Internationalisation of Lithuanian Universities and Its Integral Management

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Abstract— **The paper discuss the internationalisation of Lithuanian universities. It is revealed why internationalisation is one of the key dimensions in Lithuanian universities facing high competitive pressure. Some most important aspects are presented about internationalisation of universities, evaluating the context of Lithuania. Internationalisation should be effectively managed in universities. The integral management system could help to develop the process effectively. Lithuanian universities face the challenges coping with indoors and outdoors internationalisation.**

Keywords—internationalisation, internationalisation of Lithuanian universities, integral management of internationalisation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Internationalisation of universities becomes more and more discussed topic in scientific and practical documents. Internationalisation is very important and for Lithuanian universities, placing themselves competitively in EU or even global market.

The scientific problem of this article lays on revealing how Lithuanian universities could compete in global market.

Globalisation is tightly connected with internationalisation process of organisations, especially universities as high educations institutions. Education sector is facing internationalisation as a result and as a way how more successfully act in complex and very competitive environment of higher education in Lithuania and globally.

The aim of the research is based on identification of essential internationalisation components of Lithuanian universities and proposing integral management model of internationalisation, achieving process optimisation at universities.

The object of the research is internationalisation of Lithuanian universities.

The subject of this article is integral management of internationalisation of Lithuanian universities.

The tasks of the research are:

1) To analyse the actuality of internationalisation of universities in global context, especially considering the situation in Lithuania;
2) To identify and ground essential components of internationalisation of Lithuanian universities;

3) To discuss the possible programme for incorporating internationalisation into management processes at Lithuanian universities.

Research methods: in-depth analysis of scientific literature, comparative analysis.

II. ACTUALITY OF INTERNATIONALISATION OF UNIVERSITIES IN GLOBAL CONTEXT, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THE SITUATION IN LITHUANIA

The growing importance of internationalisation of higher education institutions is emphasized in many scientific articles [2; 31; 14; 28] and political discussions [15; 9; 10]. According to the scientific literature the internationalisation is the strategic issue for higher education institutions in order survive in nowadays challenging and exponentially changing environment.

The scientific analysis shows that the process of internalization is very complex, multifaceted and multiparametral, Jane Knight [19; 20; 21] emphasized the complexity of internationalisation concept and represented the typology of approaches to internationalisation which is presented in table I.

TABLE I. THE COMPLEXITY OF INTERNATIONALISATION CONCEPT

Activity approach	*The scope of activities which describe the internationalisation: curriculum, student/faculty exchange, international students.*
Competency approach	*Knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of students, staff, administration*
Ethos approach	*Culture, climate which stimulates intercultural initiatives*
Process approach	*Incorporation of intercultural dimension in all activities (teaching, research and etc.)*

Scientists are still discussing about the concept of higher education internationalisation [11; 32; 22; 18]. It is agreed that globalisation is one of the most important factors influencing internationalisation of higher education [15; 20; 28]. There are some similarities between globalisation and internationalisation processes, but it should be understood that it is not the same thing [32] (although it could be found some confusions in scientific literature, for example [3]). Altbach G., Knight J. [2] emphasize that globalisation is the context of 21st century which has the influence to economic, political, social and cultural activities. Internationalisation covers policies and practices which help for higher education institutions to cope with the challenges which emerge under the pressure of globalisation.

Another important factor is technological development. The fast development of technologies

especially information and communication technologies [6; 36] influences the orientation of education towards digital learning (for example, the possibilities of *Massive Open Online Course (*MOOC)). Technological changes create the new possibilities for students – they could learn in their origin country, abroad or online.

Globalisation and technological changes are two important factors which have influenced emerge of knowledge based economy. In such economy the employers need the graduates which have broad portfolio of skills and abilities which are required in a globalized world such as working in international groups and networks, recognition of other cultures, tolerance to others cultures, communication in foreign languages and etc. Graduates should be flexible and fast adapting facing with changes.

Why the internationalisation is so important for universities? J. Knight [19; 20], H. De Wit [8] state that there are several important rationales for internationalisation of universities: political, economic, academic and cultural/ social.

Political rationale. The internationalisation of higher education is seen as the possibility to strengthen the national identity and to develop diplomatic relationships between countries. It cover the national security, mutual understanding. This rationale was very important after WWII and during Cold War period.

