

## INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY FOR EDUCATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

John Saeë

*Institut d'Economie Scientifique Et de Gestion  
(IESEG- School of Management) Catholic University, rue de la Digue 3, Lille 59000, France  
E-mail: j.saeë@ieseg.fr*

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**Abstract.** There has been a sea change in the world economy with perceived far-reaching consequences on all aspects of human civilization. This dramatic transformation is largely precipitated by the phenomenon of globalization.

Baylis and Smith (1997) put forward the notion that globalization has accelerated the process of increasing interconnectedness between societies so much that events in one part of the world have more and more effect on peoples and societies far away. A globalized world, they argue, is one in which political, economic, cultural, and social events become more and more interconnected, and also one in which they have a wider impact.

It is a truism to state that globalization means different things to different people. For some, the term is entirely benign; it portrays a process that accelerates economic prosperity for the nations engaged in globalization. However, for others globalization is a plot by multinational companies, which want to exploit third-world countries' resources in terms of cheap labor and raw materials. At the same time, these multinational companies undermine national sovereignty of the third-world countries due to their enormous economic and political powers (Saeë, 2004).

In this research paper, an attempt is made to critically explore the drivers and the rationale behind the globalization that has also led educational institutions in most countries around the world to develop internationalization strategies for launching their degree offerings internationally. However, the focus of this research paper is on internationalization strategies by the Australian educational institutions that have important lessons for educational institutions of other countries interested in gaining an insight into internationalization strategies of Australian educational institutions.

**Keywords:** globalization, education, universities, internationalization strategy

### 1. Differing Perspectives on Globalization Phenomenon

At the turn of the third millennium, humanity is witnessing increased globalization with profound consequences. Yet, the concept of globalization is conceived in a number of different ways in many quarters. Thus, globalization has different meanings to different people. To illustrate this point further, a number of definitions of globalization are stipulated below.

Globalization is a concept which is describing the ever-intensifying networks of cross-border human interaction (Hoogvelt, 1997). This definition perceives globalization in terms of increased human interactions across the globe. A similar and yet broader definition of globalization incorporating sociological dimensions is conceived by Giddens in which he portrays globalization in the following fashion: Globalization can be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events

occurring many miles away and vice versa (Giddens, cited in Hoogvelt, 1997).

A more radical definition of globalization sees "globalization as a process that is characterized by awareness of global challenges; the global economy, legal system, culture, and infrastructure; and the global recognition and acceptance of human rights such as equality of opportunity, and freedom of thought and expression" (cleo.murdoch.edu.au, 1997). In the same vein, Waters (1995) proffers a sociological definition of globalization in which he argues that "globalization is a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding" (p. 3).

Underlying this definition is the belief that technological innovations in areas such as communications and transport have been the driving-force behind the breaking down of national and international barriers including the vast geographical distances and the presence of myriad linguistic and

cultural groupings across the world. In other words, the world is increasingly becoming a “Global Village”. This point is eloquently put by Hoogvelt (1997), in which he argues:

“Today’s telecommunications, using satellite TV and linking of computers, through cyberspace allow most disembodied services, e.g. technological designs, managerial instructions and operational controls, as well as media images of wars and earthquakes and representations of consumer fashions, to enter the minds of people instantly anywhere in the global system”(p. 12).

Farnham (1997) argues that globalization is based on the notion of ‘world capitalism’, a term that refers to the major globalizing dynamic because it “drives towards constantly increasing the scale of production and consumption” (p.170). Similarly, Drago et al (1992) note that globalization is a drive toward the “commercial integration of world economies” (p. 192).

Meanwhile, Hill (2002) describes globalization as a move away from “an economic system in which nations are district entities, isolated from each other by trade barriers and barriers of distance, time and culture, and toward a system in which national markets are merging into one huge global marketplace” (p. 5).

