Le Blanc, 2007; Palmer, 2006; Crosling and Martin, 2005; Edwards et al., 2003) and the fact that the objective of the review is to identify the main practices of the leading business schools, focus is restricted to US and UK institutions. This is because most of the world leading undergraduate and postgraduate level business programs in terms of the traditional rankings are positioned in these geographical locations (Lahiri and Kumar, 2012). In addition, only materials published in the English language, peer-reviewed journals and established educational body such as the higher education academy (HEA) are considered. Finally, detailed analysis of the articles selected for inclusion is undertaken based on key factors that leading business schools and programs offer to provide a global oriented pedagogy.

Findings

International Student Engagement within Business Schools

Most business schools across the UK and US divide their business programs according to disciplines. The literature review indicates that each of these disciplines have heterogenious

approaches to internationalisation although, there are six major business programs and their primary goals in regard to internationalisation are identified as follows;:

1) Management: In business management programs internationalisation appears to be present at all academic levels. However, it is more focused towards the advancement of graduate level courses as seen since the early 1990's by Harvard University for example. Their pedagogic practices aim to prepare managers and leaders with cross-functional and cross-cultural competencies and, knowledge (Porter, 2008).

2) Accounting: In accounting, the application of international standards such as the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) standards, are enhancing harmony among diverse accounting principles of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) members. This discipline's pedagogic approach reflects both the need to enforce curriculum internationalisation and quality practices at all levels (Barth et al., 2008).

3) Economics: Curriculum development and internationalisation issues are seen as critical to economic programs. The dominant pedagogic approach in this discipline aims to include and comprehend global economic issues in order to provide students with the necessary consciousness required for their diverse context application (Ghoshal, 2005).

4) Marketing: Marketing programs require an international perspective as they appear to be considered the most global discipline. These programs focus on creating skills for the globalisation of consumer and industrial products and services (Bessant and Tidd, 2009).

5) Business law: This discipline is driven by globalisation and information technology. As a result, it increasingly demands academics to recognise law practise in international contexts and the resultant convergence and divergence between systems and cultures.

6) Quantitative methods/Statistics/Econometrics: These programs is by nature heavily globalised due to the universality of mathematical formulae and statistical methodologies. As a result of these factors, these programs appear to be lagging behind in regard to curriculum internationalisation efforts unlike the other five disciplines previously outlined.

International Student Engagement within the Business Management Discipline

Focusing now on the business management discipline this study reveals key activities and approaches relating to student and teacher pedagogy and curriculum internationalisation. Following an extensive review of the literature, the most widespread activities undertaken within the business management discipline identified are the following:

1) *International case studies and examples:* The integration of international case studies into curriculums appears to be the most prominent approach adopted in support of internationalisation in the business management context.

2) *Visiting lecturers:* Many business management programs contract international faculty staff to enrich their international exposure. This activity is not restricted to

academics, with many professionals from large organisations also being invited to contribute to the internationalisation process.

3) *Technology enhanced learning:* Technology is being employed across many business management programs as a means of increasing the accessibility and international orientation of programs through blended learning initiatives. However, the extent to which this is used as a platform for cross cultural collaboration was limited.

4) *Student exchange programs:* Cross border agreements operating on a reciprocal basis for a limited number of students are widespread within the sector. These exchange students typically complete similar modules to those offered within their home institution at the host university over the course of an academic semester or year.

5) *Consortium based consulting and research/International work placements:* Some business management programs have developed programs between academic and commercial institutions with a common long-term research or developmental aim. They engage international students as interns for commercial corporations assisting local entrepreneurs to achieve international growth.

6) *Business program customisation:* Many local and international companies seek to educate their managers with a particular skillset and consequently engage with internationally customised products offering particular professional accreditation at the regional, national and international levels. As a result, many business programs are increasingly customised geographically according to company demands.

7) *International trips:* Limited trips overseas are often initiated as a method for students to obtain an international business perspective relating to the exploration of socioeconomic and political aspects of conducting business in a foreign country. However, the findings suggest that such trips tend to be more prominent at postgraduate level than undergraduate level.

As highlighted by Crosling et al. (2008) it is evident that internationalisation of the curriculum is a multi-dimensional concept approached in many ways, even within the discipline of business management. Classifying the main activities utilised in support of curriculum internationalisation according to Edwards et al.'s (2003) typology of curriculum internationalisation demonstrates that activities are undertaken relative to all phases. For example, the use of international case studies, visiting lecturers and the use of technology enhanced learning (TEL) in this context relate primarily to Phase 1, which seeks to generate international awareness. The provision of international trips and customised business programmes relate to Phase 2 which aims to increase international competence . At Phase 3 student study exchange programmes and international work placements contribute to developing international expertise.

However, while this is a positive development, the review reveals that the most prominent activities and approaches in the business management discipline are focused on activities and skill development relative to Phase 1 and Phase 3 of Edwards et al.'s (2003) typology. As Edwards et al. (2003) discuss, while no "one size fits all approach" can be adopted, it is important that any effort to internationalise the curriculum promotes vigorous learning through critical thinking and reflection. An important part of this process is sequential knowledge and skill construction at each level. Any business management curriculum should

be designed in such a manner that students can progress from gaining some basic understanding of international awareness. It should aim to develop the skills and attributes necessary for engaging in diverse cultures, contexts and value systems before students are immersed in global settings. This review identifies that while skill development is pervasive at Phases 1 and 3, with many universities indicating that they regularly incorporated activities relative to these areas, skill development at Phase 2 is much less developed. Furthermore, it is often overlooked as HEIs race to a result oriented startegy which emphasises Phase 3. Phase 1 is also emphasised as it is highly attractive for a University's international profile. However, Phase 2 is particularly important as it encourages students to reflect upon their assumptions and beliefs and it is crucial to gaining a solid understanding of other contexts, beliefs and values. The findings thus suggest that within the business management discipline, there is a need for business schools to build cross cultural interaction. Such an interaction should prominently characterise business school curriculums. As a result, business programmes could efficently prepare their students with market skills and attributes required to become global leaders and professionals.

