

Prospects, challenges and strategies of internationalization of University Education in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Education has become more international and in this millennium, governments have laid emphasis on internationalization of higher education through international co-operation and exchange. In Kenya, institutions and universities have developed their own strategies to internalize their research teaching and service. The process of globalization renews roles and responsibilities of universities following the rapid expansion of various programmes offered at the Kenyan universities due also to increase in student enrollment and opening of new campuses. It follows that Universities are operating in an economic challenging environment which demands for excellence in all services being offered. The question that this paper seeks to answer are what are the strategies and prospect that can be used by universities to improve their excellence in international ranking. The study further looks at the challenges and obstacles toward internationalization of Kenyan universities. The study concludes that implementation components of strategic plans and feedback mechanism is vital for improvement in presence, impact, openness and excellence in practice globally. The study recommends that adoption of pro – active approach through internship programs, research, innovation and creativity are necessary to improve internalization of Kenyan universities.

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INTRODUCTION

Internationalization is a multifaceted concept, with many different interpretations, emphases and purposes. Internationalization of higher education is the top stage of international relations among universities and it is no longer regarded as a goal in itself, but as a means to improve the quality of education. The knowledge translation and acquisition, mobilization of talent in support of global research and enchantment of the curriculum with international content are considered to be the benefits of internationalization of higher education. Though, internationalization holds many positives to higher education, there are grave risks associated with this multifaceted and growing phenomenon including commercial profit, academic colonization and difficulty in ensuring quality education. The current review has implications for educational policy makers to ensure positive benefits to the higher education institutions (Jibeen & Khan, 2015).

Globalization affects different sectors of society including higher education as it has intensified the mobility of ideas and people in this sector (Whitaker, 2004). As the role of global interdependence has been

accepted in economic, political, and social dynamics; academe's internationalizing function too has become more absorbent of interdependence. All over the world, universities respond to challenges presented by globalization in various ways. One response is the internationalization of the university campuses. In order to get benefit from the global trend, many educational institutions are trying hard to establish agreements and collaborations with regional, international universities (Polan-Egron, 2012).

The international relations among universities have expended significantly during the past two decades (Cohen & Yemini, 2013). The definition of internationalization of higher education refers to the process of integrating an international or intercultural aspect into the teaching, research and service functions of internationalization (Knight & Hans, 1997). Worldwide, the majority of educational institutions place a high importance to internationalization, with Europe topping the list in this regard, followed by North America, the Middle East, the Latin America and the Caribbean. Usually, the large English-speaking nations provide most services related to international higher education initiatives and control most programs whereas Asian, Latin American middle-income, and poor nations of the developing world are the "buying" countries as they are unable to meet growing demand Altbach (2007) and Kreber (2012).

Commission for Higher Education (CHE) and Kenyan universities have surveyed the different models used in Europe, Asia, and Africa for sustainable university-industry linkages (Ogada, 2000). For example, in Germany, the university-industry links are sustained by joint research projects and technology transfer centre. In Sweden on the other hand, the linkages are through technology parks. Systematic reforms in University – Industry Partnerships in OECD countries have made universities in those countries centres of innovation. Thus, linkages and partnerships are widely used all over the world to increase the research output of universities as well as quality research in these nations. Kenyan universities have begun to establish both technology and science parks. They have also enhanced collaboration in research projects.

Statement of Problem

African universities have been grossly disadvantaged by internationalization of higher education in the north. Academic mobility has been greatly skewed; with the exception of South Africa and Egypt, very few foreign students come to study in Africa, while outward student mobility from Africa to the north is among the highest in the world. With the advent of globalization, there has been an invasion of cross-border higher education providers from the north into Africa, many of them of dubious quality. Partnerships between African universities and those in the north, although meant to be mutually beneficial, have generally been more advantageous to the north, which provides and manages the funding. Also, the internationalization strategy now guiding most universities in the north is to become world-class and to improve their competitiveness by being highly-ranked in the world university rankings. This has led them to attract the best brains from the south and to favour north-north rather than north-south collaboration. This brings to the fore, the question about how competitive are Kenyan universities in the international setting.