Whilst different perceptions of the phenomenon of globalization by scholars received considerable attention in the literature, what is, however, clear is that the primary tangible evidence for globalization, is the rapid growth in the volume of cross-border trade and direct foreign investment flows (FDI) in recent decades. For instance, according to the United Nations data, between 1984 and 1996 the average yearly outflow of FDI from all countries increased by 830 percent to a record US\$349 billion. This compares with a 92 percent expansion in world trade and a 27 percent expansion in world output over the same period (cited in Hill, 2002). Australian experience has been no exception to this. Currently, more than 90% of major Australian industries and 80% of the economy are controlled by global capital or foreign investment, with dramatic consequences on the job structure, employment, economic performance, national competitiveness, productivity and environment in Australia (<http://www.overflow.net.au/-bizbrief/index.html>).

## 2. Main Catalysts for Globalization

There were several catalysts which stimulated globalization: (1) internationalization of businesses by

firms due to quest for profit maximization and risk diversification; (2) the liberalization of governmental policies on trade and resource movements around the world; (3) development of institutions needed to support and facilitate international transactions; (4) liberalization of global financial services; (5) technological innovations in communications and transport; and (6) increased global competition. Consequently, the corporate world has become increasingly interrelated. Companies in the USA, Japan, Europe and Australia are doing more and more business outside their national borders in the search for new suppliers and markets. Developing countries and newly-emerging Eastern European market economies are learning that to survive and prosper, they must engage in business with the industrial countries.

Recent decades saw global trade rising exponentially from a figure of US\$ 250 billion in 1965 to a current level of over US\$ 7.5 trillion dollars (Hill, 2002). According to the statistics released by the World Trade Organization and the United Nations, the volume of world trade has grown consistently faster than the volume of world trade output since 1950. Between 1990 and 1996 the volume of world merchandised trade grew at 6 per cent per annum, while the volume of world output grew at around 1.5 per cent per annum.

Within this perspective in mind, Australia’s international trade has also risen exponentially over the years. Data (DFAT, 1999) showed that Australia’s total international trade now exceeds AUD\$ 120 billion which constitutes a significant portion of Australia’s GDP. Overall, these data imply that the world economy is becoming much more interdependent.

Whilst recent decades saw spectacular growth rates in global trade, the phenomenon of globalization has historical origins which date back many centuries. Clear examples of globalization can be found in the time of Phoenician civilization when, in addition to giving humanity literacy skills through their invention of alphabets, great traders traversed foreign lands in their pursuit of trade. Traders in ancient times traveled the famous Silk Road which covered China, Middle Eastern countries and some parts of Europe in their attempts to sell their goods in these countries.

The 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries saw in Europe the rise of the mercantilist doctrine which advocated that nations should strongly encourage export whilst discouraging imports. Only in this way, mercantilists argued, could nations increase their wealth in the form

of gold. This economic doctrine was predicated on the premise of a zero-sum game in which a gain by one nation would mean an equivalent loss by another. Although this doctrine was later discredited, it still remains an appealing international trade policy in some nations, even today.

Many notable experts in the field of international business, namely Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Leontief, Hecksher-Ohlin, Raymond Vernon and Michael Porter and others have advanced sophisticated theories of international trade. However, this research paper, due to limitations of space, is unable to expound on these theories and perspectives.

### 3. Advantages of Globalization

The question that often comes to mind is: “What have been the major benefits of globalization in modern societies?”

Several influential commentators and researchers argued that increased international trade and cross-border investment will result in lower prices across the board for goods and services. Globalization stimulates economic growth, raises the incomes of consumers, and helps to create jobs in all countries that choose to participate in the global trading system (Hill 2002; Mahoney et al, 1998).

### 4. Disadvantages of Globalization

Many other scholars have pointed to several disadvantages arising from globalization.

Some critics of globalization (Batra, 1993; Goldsmith, 1996; Bartlett and Steele, 1996) maintain that falling trade barriers allow firms to move their manufacturing activities offshore to countries where wage rates are much lower.

Another criticism of globalization is that national sovereignty in most countries is being undermined by the increasingly interdependent global economy i.e. economic power is shifting away from national governments and toward supranational organizations such as the World Trade Organization, The International Monetary Fund and Transnational companies.