Economic rationale. The internationalisation ensures the preparation of such graduates which are able to work in nowadays environment and create the value.

Academic rationale. The internationalisation is the possibility to achieve the international standards in teaching and research through cooperation with other institutions all over the world.

Cultural/ social rationale. The internationalisation allows improving the intercultural understanding which is essential in contemporary environment. Rationales could be different according to the country/regions peculiarities [33].

It is agreed that having internationalisation strategies in place makes the positive impact on the universities internationalisation. Despite of the fact that many higher education institutions have such strategies they are usually focused on students' mobility. International strategy should be comprehensive and include three important areas which are strongly related [9]:

- International students and staff mobility (students, researchers and staff mobility; recognition of competences gained abroad, focus on learning outcomes);

- Curricula internationalisation and improvement as well as digital learning (capitalisation of international experience; development of language skills; opportunities for international collaboration using information and communication technologies);

- Strategic cooperation, partnership and capacity building (cooperation creating international partnerships and alliances; joint and double degree

programmes; curricula with broad transferable skills and possibilities to work together with employers from inside and outside EU).

European Higher Education Area (EHEA) facilitates the internationalisation processes. Such tool as Erasmus+ is known as one of the most popular and effective achieving internationalisation goals. For example in 2014 -2020 period the Erasmus + programme for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience and volunteer abroad (budget €14.7 billion). Bologna process is an important step towards internationalisation of higher education. European Commission, European Universities Association highly support the member's; internationalisation processes.

It is expected that demand of higher education will grow in the near future. According to UNESCO Institute for statistics in 2010 there were about 178 million students in the world. Forecasts show that by 2025 the number of students will be 236 million [34]. Looking to the situation in Lithuania, the number of students is decreasing. Institutions of higher education should react to this challenging situation. In this case internationalisation could become not only the way to improve the quality of higher education, but also the possibility to attract students from other EU and not EU countries and benefit from hosting international students.

III. ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF INTERNATIONALISATION OF LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITIES

Lithuanian higher education institutions and especially universities experience a challenge of demographic changes and increasing pressure of globalisation. Labour demand changes as well are very important, because there is need for practice oriented graduates. Beside of the mentioned consequent competition from vocational schools and applied science high education institutions exists. One of the main consequences of these challenges is a decreasing number of local students. Due to these factors internationalisation of Lithuanian universities becomes an important aspect for universities to remain and endure being competitive in the global higher education area.

According to Jane Knight [21] *the internationalisation of higher education is "the process of integrating an **international, intercultural or global dimension** into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education".* Knight [21] states that *internationalisation revolves around two basic components: internationalisation at home* (rather curriculum-oriented) *and internationalisation abroad.* These components do not exclude one another, but are intertwined in policies and programmes (table II).

TABLE II. COMPONENTS OF INTERNATIONALISATION AT HOME AND ABROAD
(adapted according to J. Knight, [19])

Internationalisation at home *Campus*	Internationalisation abroad *Cross-border*

Curriculum and programs	Movement of people
Teaching/learning process	Delivery of programs
Extracurricular activities	Mobility of providers
Liaison with local cultural and ethnic groups	International projects
Research and scholarly activity	

Although an internationalisation is an important factor for higher education it is not developing in similar ways in higher education throughout Europe and the world as a whole. There are different accents and approaches. Internationalisation strategies are filtered and contextualised by the specific internal context of the university, by the type of university, and how they are embedded nationally [7]. As one of the examples is the Bologna Process in the European Union. The Bologna Process does not aim to harmonise national educational systems but rather to provide tools to connect them. The intention is to allow the diversity of national systems and universities to be maintained while the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) improves transparency between higher education systems, as well as implements tools *to facilitate:*

- *recognition of degrees and academic qualifications,*
- *mobility, and*
- *exchange between institutions.*

Mobility factor in the Bologna Process plays an important role as a connecting aspect in higher education internationalisation. Documents introduced in the frame of Bologna Process are clearly focused to give mobility a boost and in this way to strengthen the internationalisation in HE (table III).

TABLE III. MOST IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS INTRODUCED IN THE FRAME OF BOLOGNA PROCESS AND THEIR IMPACT ON MOBILITY TOWARDS INTERNATIONALISATION OF HE

DOCUMENT	IMPACT
Bologna Declaration (1999) - London Communique (2007)	to increase a *mobility* of academic community
Leuven Communique (2009)	to encourage EHEA students to *study abroad;*
Bucharest Communique (2012)	"*Mobility* for Better Learning. Mobility strategy 2020 for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)").

