

An Overview on Internationalisation within the United Kingdom Higher Education



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Abstract: *This study aimed to analyse how the trend towards internationalisation for higher education has been constituted considering the perspectives of solidarity. Internationalisation is understood as integration among worldwide higher education institutions in the current scenario. Thus, the term does not conform to the definitions of globalisation as a phenomenon. The work discusses the process of the UK universities internationalisation and analyses how this process has occurred, where the internationalisation was the result of a formal policy of the institution or if, in reality, internationalisation was the result of actions predominantly determined by individuals. The paper explores internationalisation and Brexit with higher education in the United Kingdom. It focuses on the impacts of globalisation on universities caused by Brexit. It also emphasises the concepts such as internationalisation and mobility, globalisation and higher education and research, collaboration, and EU funding. The research results reduce the literature on the internationalisation of higher education, particularly the dynamics of the internationalisation of universities located in developing countries. The research also reveals and emphasises the internationalisation actions, that is, the importance of teachers, researchers and administrators as catalysts of this process. Therefore, universities should find new strategies for attracting more international students, effective digital media marketing, strongly branded marketing campaigns, and worldwide satellite campuses, resulting in significant changes.*
Keywords: *Internationalisation, Globalisation, Brexit, United Kingdom, Higher Education.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, international academic cooperation has acquired fundamental importance in the UK and foreign higher education institutions. Universities are entering the new century with the challenge to rethink their role in society as institutions that house a multiplicity of values and opinions and emphasise the universal character of knowledge. The mobility of students, teachers, researchers and managers voraciously intensifies transnational ties, establishing networks of universal knowledge. The cooperation networks formed by university scientists from different parts of the world premised that significant advances must occur within the universities [1]. The international character of universities has been present since the first European schools in the early 16th century.

The formation of these schools brought together teachers and students from different regions and countries, representing their constitutional, international communities, which met the requirements of the Internationalisation goal. [2] has also provided a robust and meaningful definition for the Internationalisation term: "The process of integrating an international, intercultural and/or global dimension into the goals, functions (teaching/learning, research, services) and delivery of higher education". As a knowledge-generating space, the university has contributed to rapid technological changes, media evolution, and the speed with which information circulates. This has brought people together and given rapid and direct access to what is occurring in the farthest reaches of the globe, generating an accelerated process of Internationalisation [3]. Concerning this process, a fundamental question arises: is it necessary to rethink the role and importance of universities imbued with their cultures and people?

II. GLOBALISATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

With the accelerated internationalisation process, especially in the last two decades in science and technology, the universities have started to seek their space in the face of this new picture that presents itself. It is even a question of survival, i.e., is it necessary to internationalise to compete on an equal footing with the best national and foreign higher education institutions. The myriad challenges emerging in the new century impel the universities to seek a much larger degree of internationalisation. The globalisation of the economy, trade, production and telecommunications has created an interconnected scenario. The globalisation of culture, science and technology demands a much more solid and competitive competence and training of university students. It is, therefore, necessary that institutions are prepared to offer solutions to these new challenges. With the displacement of the world's power axes, the relations between the countries have changed, and, as a result, the role of educational institutions is controlled by these changes [4]. Governments, companies, institutions and people have started to have referential knowledge to plan their future. The university's mission has expanded, as a consequence, to become an institution that produces scientific knowledge, the vector of expansion, qualification and even maintenance of its original purpose. Preparing citizens of the future for an interdependent world requires a higher education system whose internationalisation process allows it to discover, learn and respect cultural diversity.

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This exemplifies the actual integration proposal and comments on other universities that have not always achieved the desired success. The identification of joint actions enhances partnerships between the institutions and bring communities closer to where they both reap benefits in the context of integration, mutual recognition and help other institutions, which are in the search for internationalisation of their academic structures to reflect on the best ways to reach the international scene. The UK academic qualifications have been influenced profoundly by globalisation. The country has impacted internationalisation teaching, development, policy, curriculums, and employment within the HE sectors, for instance, the Bologna Process [5]. In autumn 1999, the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) was recognised to guarantee that the Bologna Process is applied appropriately. Furthermore, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was founded in 2010 to confirm academic qualifications compatibility across the 48 European states. As a result of the Bologna Process, Internationalisation frameworks are being implemented in the higher educational institutions of the UK and EU. [6] proposed that the internationalisation strategy must go through six complete stages before integrating into an institution's internationalisation strategy. These stages are: raising awareness, generating commitment, detailed planning through the organisation, systematic review and demonstrating top-level commitment.