The Objectives of the study

The objectives guiding the studies were: What are the prospects of internationalization of Kenyan universities? What are the strategies for internalization of Kenyan universities? What are the challenges facing internationalization of Kenyan Universities?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The internationalization of higher education can be beneficial in sustaining and growing science and scholarship through dynamic academic exchanges; and building social and economic capacity in developing countries. The western universities are establishing powerful international networks and associations to mobilize aptitude and ability in favor of transfer of knowledge, advanced policies and global research for enhancing investment and measuring impact. Moreover, they are using e-technology and social media as

important and influential tools for increasing public access to relevant information for aiding talent recruitment and retention. In this way, access is provided to higher education in countries where local institutions cannot meet the demands. The positive aspects of internationalization include improved academic quality, internationally oriented students and staff, and national and international citizenship for students and staff from underdeveloped countries. For developed countries, revenue generation and brain gain are potential benefits. In every respect including ratio of international students, franchiser of academic programs to foreign providers or quality guarantors, Western developed countries gain the main financial benefits (International Associations of university, 2011).

According to Edmonds (2012), the internationalization of higher education can be beneficial in sustaining and growing science and scholarship through dynamic academic exchanges; and building social and economic capacity in developing countries. The western universities are establishing powerful international networks and associations to mobilize aptitude and ability in favor of transfer of knowledge, advanced policies and global research for enhancing investment and measuring impact. Moreover, they are using e-technology and social media as important and influential tools for increasing public access to relevant information for aiding talent recruitment and retention.

Though a lot of positive attention has been given to the internationalization of higher education and this process holds many benefits to higher education, severe risks, challenges, and controversies are part of this multifaceted and growing phenomenon (Scott, 2011). In many countries, series of discussions have been taking place regarding the directions as well as its positives and negative aspects. In these discussions, it has been pointed out that too many efforts have primarily favoured universities in the West, while doing little to promote long-term advances for those in developing nations (Scott, 2011). The International Association of Universities (IAU) Survey (2005, as cited in Knight, 2007) indicated that internationalization is beneficial to the higher education but approximately 70 % of the sample suggested that significant risks are associated with the international dimension of higher education (Knight, 2008). Most of the countries identified commercialization, brain drain and low quality education as the major risks associated with internationalization of higher education. One of the salient motives behind internationalization efforts is profit motive as many universities see this as way to attract "revenue to balance their budgets". The international universities are eager to recruit international students so that they can charge higher fees (Scott, 2011).

METHODS

In education, often the research methods and design are more relaxed and varied (Cochrane Library, 2014). In this study, full systematic review technique involving the use of precise methods to gather information and access results of research publication was used. This basically involve collecting data from existing sources for example, electronic databases, searching books and journals, and contacting experts for unpublished or ongoing research. In a full systematic review, once you have identified studies you can extract data for pooling in a meta – analysis to provide both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis. The extent to which you can do all this depend on the number of paper retrieved and the purpose for which they are to be used (Popay et al, 2006)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

International Students Enrolment

There are a total of 4,782 international students enrolled in universities in Kenya. Private universities had the highest enrolment of international students at 3,873. Public universities had only 909 international students. Majority of international students were undertaking bachelor's degree with 3,218 students, followed by masters with 1,227. Table 1 shows the number of international students enrolled in universities.

Table 1. International Students Enrolment

Universities	bachelors	Post graduate Diploma	Masters	PHD	Grand Total
Public	333	133	410	33	909
private	2,885	33	817	138	3,873
total	3,218	166	1,227	171	4,782

Source: Ministry of Education (2015)

Internationalization of Kenya Public Universities

Nairobi University

The Centre for International Programmes of Nairobi University facilitated the signing of sixty-one (61) bilateral collaborations with renowned international universities, organizations and industry around the world. These collaborations have mainly focused on joint research and publications, exchange of academic material (s) and publications and mobility among researchers and students. The FY 2012/2013 saw CIPL engage comprehensively with other institutions leading to creation of several linkages which have been able to leverage for fundraising initiatives such as European Commission funded projects (AFIMEG, ARISE, ANGLE), Commonwealth scholarships and Education International (EI) among others. CIPL also facilitated staff and student study abroad programme (SAP) where five (5) members of staff and eleven (11) students went to study in foreign institutions. In addition, there were several visiting professors who came to UoN and were involved in teaching and research activities on exchange programme. The proportion of incoming and outgoing international students and staff increased compared to the previous year (2011/2012).