Application to Case: Internationalisisng LJMU's Business Management Programme

The BA (Hons) Business Management program at LJMU is a well-established program which has increased its position in various league tables in recent years. It currently ranks 29th in the Guardian League table 2017. It aims to provide students with the knowledge, skills and experience required to undertake a wide variety of management careers in the public and private sectors. The program has extensive links with industry at local, regional and national levels. As part of its internationalisation efforts it engages in a wide range of activities.

To increase international awareness international case studies and examples are incorporated into all modules in the curriculum to enable students to consider issues from multiple cultural perspectives, both in individual and in group environments. In addition, the regular inclusion of local and international guest speakers and the provision of regional field trips are standard practice in many modules exposing students to the differing approaches to management and alternative responses to a range of managerial issues. The program also provides an opportunity for students to increase their international awareness through embedding the World of Work skills development programme. Through this programme students engage in a range of career development which are co-developed and co-delivered by employers enabling them to interact with a range of international small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and multinational corporations (MNCs). As such, these range of practices ensure that students develop the ability to recognise and understand alternative perspectives of core concepts and principles relative to the discipline. Thus, the development of international awareness is well fulfilled by the current program.

As a part of the international accreditation process, the business programme is professionally accredited by a range of relevant bodies including the Institute of Leadership Management, Chartered Management Institute and Institute of Six Sigma Professionals. The Institute of Directors is also actively involved in the programme and regularly engage with the student body through delivery of tailored workshops. The primary purpose of these activities is to

engage students with the specialist national and international dimensions of the discipline and increase students' international competence. However, while cross cultural interaction is obtained through the engagement of international students on the programme, cross campus collaborations at student level are currently absent from the business management curriculum. According to Edwards et al. (2003) the inclusion of cross cultural and cross campus linked projects and assessment related activities could be easily facilitated through various information and computer technology (ICT). Such activities enable students to examine issues through various ideological, ethical and cultural perspectives. They also increase students' international competence which is a crucial stage as it allows them to develop their international understanding through experimental learning and reflection. Thus, this is identified as a gap in "international competence" phase that requires further development within the BA (Hons) Business Management. The development of international expertise, the BA (Hons) Business Management program provides opportunities for students to benefit from both international work placements and study abroad trips. As such, students could choose to fully immerse themselves in a global setting through studying and/or working abroad. These teaching and learning opportunities are enabling students to become capable of functioning effectively in a dynamic global environment. However, to successfully engage in such environments students need to have previously gained a broad inter cultural understanding and essential language and relational skills. Thus, the development of international expertise could be further strengthened at the "international competence" phase. Methdological gaps in this phase suggest that these students are not fully equipped for such international settings. Further experimental learning with a global perspective should be considered at this phase (e.g. international study abroad tips and short exchange programmes; cross country collaborations and projects). That way students could obtain the maximum potential from engaging in activities directed at gaining international expertise.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the context of globalisation, the importance of preparing students with international knowledge and skills through the provision of HE is now widely acknowledged. This is particularly important within the business management discipline which has been heavily criticised in recent years for being disconnected from reality and practice (Ghoshal, 2005). As a result, many HEI's and business management programmes in particular, have altered their aims and objectives to adapt to this new environment and, are seeking to incorporate a range of approaches and activities into their curriculums to support the internationalisation process. However, while a wide range of teaching and learning activities have been adopted, little work has been done to identify the main approaches used by leading business schools to translate the objective of curriculum internationalisation into everyday practice within the business management discipline.

This study bridges this gap by systematically reviewing and critically discussing the different approaches and activities that are adopted in leading business schools across the UK and US to support internationalisation. Epistemologically supported by Edwards et al.'s (2003) typology of curriculum internationalisation, this study identifies empirical examples of international best practice utilised to provide internationalised curriculums. Then, it applies

the findings to LJMU's BA (Hons) Business Management programme drawing valuable conclusions and recommendations regarding its attempt to internationalise the curriculum. Overall, the findings indicate that while a plethora of approaches are adopted there is currently a lack of focus on the development of "international competence". This key phase (Phase 2) of Edwards et al.'s typology focuses on engagement in cross cultural activities at the curriculum level both at a general level and within BA (Hons) Business Management at LJMU. This study reveals that such a failure is not symptomatic. Rather, a lack of focus on the development of international competence prohibits aneuphoria of charismatic leaders and, fails to develop managers with a global perspective and appropriate skillset. Therefore, this study recommends that HEI's offering Business Management programmes should reflect on this anomaly and further embrace international oriented pedagogic practices relative to Phase 2 "international competence". An alignment with this international competence phase stresses the protarchic role of internationalisation strategy. It places more focus on the harmonic development of international teaching and learning activities within their curriculum design and program delivery. As a result, this study bridges this transitional pedagogical gap aiming to provide business students a leading position in an increasingly uncertain and rapidly changing global environment.

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