Globalisation and internationalisation are the substantial inspiration for higher education policy and strategies. This impact forms part of an ongoing tradition and depends strongly on the collaboration of governments and institutions.

III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF INTERNATIONALISATION IN THE UK

The level of internationalisation appropriate to the map projection of a Higher Education Institution (HEI), which seeks to strengthen their partnerships and inclusion in the international globe, is steadily increasing. Factors that compromise success in the cooperation programmes can include unsuccessful activities during internationalisation. These may comprise the inexperience of an academic community, negative attitudes of the staff and students, nonexistence or ambiguous strategies for internationalisation, a cultural recognition deficit, unavailability or unfeasibility of adaptation of the Foreign communities, language barriers or high levels of geo-educational misunderstanding. The abundant bibliographical material of the UK in the international panorama, foreign policy and the new directions of globalisation enhance the structures and systems of internationalisation [7]. Higher education institutions play a prominent role since they form high-level resources and knowledge and encourage the movement of people from undeveloped or developing countries to the world developed market countries [8,9]. Higher education institutions can function to be built in the formation of Citizen Integration. Carrying this mentality from the Middle Ages to the present day, the governmental representatives of the UK, in the opening address of the World Conference on Higher Education [10], shared two statements: (1) the change in teaching should be based on

the values that inspired the first European Universities; (2) the expansion movement of higher education should address an increase in international cooperation naturally. The phenomenon of the globalisation of the economy, characteristic of the last decades of the twentieth century, shook the universities and launched some new challenges. The growing importance of knowledge and the appreciation of the capital intellectual property of individuals, the information and media revolution, and the responsibility for the creation and maintenance of understanding between peoples and a spirit of solidarity with the least developed countries became International forums [11]. These challenges impelled the universities to revise and update their strategies so that their students and their graduates can count on the essential academic and professional skills that enable them to interact in an increasingly multicultural and international society, with rapid changes in its systems. In this new panorama, universities are almost bound to seek international cooperation. They recognise that they will obtain the necessary support for developing education, research and extension [12]. The scientific management of agreements, collaboration agreements, and international scholars are concerned about establishing different programmes, supply management of joint academic degrees, and encouraging the creation of links with centres of global excellence recognition. It also supports the training of highly qualified staff and the training of human resources for university education. Disseminating information of particular interest to those seeking international integration opportunities helps open relations with outside parties and encourages participation in new forms of cooperation with international academics. In setting their internationalisation strategies, institutions must observe specific characteristics that can define the area activities, such as restrictions in terms of the geographic location of university partners; the existence of language barriers; areas of knowledge excellence in teaching or research, and even the country's level of development where the institution is located. According to the UNESCO (1998) guidance document produced in the World Conference on Higher Education, there was strong favouritism in development and seeking partnerships with European bloc and North American institutions and later the Latin American and Asian blocs [13]. In the past few years, the movement of workers and intellectuals was essential to any long-term development strategy.

IV. COMPLEXITIES IN INTERNATIONALISATION & HIGHER EDUCATION

Speaking about international academic cooperation, and especially when it should be part of the mission of educational institutions, it is necessary, in the first place, to understand some concepts of cooperation. The idea of cooperation has been used in different epochs of humanity. It has evolved, using different words, causing disagreements among political scientists who are not always attuned to the exact meaning of cooperation.



Since the Greek philosophers' time, the term "alliance" has been used with the idea of cooperation but with different connotations from the one used in contemporary times. The idea established the meaning of cooperation to avoid war because it assumed that all countries were involved in conflict situations with other states. However, cooperation refers to working together for capacity-building in specific sectors, giving better results. Integration, therefore, cannot be understood simply as incorporation or replacement. It should be understood as a process of necessary elements in specific sectors to improve the equilibrium of the components of the medium [14]. These programmes in internationalisation made room for the creation of several universities that promoted multilateral cooperation and were responsible for the opportunity for thousands of students each year to study abroad at recognised educational institutions. This mobility afforded strong European Universities a large-scale experience in the field of academic cooperation, especially with the development of a credit transfer system, the European Community Course Credit Transfer System - ECTS and the creation of instruments for recognition of studies that allow them to manage the differences of the various higher education systems. Necessary steps such as the development of the Bologna Declaration, the Turin Action Plan, reinforced the positioning acquired by the international academic cooperation; and it ceases to be an appendix in academic life and becomes an action strategy of universities [15]. Competitiveness increases, and the differential is settling in the internationalisation of institutions, i.e., the level of excellence of partnerships and quality of opportunities that universities have to offer for an experience abroad that their students and teachers acquire during their academic life. It remains unclear whether the universities are aware that their function is integrated effectively or prepared to face new challenges in the future. Universities have the advantage of the international opportunities that the global picture presents them [16]. A Strategy for development and international cooperation must be conceived as a policy.