Egerton University

The Directorate of International Linkages and Programmes boasts of: Yearly enhanced admission of International students from various countries since inception in 2010, improved exchange programmes for both staff and student mainly in Agriculture, Limnology and Wetland Management, and other courses as well, from South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, DRC, Southern Sudan, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mali and Burundi on full time study, increased Memoranda of Understanding with other institutions (the most recent on a list of close to 100 include Al Zaiem Al Azhari University, Sudan; Open University of Tanzania; Tanzania; CAC Africa Summit, China between CCPT CHEM, China and Faculty of Agriculture at Egerton University; Ministry of Agriculture , China; and locally, Agriculture Enterprise Development Programme [VAEDP], Vihiga , Kenya.

Masinde Muliro

The Directorate of International Relations and Academic Linkages (DIAL) was established on 28th June 2010 at the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology. The main function of DIAL is to promote and nurture internationalization, collaboration and partnership with other institutions of higher learning, organizations and communities worldwide as well as offering a platform for exploring linkages in order to maximize the gains from educational experiences available worldwide.

JKUAT

In line with JKUAT quality policy, over the last two quarters, the following MoUs have been signed: Copperbelt University of Zambia. Lanzhou University. The collaboration was spearheaded by Faculty of Agriculture signed in September 2013. The population of the international students was 480 in 2011/2012 rising to 700 in 2012/13, an increase of 45.8%. The annual growth over the three years has surpassed the targeted growth of 10% per year for the 2009-2012 Strategic Plan. Currently, the University has 130 national and international partnerships and linkages with industry. The functional local linkages and partnerships include that with Safaricom Ltd, Tana and Athi River Development Authority (TARDA), Kenya Bureau of Statistics among others. As part of internationalization, JKUAT is collaborating with the Chinese Academy of

Sciences (CAS), Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), Safaricom Ltd., International Business Machine (IBM) - USA, Nissin Foods Holding - Japan, Huawei Ltd - China, Siemens Cooperation – Germany and Flora life Ltd – USA

Kenyatta University

CIPC has a responsibility to champion internationalization across the campuses in all facets of teaching/learning, research, campus life and student development by providing knowledge and advice to those engaged in these activities day-to-day. CIPC works to connect University faculty, staff and students to international collaboration opportunities, program and project funding and other opportunities to internationalize the campus and curriculum.

Maseno University

Maseno is one of the key focal institutions for the implementation of the Kampala based IUCEA research programme on the Lake Victoria region (VICRES). The profile of Maseno in this regard is poised to rise in the short to medium term through partners such as ICIPE, Walter Reed and CDC. Maseno University has established the Centre for Research and Technology Development (RESTECH Centre). Commissioning of hotspots to allow for full internet access at the university has created an opportunity for staff and students as well as the surrounding community to network, learn, research and outreach all of which advertise the institution and its programmes. Building partnerships and collaborations with other centers of excellence within Kenya and across the world is underway

University Rankings

The Webometric Ranking of Kenya Universities in the Period 2017/18

Internationalization can be a powerful tool in the advancement of higher education. In Africa, higher education institutions should use internationalization to empower them to contribute meaningfully to the development of their countries and the continent. Among the options that have great potential in this regard are regional collaboration, which is limited at present, partnerships with institutions in the newly-emerging economies and engaging the African academic diaspora.