Conversely, free traders would argue that the benefits associated with globalization far outweigh these perceived drawbacks. Globalization is an inescapable reality that no nation can afford to ignore, since it can be beneficial to nations involved in increased international trade (Hill, 2002).

## 5. Contemporary Globalization of Education

Higher education always had international perspective due to universal nature of knowledge and international cooperation in research (IAU, 2002), internationalization of higher education today is increasingly fostered by changing external environment in which they operate. Higher education as an industry has to respond combination of supply and demand forces shaping up the market for higher education services. On the demand side, changing industrial structure of the society reflected in the shift toward knowledge based economy stimulates increased need for educational services in general. The victory of market economy paradigm almost the world over stimulated additional demand for knowledge generated in the Western countries with growing numbers of students from developing countries and countries in transition to market economy attending Western universities. It is worth noting here that 85% of all international students in the world study within OECD area, with USA, UK, Germany, France and Australia leading in foreign students' numbers (OECD, 2002). Three Anglo-Celtic countries among mentioned above host 55% of international student population in OECD area (Table 1).

**Table 1. Distribution of foreign students in OECD countries by host country (1999)**

Host country	% of all foreign students in OECD countries
Australia	8
UK	16
USA	31
Germany	12
France	9

Source: adapted from Larsen et al (2002)

What are the countries of origin of international students? In 1999 Asian countries accounted for 47% and Middle East and North Africa accounted for 10% of international students in OECD countries (OECD, 2002). According to the recent statistics China is the major single-country source of international students in OECD countries (OECD, 2002).

## 6. Globalization of Australian Education

Whilst the debate on prosperity versus impoverishment associated with the phenomenon of globalization is still raging and, as such still remains controversial in many quarters around the world, the reality of globalization has helped Australian education

institutions to successfully develop globalization strategies for their educational services.

Since its inception in recent decades, Australian educational institutions have successfully exported their educational services overseas.

Export of education services is most commonly conceived of as students coming to Australia to study, but they can also include correspondence courses for overseas students, the electronic transmission of lectures and courses overseas, and Australians traveling personally overseas to provide various forms of education. Further, Australian educational institutions in conjunction with local overseas educational providers have offered their courses in different overseas markets.

Export of education can be provided by the formal sector and the non-formal sector. The formal sector comprises public and private secondary schools and universities and colleges of Technical and Further education (TAFE). The non-formal sector is made up of private colleges and institutes which, in the main, provide courses in Commerce and related subjects and English language but also offer a wide range of other subjects. Traditionally, the formal sector has awarded successful students with statutory-recognized educational qualifications. However, it is becoming increasingly common for each sector to provide courses leading to both official and unofficial qualifications.

## **7. Economic Benefits of Australian International Education**

Historically, economic benefits derived from international education, particularly full-fee paying overseas students were relatively modest. For example, direct earnings from the full-fee paying overseas student program for 1989 were some \$174 million and the Bureau of Industry Economics (BIE) suggested that students' non-tuition expenditure (which included expenditure in Australia by foreign students on items such as living expenses) in 1988 was probably equivalent to tuition expenditure in that year. On that basis, in 1989, Australia's total foreign exchange earnings from the export of education services were around \$350 million. However, total earnings from international education have risen dramatically over the years. For example, by 1994 Australia's total revenue from international education and training totaled \$1.7 billion (Mayer, 1994) and now exceed over \$2.5 billion in 1999 (TTA, 1999). This phenomenal growth is attributed to the successful launch of the Australian quality education internationally over the years.

## **8. Why Do Overseas Students Choose Australia As Their International Educational Destination?**

Overseas students indicated that a variety of factors which influence their reasons for choosing Australia. These include the award of a scholarship to study in this country (Harris and Jarrett, 1990). That is, the students are directly offered a place at an Australian institution by way of personal achievement and a paid agreement.