Lithuania joined the Bologna Process from its very beginning in 1999. According to R. Karveliene [17] Lithuania is dependent upon the same globalisation factors as other countries; however, after entering the European Union and signing the Bologna Declaration, the Lithuanian ethnocentric orientation of national education policy started to overlap with the international policy propagated by the Bologna Process that refers to Eurocentric ideology [5]. With reference to T. Bulajeva [5], R. Markevičiene [26; 27],

R. Karveliene [17] some Lithuania's documents of national level (period of 1999-2012) that harmonise Lithuanian higher education (Programme for the Promotion of Internationalisation in Lithuanian HE 1999-2010, The development plan of the Lithuanian higher education system of 2006-2010, Regulations of National Education Strategy 2003-2012) [30] conceal the internationalisation problem.

However R. Karveliene [17] stated that during the period of 2000 and 2010 Lithuanian universities understanding the importance of internationalisation, in their strategic and development documents assigned the internationalisation process to the development aims (e.g. universities strategic development plans, strategic activities plans, development strategies, etc.); in addition, concrete state documents indicating internationalisation development guidelines appear as well. In 2006 have been carried out the study "The Global Practice of Promotion of Higher Education Internationalisation and Guidelines of its Application" and the "Programme for the Promotion of Internationalisation in Higher Education, developed for 2008-2010" was approved. The main focus of the programme on the *development of international cooperation in HE*. In 2011 the Programme for the Promotion of Internationalisation in Higher Education 2011-2012 was approved. With reference to R. Karveliene [17] in this programme it was foreseen to pay attention not only to: *the internationalisation of:*

- *studies* but also
- *to research*,
- *to closer contacts with foreign science and education institutions,*
- *to the development of cooperation with Lithuanian research emigrants and*
- *to the strengthening of the Lithuanian spirit.*

One of the last adopted documents in Lithuania is the new National Action Plan for Internationalisation of Lithuanian Higher Education 2013-2016, which was approved in September of 2013 [1]. It emphasises *the main components, which are needed to give a boost internationalisation of Lithuanian HE cover a broader scope*: the funding from structural funds for implementation of ECTS, preparation of Joint programmes, organisation of placements abroad, student grants and promotion of Lithuanian HE abroad. *The Action Plan highlights the main priorities:*

- Development of *joint study programmes and programmes in foreign languages*;
- *Enhancement of competencies of academic personnel;*
- *Attraction of foreign teaching staff;*
- Promotion of *support system for foreign students and minimising of barriers for incoming foreigners*;
- *Fostering of students and staff mobility*;
- *Support for Centres for Baltic studies abroad*;

- *Support of emigrants of Lithuanian origin, applying to and enrolled in Lithuanian HEIs;*
- *Maintenance of relations with Lithuanian emigrants;*
- *Promotion of Lithuanian higher education world-wide.*

This plan was prepared at the end of the Lifelong Learning programme when academic *mobility* was recognised as one of important criteria evaluating the progress of higher education institutions. Therefore, this document was prepared consulting with higher education institutions and agencies that coordinate international mobility [17].

Taking into account the period of more than two decades (1999-2014) a big progress was achieved in the process of internationalisation of HE in the regional level of the European Union and in the national level - taking into account the case of Lithuania. Strategic documents of the European Union and Lithuania have revelled main problems of internationalisation of HE as well as foreseen future guidelines for its implementation. In summary can be stated that mobility appears as a connecting component of internationalisation of HE. Successful implementation of mobility could give internationalisation of HE a boost and furthermore it could accelerate the process of internationalisation. Although the internationalisation of HE is a nowadays topicality it is a complex process integrating international, intercultural and global aspects. The European Union in the regional level and the European Union member states in their national level create a management of internationalisation of HE from the strategic perspective. However recently appears a big demand for an institutional strategy and integral managerial model/tool, which could integrate all components of internationalisation in an institutional level.