One internationalization option that African universities should be wary of is trying to be ranked under the global university rankings, which use criteria that are not appropriate for their particular systems. The best known measure of academic ranking of universities originates from Shanghai Jiao University. It publishes the rankings depended on the outputs and it puts weights on six index common to the Universities. However, the choice of the criteria is quite arbitrary and the weights put on them are also quite arbitrary. Any effort to be globally ranked would not only lead to a waste of resources but, more importantly, would divert the institutions from their important development role.

The truth about African universities and especially in Kenya is that we are performing badly in world rankings except University of Nairobi (table 2). The webometric Ranking of world universities is updated twice yearly and is based on a composite indicators that include both the volume of web content and the visibility and impact of web publications according to the number of external links the institution receives. The University of Nairobi recorded a marked improvement internationally by emerging 775 out of over 25,000 ranked universities. The University of Nairobi's performance is the best result posted by any local university since the advent of web ranking in 2004. This confirms the scholarly competition edge UoN has steadily maintained in Kenya, Africa and the world.

The world's highest university is given the number 1 and so on down to number 100. After that, universities' ranking are indicated by a numerical range '101 to 151'. Universities below 500 are not given a number but arbitrary approximate number can be computed to determine the performance of universities.

Table 2. Top Ten Universities in Kenya

Universities	World Ranking		Presence Rank		Impact Rank		Openness Rank		Excellence Rank	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
Year	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
Nairobi	775	874	11	4	785	726	910	985	1513	1535
Kenyatta	2020	1707	499	78	3028	1445	1339	1237	2829	2710
Egerton	1727	1686	5311	2099	495	607	4272	4080	2941	2757
J.Kenyatta	2851	2629	1773	648	6705	5217	2403	2558	2829	2805
Maseno	3544	3771	7789	6315	7827	9877	2803	2992	3339	3480
Strathmore	4718	4539	1338	427	5824	5087	7241	6831	4916	4914
Catholic	5822	5878	2089	1776	11455	11689	6795	6322	4482	4696
Masinde Muliro	6021	5940	3329	1541	13912	13509	3971	4410	4482	4696
South Eastern	6537	5273	2223	724	10828	6463	3058	3325	5778	5777
Methodist	6537	8146	1206	3862	6419	9099	8060	8001	5778	5777

Prospects for Internationalization of Higher Education in Kenya

Across the world, forward looking universities deliberately integrate a global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of their services. Top universities are not only expected to be diverse in terms of race and nationality but most also maintain their reputation through such diversity. About 50 per cent of graduate students in Oxford and Cambridge are non-British.

In Kenya, for instance, the avenues through which local universities are sourcing funds are increasingly narrowing. The recent examination reforms in higher education spearheaded by the Education Cabinet Secretary now means that the flow of income from privately sponsored programmes is practically dead. Universities that will attract the most students from across the borders are the universities that will thrive. The same will have multiplier effects on the wider economy. For instance, international students have contributed as much as US\$8.12 billion (Sh838 billion) per year to the Australian economy. Still, a number of impediments stand in the way of internationalisation of higher education in Kenya.

First, local universities are structurally inward looking. The recently released CUE report on admission requirements for local universities effectively sets KNEC-affiliated examinations as the clearest route to a degree in local universities. The modalities for equivalent admission criteria beyond the KCSE certificate to an undergraduate degree in Kenya are unclear. Worse, in cases where an alternative admission criterion is provided, some Western qualifications are privileged over other regional certification.

Secondly, local universities have underdeveloped internationalisation strategies or policies, thus it is difficult to identify the positions of institutions when it comes to intra-Africa student mobility. The general absence of institutional mechanism that supports student mobility has contributed to the poor marketing and position of universities in the regional market. Some institutions do not even have a comprehensive data of their international students. Although improvements have been made with regard to immigration regimes, most African countries have the most unreasonable VISA requirements for other Africans. Such structural issues continue to undermine the movement of students within the continent.

Thirdly, African countries must learn to tame their often virulent politics. Instability, civil strife and post-election violence scare potential students, not to mention the occasional invasion of universities by politicians. Indeed, the list of the leading countries in Africa in attracting other African students, which include South Africa, Senegal, Morocco and Ghana, reads more like a list of the most politically stable countries in the continent.