Australia, it would seem, is considered to have relatively low costs of living and study expenses. In fact, 62.9 per cent of overseas students believe the cost of study in Australia was less than or equal to the cost of study in other comparable countries (Steadman and Dagwell, 1990).

This is a definite advantage when overseas students and their families are considering an international education, as many of these students are from working class families and the majority of financial support comes from relatives. Yet another study undertaken by the IDP on behalf of AIDAB (Australian International Development Aid Bureau) indicates that education fees and the standard of living in Australia are noticeably higher than that in other comparable countries (Browne and Dale, 1991).

The high standard of education in Australia draws overseas students to this country. Sixty one per cent of overseas students believe the quality of degree programs being undertaken in Australia was better than or equal to that in comparable countries (Steadman and Dagwell, 1990).

The restricted access to tertiary education in their home country has forced students to seek education in a foreign country. For example, the country may offer only one or two tertiary institutions with limited placements, or the student may live in a remote area not in close proximity to an institution. Thus Australia would be viewed in a positive light as it offers many universities, colleges of advanced education and private tertiary institutions from which they can choose.

Travel costs are lower than to destinations with other education providers and time differences between Australia and the students' home countries are less (Industry Commission, 1991, p. 26). The low incidence of travel costs thus acts as a great benefit for Australia as an education destination.

## 9. Australian Government Policy on Full Fee Paying Overseas Students

Driven by the desire to internationalize education and training as a means of generating revenues, the Australian Government initiated a new policy as far back as 1986 allowing universities and other educational institutions to offer places to overseas student at full cost. While no limits were placed on the number of full fee paying overseas students who could be accepted, the Government put in place guidelines aimed at preventing the displacement of Australian students in the form of a specified minimum course fee for full fee paying overseas students. At the same time, overseas student visa procedures were streamlined to assist institutions in marketing their courses.

The effects of these changes were a dramatic increase in student numbers with student arrivals more than doubling between 1986 and 1989 (Mayer, 1994). In particular, the number of students entering Australia to study non-formal courses increased sharply.

Australia's immigration policies regarding overseas students underwent various and frequent changes from 1987 onwards. These changes arose from concerns that the "exports of education" sector was being exploited by some students and institutions. It was felt by many in the industry that the relaxed regulations in the early part of 1987 allowed 'non genuine' students primarily interested in working and/or overstaying, to enter Australia with relative ease. Student visa regulations and procedures were tightened and the bona fides of students was assessed. However, tightening regulations were not just aimed at students. Concerns that some institutions were targeting 'wrong' or 'non-genuine' students led to stricter rules being imposed on institutions through the Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET).

The number of students coming for English Language Intensive Courses (ELICOS) and other short courses fell significantly following the tightening of entry procedures. Generally, institutions in the formal sector were not affected except where they offered non-formal courses such as English language training.

In the 1990s, the international student intake rose sharply due to successful targeting of various overseas markets by the Australian educational institutions.

## 10. International Students Currently Studying in Australia

Australian educational institutions have an international reputation as quality education providers (Anonymous, 1998, 'Australian Higher Education', Australia Education Centre). Australia is keen to share its expertise with the rest of the world. According to Austrade, Australia has an increasing number of international students studying in universities, institutes, colleges and schools. In 1997, there were more than 150,000 international students studying in Australia. Of these, 64,000 international students from around the world chose to study at Australian higher education institutions (business, administration and economics courses were especially popular) in 1997 (Anonymous, Austrade, 1999).

There are nine major source countries for students in Australian higher educational institutions, as shown in Table 2.

## 11. Cost and Benefits Analysis of International Students Studying in Australia

In broad terms, the benefits to Australia from the education services come from the financial income of educational institutions and the expenditure of students on goods and services in Australia, less the cost of

**Table 2. Source Countries of International Students Studying in Australia**

Country	1995–1996	1996–1997	1997–1998
S. Korea	8171	9588	4839
Indonesia	6651	8030	7591
Japan	5967	6319	5176
Malaysia	4874	5327	4323
Singapore	4958	4575	4222
Hong Kong	3888	4276	3504
USA	3137	3579	4158
India	2449	2820	4192
PRC (China)	1653	1995	2375

Source: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (1999)

providing the exports of education, are similar to those from the export of other goods and services. However, there are also some important differences.