V. THE UK POLICIES IN INTERNATIONALISATION & HE

A set of actions and instruments is organised according to scientific development and academic goals. This idea makes the following assumptions: the policy repositories, embedded with management and coordinating roles; goals with a minimal consensus at the university level; a set of favourable actions for cooperation; a good choice of partners, opportunities and resources that can support international cooperation. These assumptions enable institutions to become known, respected, and ready to compete in education in the international market. Understanding the importance of the internationalisation of higher education institutions by the high councils, as emphasised earlier, is essential to providing a favourable attitude to its deployment and execution. Universities that have already developed the internationalisation process must reinforce it, and those who do not have it yet should accelerate the progress. The absence of a strategy at institutional and governmental levels may be a retarding factor in obtaining numerous development results and

institutional projection in the international arena [17]. For the definition of strategies, each university tries to observe the principle of autonomy, individually defining needs according to the agreed objectives of the institution's goals. The strategies generally emanate from the higher levels, directors, in short, the governing body of the institutions. They can be centralised or may include the participation of other institutional bodies or academic units such as the offices of international affairs, which are structurally constituted in some universities. As the study concluded, by observing some of the largest foreign or national universities, and by constantly referring to macro UNESCO guidelines on trends in higher education for the twenty-first century, strategies for the internationalisation of institutions tend to observe some of the following: - the definition of an internationalisation policy is realised by cooperation of academic institutions; - encouraging the exchange of students, teachers and managers; - inclusion in international cooperation networks, which have clearly defined goals; - participation in collaborative research projects with a global range; - the raising of funds from different sources of funding, both domestic and foreign; - coordination and participation in international conferences and seminars; - participation in meetings convened by international organisations [18]. Observing the economic, political and social changes worldwide becomes critical for institutions seeking international academic cooperation, the global education market, and improvement in quality and competitiveness. The "cooperate to compete" principle shows a need to be aware of a new society's challenges that need qualified and competent citizens. International cooperation ceases to be an appendix and becomes part of academic life, providing a constant exchange of information between primary researchers and teaching centres and giving real networks of universal knowledge. Educators understand that international academic cooperation should be covered by all institutions that have the production and socialisation of knowledge; however, each institution's individuality and specificities and every person or region are still respected [19]. With this in mind, international cooperation should be pursued. Through it, the higher education institutions can seek an effective integration of nations to defend their common economic and social interests and, above all, to seek a more just and equal reality for people [20].

VI. INTERNATIONALISATION AND BREXIT

Since the announcement of the Brexit in 2016, there has been uncertainty among students and staff in the United Kingdom institutions of higher education, especially those from other European countries. Research conducted in 2017 indicated that 43000 students and 12500 staff were working at various higher institutions in the United Kingdom from other countries in Europe [21]. Brexit impacted these numbers more, so those working in the universities of the United Kingdom who were non-United Kingdom decreased. Brexit fueled fear among non-United Kingdom nationals over the loss of United European funding, research collaboration, and academic talents [22].



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Most universities are established internationally, beginning with the concept of internationalisation and mobility, implying that these universities are recognised globally. Most universities are global; they intersect at the local, the nation, and globe of higher education. Most countries reformed their higher educations to create a competitive capacity environment in the global higher education market. For instance, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia established an influx of international students and offshore education [23]. Scholars recommend that scientific advances focus on the internationalisation of the division of labour. From this, the idea of internationality where researchers will belong to an international community. Recently, mobility patterns of student destinations have remained attractive for international students compared to regional institutions, for instance, the United States and the United Kingdom. They imply that the global higher education landscape will have different shapes [24]. Brexit resulted in fears of losing mobility exchanges between the European academic institutions and the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom universities have closely mentioned the UK government's concerns over immigration policies, mostly on scientists and researchers [25]. In addition, during the Brexit period, there have been dramatic changes in universities' conditions. Before Brexit, higher education institutions in many countries were encouraged to create national policies, with universities competing and presenting new opportunities globally. Hence the quality of education depends on the above. Brexit by the United Kingdom significantly impacted the research process, culture for publication and communication, cooperation of scientific communities, teaching, mobility of students, and transfer of knowledge. Universities have always been characterised by a high ability to adapt to changes at multiple levels. In the twentieth century, we have witnessed an expansion of higher education institutions in terms of number and size. Therefore, the Brexit by the United Kingdom has reversed the adopted definition of internationalisation. Lastly, the biggest issue with Brexit for the academic community is, beyond doubt, research and financial consequences. Brexit implied there would be limitations and cuts concerning the European Union funding. These limitations and cuts impacted students and staff mobility to some extent. Brexit impacted the participation of the United Kingdom in the research programmes where the participation was less than ever. The agreement by the United Kingdom to withdraw from the European Union will strongly impact the research. Scholars argue that the United Kingdom will be unable to control its research arrangements after Brexit, thus limiting choices in Horizon 2020 since it will have less decisive power on directions and research strategy [26]. The university authorities are concerned about Brexit due to the United Kingdom universities' income implications. As UK higher education depends on capital, labour and student mobility, how can the global economic geography of UK transnational education be reshaped in anticipation of post-Brexit student mobility? Therefore, globalisation is touching the UK HEIs profoundly due to Brexit.