Finally, local universities must embrace technology. To internationalize also means leveraging on the affordances of technology. The makeup of university websites and how they brand themselves on the web clearly shows that the default inward look is entrenched. Most websites of local public universities are a disastrous parading of irrelevant information.

Strategies of Attracting Foreign Students

Internationalization is now well-embedded in higher education. While internationalization is beneficial to higher education in many ways, the following strategies can lead to positive results:

Partnership

Perhaps partnership as a strategy can lead to better results: Partnership between African universities and those in the north, although meant to be mutually beneficial, have generally been more advantageous to the north, which provides and manages the funding. Also, the internationalization strategy now guiding most universities in the north is to become world-class and to improve their competitiveness by being highly-ranked in the world university rankings. This has led them to attract the best brains from the south and to favour north-north rather than north-south collaboration. A large number of universities in Europe and North America already have long and fruitful partnerships with African universities, have acquired expertise in the challenges facing Africa and are willing to share them in a collaborative and mutually beneficial.

Regional collaboration

There have been several initiatives launched aiming at regional collaboration among African universities. One of the earliest of these is the African Economics and Research Consortium (AERC), a network of 27 universities and 15 national economic policy research institutes/centres, established in 1988 to promote collaborative research and postgraduate training in economics so as to overcome the limited capacity in individual member universities.

There is also the University Science, Humanities and Engineering Partnerships in Africa (USHEPiA). The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), created in 2004 and based in Uganda. The Regional Initiative in Science and Education (RISE), established in 2008 with funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, aims to build capacity in science, technology and innovation to stimulate economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Pan African University (PAU) of the African Union, which started operations in 2012 aims at continental networking for promoting postgraduate training and research in identified priority areas for Africa. The World Bank's African Centres of Excellence (ACE) project. Several ACEs have recently been set up in Western and Central Africa and additional ones are being planned for Eastern and Southern Africa. The guiding principle for all ACEs is regional collaboration and partnership among higher education institutions to address key development challenges.

New partner countries

Several emerging economic powers – Brazil, China, India and Korea – are showing growing interest in partnering with Africa and assisting in its development. These countries offer scholarships to Africans – including academic staff in universities – for studying in their respective countries. Experience has shown that all the African scholars return home after their studies and the issue of brain drain does not arise.

Brazil has, within its Ministry of Higher Education, an organization known as CAPES, whose main purpose is to provide scholarships to academic staff for doctoral training. This could prove to be very beneficial to Lusophone African universities. CAPES has also built up expertise on quality assurance of postgraduate programmes and it would be willing to share this with all African universities as the latter expand their postgraduate training activities.

China's Confucius Institutes (CIs) – there are now over 35 of them in Africa and more than 350 of them worldwide – can be an interesting vehicle for Africa-China academic collaboration. The main objective of CIs is to promote the teaching of Chinese language at universities and the appreciation of Chinese culture, but they also help to prepare scholars proceeding to study in China and assist in the research activities undertaken by postgraduate students in China. This can greatly facilitate institutional collaboration.

A key contributing factor to South Korea's remarkable development over a relatively short period has been its heavy investment in quality higher education. Korea is sharing its experience with several African

countries through its Knowledge Sharing Program. Two areas which were also key to Korea's development are agricultural development and ICT, both highly relevant to Africa. Again, African universities can learn from Korea's experience in these specific areas.

It would thus be advantageous for African universities to focus on these new partner countries in their internationalization strategy. This is the strategy that is being adopted by the World Bank-initiated and Africa-led Partnership in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (PASET) project which aims at building capacity in scientific and technical fields for the priority sectors in Africa. One factor that needs to be taken into account by African universities, however, is that collaboration with institutions in these countries is usually covered under government-to-government agreements, and they therefore need to work closely with their national policy makers.