One set of differences arises from the fact that most foreign consumers of the service reside in Australia while they are educated. This means that they:

- consume goods and services which may be priced at less than their real cost (transport, health, children's education etc) and in some circumstances may add to congestions;
- contribute to taxation and tariff revenues when they consume ancillary goods and services;
- may obtain jobs and affect remuneration and employment opportunities for Australians; and
- may overstay their allowed time and compromise Australia's immigration processes.

## **12. Wider Costs and Benefits of Globalization of the Australian Education**

The presence of international students in Australia can have effects beyond immediate effects in markets for the goods and services that they require, including the following.

## **13. Balance of Payments**

Some commentators noted about benefits that the exports of education provide to the balance of payments. Many would argue that in any assessment of the desirability of particular activities, special weight should be given to those which earn foreign exchange. A corollary is that increase support should be given for exporters, especially in establishing industries such as education.

If foreign exchange is given no special weight, benefits from providing goods and services do not vary accordingly to whether the expenditure was derived from funds from abroad or in Australia.

## **14. Non-tangible Benefits From Enrolling International Students**

Some of the most frequently mentioned benefits from education exports occur when students return home. These benefits are generated from both full fee paying overseas students and students who benefit from assistance through aid program.

## **15. Trade and Commercial Benefits**

Students may acquire brand loyalties to Australian products from the expenditure in this country which

may imply greater future demand than would otherwise have been the case. Similarly, there may be increased facilitation of trade between countries as a result of personal and institutional relationship developed here by individuals able to facilitate or influence trading liaisons with Australia in the future.

Australian educated people may also influence the development in their home countries of standards and regulations which are compatible with Australian standards.

This has in the past proved to be of considerable value to Australian exporters.

## **16. International Relations/Diplomatic Benefits**

Some commentators hold the view that Australia benefits politically from having an active overseas student policy. The Goldring Committee (Report of the Committee of Review of Private Overseas Student Policy) revealed that there were many people in senior government and political positions in other countries in the region who have studied in Australia and whose attitude towards Australia were generally more favorable as a result.

## **17. Cultural and Educational Benefits**

The presence of overseas students in Australian institutions is said to provide an enrichment of the educational environment. Australian students benefit because they are exposed to a diverse range of people, customs and ideas, and gain a more international perspective.

TAFE Queensland listed several benefits, including cultural exchange, overseas recognition of awards, conduct of additional classes which would otherwise be uneconomic, and increased responsiveness of institutions to establish new courses to meet local and overseas demand (Steadman and Dagwell, 1990).

## **18. Internationalizing Australian Universities**

From the early 1990s especially, globalization has led to the internationalization of many universities around the world. A globalizing world economy has accelerated, changing the view of higher education students, alongside increasing interdependence of the world's economies. Internationalization of universities is not only a matter of recruiting international students, but it also implies that teachers and students will learn from each other, (both offshore and local students,) meeting the needs and wants of international business,

whilst creating interdependence between students. One of the aims of internationalization of universities is to produce graduates capable of solving problems in a variety of locations with cultural and environmental sensitivity (Aulakh et al, 1997).

## 19. Study Abroad

One of the related initiatives that Australian tertiary education have spearheaded is “Study Abroad” programs.

“Study Abroad” Programs are normally one or two semester periods of study undertaken overseas, for which partial or full credit will be obtained toward a student’s degree at their home institution. Credit transfers for studies completed overseas will vary according to the differences between the student’s academic system at home and that of the host country. Study abroad programs are available at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Australia. All Australian universities accept direct entry applications for Study Abroad. The experience of these programs is intended to expand the knowledge of other culture and offer the personal challenges and the rewards of successfully adapting to another culture (Anonymous, 1999, Australian Education International).

## 20. Distance Education

Increasingly, Australian educational institutions have, in response to perceived needs arising from onshore and offshore market niches, been developing their curricula through distance education.