VII. RESULTS AND COMMENTS

Universities are traditional institutions for disseminating knowledge. These institutions are autonomous, protected from political interference and with a high degree of independence concerning the influences exerted by International actors. However, that situation has changed with the consolidation of globalisation. The development of communication and transportation generated excellent approximation of the countries by strengthening their relations in various economic and political traits [27]. In addition, knowledge has acquired particular relevance in the current economic conjuncture. The labour market requires individuals who have knowledge skills and can communicate in differing languages, giving greater sensitivity and tolerance to different cultures practised in the world. Thus, the level of knowledge and experience and the development of their skills are essential for a professional to enter the global labour market. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are responsible for the qualification of many professionals - placing themselves as authentic "factories" of knowledge and skilled labour. The process of globalisation must respond to these requirements, taking market and political changes into account. Thus, the international context has pressured universities, as there is a growing need for institutions to meet cultural, economic, and political interaction demands. Although the process of internationalisation of HEIs is not recent, there is still limited research on the subject, especially when it comes to the internationalisation of UK HEIs or other countries under development [28]. Brexit by the United Kingdom has raised many concerns in higher education institutions over research, particularly on cooperation and student and staff mobility within the United Kingdom institutions. After the Brexit deal, it is clear that participation in research programmes in the United Kingdom will be lessened. Also, the Brexit deal led to a rise in new immigration issues. Therefore, the government of the United Kingdom has the mandate to show commitment to providing solutions and strategies on these emerging issues. Educational institutions have to increase the number of international students by applying influential digital marketing and highly branding marketing campaigns. The Swiss-European Mobility Programme (SEMP) is an exchange programme for students, graduates, staff and HEI staff in which the UK is still participating. International students may gain an advantage from a drop in the UK currency, making the UK a more affordable place to study. The UK HEIs should also establish more satellite campuses worldwide to attract International students to attend their universities [29].

VIII. CONCLUSION

The process of socioeconomic and technological change has provoked new training needs for higher education, which has the difficult task of preparing for a globalised world without frontiers and centred on knowledge. Among the current trends for higher education, internationalisation and technical cooperation have conceived an international and intercultural dimension in all aspects of education and research.



The work aimed to analyse the internationalisation trend within higher education, including the perspectives of solidarity. Studies show that despite the defence for ethics and solidarity among nations in the educational field, the idea of internationalisation is understood as fraternal integration between higher education institutions. Globalisation is a phenomenon that extends at the expense of diversity, the autonomy of national states, identity and cultures, and the internationalisation with technical cooperation as an international or intercultural dimension in all aspects of education and research. It could be concluded that in the UK HEIs, internationalisation plays a significant feature concerning teaching, research, funding and recruitment. It would appear that for UK HE institutions to become genuinely internationalised, the staff and students need to be aware of policies in place for internationalisation and ensure the institutions take adequate steps to support the implementation of strategies for internationalisation. This may include further staff training or a review of internationalisation strategies set out by some UK HE institutions. This study has explored the impact of internationalisation and Brexit on higher education in the United Kingdom. Globalisation is touching the UK Higher Education Institutions profoundly due to Brexit. Undoubtedly, Brexit by the United Kingdom can be directly associated with negative consequences, especially in higher education and research, for instance, limitations and financial cuts by the EU. These limitations and cuts impacted students and staff mobility and the participation of the UK in the research programmes to some extent. Therefore, the government of the United Kingdom has the mandate to show commitment to providing solutions and strategies on these emerging issues. Universities should focus on digital media marketing and worldwide satellite campuses to attract more international students.

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