African Diaspora

One of the eight priority areas of the Action Plan emanating from the Dakar 2015 African Higher Education Summit is to mobilize diaspora and engage them in transforming Africa's higher education sector. The Plan specifically proposes a programme that sponsors 1,000 scholars in the African diaspora every year, for 10 years, to African universities for collaboration in research, curriculum development and graduate student teaching and mentoring. Previous attempts at encouraging them to return to Africa have not been successful. The better approach is to garner their support from their adopted country of residence and get them to assist African institutions through short attachments, thus converting 'brain drain' into 'brain circulation'.

It is essential therefore for African universities to include engagement of the academic diaspora in their internationalization strategy or policy. However, implementing such a strategy or policy poses challenges. Few countries have established a database of their professional diaspora and, even if they have, this does not distinguish academics who would be willing to assist in higher education. Ethiopia, for example, has created a Diaspora Engagement Affairs Directorate General under its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and this is commendable. The most appropriate organization to do that would be the Association of African Universities, which could then also coordinate requests for diaspora assistance from its member universities.

The Challenges of Attracting Foreign Students

The grim reality is that African countries are not doing enough to attract other Africans to their institutions. However, this challenge can be overcome through the following:

Intra – Africa Mobility

International students from several African countries are successfully representing their country in Kenyan university that are sensitive to demands of a globalised, borderless campus reality. Students from neighboring countries are now a common feature of local universities, owing to the perceived status of universities in Kenya regionally. In most departments in public universities we have students from Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Burundi and Namibia. However, even as intra-Africa student mobility is rising, local universities seem unprepared to managing a more expanded student community beyond the traditional borders.

Diversification

Top universities are not only expected to be diverse in terms of race and nationality but most also maintain their reputation through such diversity. About 50 per cent of graduate students in Oxford and Cambridge are non-British. The fact that the concept of the universe itself is contained in the term 'university' is evidence of the vital role that knowledge and free movement of people play in higher education. But it is not just senior scholars who are crossing international borders; students are increasingly traversing borders in search of an alternative higher education.

Brain Drain

In Africa, most students travel to France, South Africa, the UK, USA, Germany, Malaysia, Canada, Italy and Australia, in that order. According to statistics, the percentage of African students who travelled to seek higher education preferred countries in Western Europe and North America. While the South-North mobility of students has strengthened the capacity of local institutions, it has also led to brain drain and fed the economies of the host countries, thereby leading to an asymmetrical dependency relationship even in research. In this regard, developed nations are the beneficiaries of international student mobility, as more than 90 per cent of international students have enrolled in institutions in countries considered the most developed.

The Economy

There are clear advantages of pursuing an international outlook, especially through other African students. For instance, international students have contributed as much as US\$8.12 billion (Sh838 billion) per year to the Australian economy. In New Zealand, the higher education service is the country's fifth largest service export generating as much as US\$1.46 billion (Sh150 billion) per year in foreign exchange, placing it firmly amongst New Zealand's leading industries. In Kenya, for instance, the avenues through which local universities are sourcing funds are increasingly narrowing. Universities that will attract the most students from across the borders are the universities that will thrive. The same will have multiplier effects on the wider economy.

Technology

Finally, local universities must embrace technology. To internationalize also means leveraging on the affordances of technology. It is shocking that many local universities cannot accept emailed applications or even do a Skype interview. The makeup of university websites and how they brand themselves on the web clearly shows that the default inward look is entrenched. Most websites of local public universities are a disastrous parading of irrelevant information. But more crucially, the contacts displayed on them are often dysfunctional. Complaints of unanswered emails are the most common from prospective international students. It is bad manners not to reply to e-mails in the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

It is not gainsaying that internationalization of Kenya Universities is gathering momentum. However, challenges are steeped in the drawing of strategic plan and the management of resources at the disposal of Universities that can lead them to impact the five levels of impact, openness, presence, excellence and world ranking. It is recommended that to benefit from internationalization, Kenyan Universities must defeat localization in terms of enrolment and be pro – active through student exchange programs, research, innovation and creativity. This would ultimately improve their impact internationally.

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