IV. TOWARDS INTEGRAL MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONALISATION OF LITHUANIAN UNIVERISTIES

The discussion of management model needed for internationalisation at the university level should at least consider the question of conceptualization and operationalization of the internationalisation concept, specification of internationalisation strategies, goals, plans etc. pursued by universities in the context of market forces and other environments, analysis of best practices, overview of possibilities and limitations of management information systems (MIS) and description of current and reengineered processes at a university.

The scope of the internationalisation concept directly affects discussion of what is to be managed at the university level, i.e. what objects, functions, actions, goals are subsumed under the internationalisation function. Taking a pragmatic stance to the internationalisation, at the end it means higher value for various stakeholder groups: higher

university rank, higher salaries or other kinds of rewards, more income, better education and higher employment chances etc. Therefore we see internationalisation as the means to enhance these various utilities.

Internationalisation strategies and approaches [29] may include actions from unsystematic to highly structured and interlinked plans and actual procedures to reach the agreed goals. A university due to its specific environment may choose not to market itself to international and exchange students, but still strive to deliver international standard curricular to its students.

The discussion of the best practices in the management and MIS related to internationalisation is beyond the scope of this paper, but a number of quality management systems and standards are in place to give structure and interconnectedness to the internationalisation strategy, e.g., Balanced Scorecard [16] while MIS provide a framework to implement the management process of internationalisation function. Management information system [23] of an organization comprises several important parts, including software, hardware, people, and business processes. University as any other organization needs to have its business processes analysed and defined. Business process analysis, modelling and design [12] are a very important, if not central task for MIS development in any organization.

Activities, processes, competencies (e.g., multicultural competence development) must be considered as an integral part of Human Resource Management, Knowledge Management processes in university MIS. Existing business processes in a university can be analysed and modelled by means of Unified Modelling Language UML [35]. UML is a widely adopted graphical notation in information systems development; it can be used as a business process modelling language which emphasises representation of the system behaviour from technology independent, high level abstraction perspective. UML can be used for representing both static structure and dynamic behaviour of the elements of the system. UML diagrams are understandable not only by software analysts and developers but also by people involved in business processes.

Although every university has its own configuration of resources and external environment, more or less unique strategic goals and procedures pertaining to internationalisation and therefore business process modelling for a single university may yield very specific system, a number of rather universal indicators operationalise the inputs, throughputs and outputs/outcomes/impacts related to internationalisation dimension [13]. "Lagging" (output) internationalisation indicators usually are related to:

- inbound and outbound exchange students, international students (share of exchange students, percentage change per year, ratio inbound/outbound etc.)

- inbound and outbound researchers
- joint research, other projects and publications with foreign high education institutions
- effectiveness, efficiency and other characteristics of actions (e.g., seminars, exchange, extra-curricular activities etc. to develop multicultural competency in various target groups) and resources invested in the internationalisation efforts

"Leading" (input) internationalisation indicators may characterise:

- courses and study programmes available to foreign students (exchange and international students, e.g., percentage or absolute number of such courses)
- composition of teaching and administrative personnel, domestic and foreign students (e.g., percentage of foreign administrative personnel, number of nationalities represented in student community)
- level and efforts to foster multicultural environment (e.g. number of religious facilities, a measure included in QS Stars university rating system) and appropriate multicultural competencies for teaching and administrative personnel, domestic and foreign students

The combination of various perspectives (e.g., personnel, financial, customer etc.), types of indicators in cause and effect (e.g., input, output, outcome) chains and possibly other analytic dimensions may produce a complex system of performance indicators representing the functioning of the management system of internationalisation. The development of integral management model of internationalisation at Lithuanian universities should include detailed recommendations regarding conceptualisation, measurement of internationalisation and its incorporation into university management information system.

CONCLUSIONS

The in-depth analysis of internationalisation of Lithuanian universities revealed such important aspects:

1) Overall internationalisation of universities have main rational groundings:
- Political;
- Economic;
- Academic;
- Cultural/ social.

In Lithuania internationalisation of universities is conditioned by globalisation and growing competitiveness.

2) Internationalisation of Lithuanian universities is based on two opposite dimensions: internationalisation at home and internationalisation abroad. Different strategies

should be applied implementing internationalisation in particular context.

3) *Efforts to incorporate internationalisation as a distinct function into university management process in Lithuania should include conceptualisation and operationalisation of the internationalisation concept, crafting strategies, learning from best practices around the world, focusing on application of management information systems (MIS) and application of contemporary techniques of reengineering business processes.*

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