Three of Australia’s higher education institutions for distance education (University of Southern Queensland, Monash University, Central Queensland University) all have a comprehensive and well-developed system of distance education, and provide extensive education in courses similar to studying in Australia. As an example, Mason (1996, p.54) suggests that, “A few courses specifically aimed at a global audience, which nevertheless are fee-paying, accredited and on-going, do exist, and many more are in the planning stages. See, for example, the Graduate Certificate in Open and Distance Learning by the University of Southern Queensland (<http://www.usq.edu.au>), and the UKOU’s Masters Degree in the same subject (<http://www-iet.open.ac.uk/iet/iet.html>)”.

Because of the Distance Education Programs, international students have been able to study in their home countries. In the current economic situation, this program can be the most practical and economical way of obtaining an Australian tertiary qualification for

students who are unable to study in Australia. “The majority of distance education courses adopt a multimedia approach that includes printed materials, computer based learning, interactive multi media materials, audio tapes, video tapes and ‘talkback’ radio. Distance education standards are high and qualifications are fully accepted by other institutions”(Anonymous, 1998, ‘Distance Education’, Australian Education Centre).

## 21. Problems associated with Internationalizing the Australian Education

Active involvement of Australian Universities on the international scale inevitably creates new challenges. Internationalization brings a cross-cultural dimension integrated into all core activities of the Universities (Back and Davis, 1997). Consequently, systematic cross-cultural adaptation of these activities is required (Taylor, 1997). Therefore, the most crucial development to do with expanding internationally is ensuring the application of cross-cultural communication competence in tertiary education (Holton, 1997) which includes a more flexible approach to teaching (Taylor, 1997).

There are to-date few tertiary institutions in Australia that have developed courses to address cross-cultural dimensions.

Another related problem is the application of information technology (Holton, 1997). For example, distance learning depends on technology more than any other mode of teaching. Notwithstanding positive developments in this field, there are still challenges and barriers inherent in the distance learning mode that need to be addressed by the Australian educational institutions, namely: “lack of appropriate staff training in order to teach with the new technologies; lack of an appropriate reward structure to attract staff to adopt new methods; and lack of resource to fund the development of technology-based courses” (Mason, 1996, p. 81).

Further, internationalization of Australian higher education depends on the recognition of the fact that current educational practices need to be changed to better suit global educational marketing demand (Taylor, 1997). However, “there exist a whole range of bureaucratic procedures, academic intransigence and administrative inertia, which prevent a re-engineering of the institution” (Mason, 1996, p. 81).

## 22. Conclusion

Increasing penetration into worldwide international education points to promising trends for the Australian

education sector. Meanwhile, the Australian educational sector needs to develop cross-cultural skills to better tap this highly competitive market. In addition, there is a perceived need for academics involved in international education to gain intercultural communication competence so that they could competently interact with international students. Further there is a perceived need for international students to gain cultural competency about Australian society and culture so that they can competently acculturate themselves whilst studying in Australia. This issue again requires the development of appropriate curricula in an areas such cross-cultural skills and intercultural communication competencies by Australian educational institutions and their overseas counterparts.

Finally, the onus on Australian educational institutions in much the same ways as other educational institutions overseas involved in internationalizing their degree offerings to design and market their courses in a manner that is appealing and academically sound to international students, which is also critical for the continued strategic growth and development of education as an international business. Globalization is thus seen by many as a positive trend that will produce more wealth for the Australian national economy and other participating nations involved in the globalization process. Internationalization of higher education has become one of the major features of Australian education, and it will give increased international competitive advantage to the Australian economy. However, there are still some important barriers to globalization in Australian higher education, as noted earlier. These are impacting severely on Australia's capacity to meet the challenges presented by the emerging new paradigm. One of the outcomes of these institutionalized obstacles is that it will take time and much effort to make the necessary adjustments in both the administrative and academic domains before Australian educational institutions can launch themselves with full fury into the international business arena (Mason, 1996).

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