

Experiential Knowledge leads to Internationalization of HEI (Case study of Cross Border Activities)

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Date of Submission: 07-08-2020

Date of Acceptance: 21-08-2020

I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to evaluate the degree of internationalization of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) and the factors that influence their internationalization process. The study begins with the contextualization of the HEI internationalization process through a brief historical synthesis and the establishment of the levels of analysis of this process, to focus, in more detail, the organizational level. To this end, it is supported in an organization dimensions model to define the components of the internationalization process. The identified factors were processed for each of its components, and the degree of internationalization was obtained to match with the popular theories of Internationalization process. The study concludes with the commitment to have an interesting level of internationalization, which is higher for institutions with more than 3,500 students, with simultaneous focus on teaching and research, conferring the master's and preparing for doctoral degrees. The qualitative study using expert sampling was conducted through semi-structured interviews with 56 faculty members of the institution. The vision of the institution reflects the need of Internationalization and the prevailing situations also forms a basis of reactive reasons for internationalizing.

1.1 Is Internationalization the need of the hour ?

In the process of internationalization, nations have made growing efforts to make higher education systems between nations become more compatible, comparable and competitive, so as to make their higher education institutions (HEIs) more attractive in the world and enhance national competitiveness. A main strategy to achieve this is to set up regional HEI alliances. An increasing number of HEIs are trying to form cross-border institutional partnerships through joint programmes and institutions. This study analyses the general situation and motives of regional HEI alliance in the process of internationalization through the select HEI.

1.1.1 Objectives of the study

The following were found to be the main objective of the study :

1. To observe and study the framework used for the internationalization process used by the select HEI.
2. To evaluate the rationale of Internationalization by considering knowledge factors and the role of management.

Malaysian Internationalization process is considered since the select HEI has gone for internationalizing first with Malaysian Universities.

1.2 Framework of action for Internationalization

For the purpose of internationalization of a HEI, they must consider the following:

1. Governmental educational Policy. (Academic Bodies/ Associations)
2. Administrative process (short to medium term);
3. **Orientation towards fostering autonomy of the academic units within the HEI;**

4. **Orientation towards maintaining the integrity of the institutional development**, in other words internationalization should be an additional benefit not the main goal (like quality or social responsibility, for example);
5. Communication, coordination and clear definition of actions which are to be considered as elements in the action plan.

1.3 Concept Disruption

Breaking of a myth and journeying toward global standards led a pathway for the select HEI, disrupting the old model of providing education that has taken the HEI towards growth.

Motives / Reasons for Internationalization

The leading Factors affecting HEI- Internationalization - from the Uppsala theory.	From the Review of literature (Past studies)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Role of Management ❖ Managerial Characteristics ❖ Foreign (College) experience ❖ Faculty worked in abroad/ lived in abroad ❖ Competency level of available faculty ❖ Collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Increased International collaborations ❖ Competitive and institutional forces. ❖ Organizational goals ❖ influence of internal actors. ❖ Intercultural competencies of the students ❖ Enhancing international competencies ❖ Enhancing the learning experience of students. ❖ Government Motivation

1.4 Internationalization of select HEI of Coimbatore.

The institution has developed an effective inter linkage across teaching, research and extension. Academic collaboration and networking with other institutions, both in India and overseas, is a priority area. These collaborations are to strengthen the institute's capacities to fulfill its vision of being an institution of excellence in higher education that develops and applies knowledge in pursuit of social justice and human rights for all. The institution strives to be the exemplary Educational Institution in Coimbatore District.

Internationalization had taken place by signing a Memorandum of understanding with the foreign University in Malaysia during 2016-2017 for study abroad and student exchange programmes. The institution has taken slow and steady step of gaining knowledge through stepping into one country at a time. The experiential knowledge gained through the MOU had helped the institution for further MOUs with other countries. Conducting of international conferences hosted by the foreign University (Malaysia) was a remarkable achievement during October 2018. Subsequently the exchange programmes for students and staff are carried out every academic year. The institution has taken further steps to collaborate with more countries and trying to foot into Asian - Eastern Countries for post millennial era of learning environment. The faculty are in need of adopting transformational approach of teaching learning process to adopt the new methodology in teaching global students.

1.5 Method of Internationalization (Entry Mode)

1.5.1 Applicability of Uppsala theory with select HEI of Coimbatore.

The theory of Uppsala which was contributed by Jan Johansson was applicable and tested with the manufacturing firms. Here the case of HEI is dependent on the theory contributed by Jan Johanson for slow and steady approach, which we call it as waterfall strategy. (i.e one country at a time and after gaining experience, the institution goes for entering into another foreign market.) Sprinkler's strategy cannot be adopted since HEIs will not leapfrog the steps of internationalization and footing into several countries at the same time. Global intervention is much needed for today's Business and Educational environment.

Reviewing the outcome of Uppsala theory of internationalization has still shows the validity of slow and steady approach in HEI internationalizing. Considering the Global learning opportunities abroad, the entry mode was one country at a time and adopt water fall approach and focusing one country. The geographical distance, climate, culture and nature of students to accommodate in a foreign country were the factors considered for global entry.

1.5.2 Role of Management in HEI Internationalization

The select institution was found in 1987 with few courses and after 33 years of its journey, the institution has gained knowledge in taking an audacious step for internationalizing. Signing of

Memorandum with foreign universities, student exchange programmes, study abroad – short term courses etc., had paved the way for internationalizing.

The proactiveness of the Management in internationalizing a firm is so significant likewise in HEI internationalization also. (1) Having a long term vision of converting the HEI for a global educational place of learning has to be initiated from the Management. (2) Supporting the staff with providing fund for attending conferences/ Seminars/ Symposia will help the staff in gaining foreign exposure. (3) Inviting students from various countries and offering a curriculum of their choice (4) Sending students to various countries for gaining domain knowledge from global perspective (5) Networking with Foreign Universities and hosting the foreign professors will open ways of internationalizing to various countries.

1.5.3 Role of Staff with Foreign Experience / Exposure

Along with the Management, people who have worked in abroad, staff with foreign knowledge and experience, Teaching in foreign environment and the changing mindset of students and staff toward foreign country, survival strategies have helped the HEI to leap frog and achieve internationalization. From the observation there were one fourth of the staff members had enough foreign experience to motivate the students for adopting the culture and global learning platforms. (The staff group comprises of Commerce, Management, Computer Science & IT and Science and Humanities)

S.No	Previous Experience	Traveled abroad	Studied abroad	Worked in abroad
1	Management	✓	✓	-
2	Head of the institution	✓	-	-
3	Faculty	✓	✓	✓

The above information posits that the staff members are having experience in teaching abroad, worked in abroad or having travel experience of visiting several countries. An institution of having staff with foreign experience will pave the way for easy internationalization. Hence one fourth of the total teaching staff are having foreign experience in motivating the students and supporting the management in entering into foreign countries.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In recent decades internationalization has risen to prominence in higher education institutions (HEIs). Scholars have identified several rationales for internationalization. There is however a lack of conceptual understanding and empirical evidence for which rationale(s) for internationalization are chosen by a given HEI and why. The goal of this article is to fill this gap. The previous studies have attempted to develop and test a conceptual framework to predict the salience of a given rationale for a specific HEI. The framework integrates factors at multiple levels, namely **competitive and institutional forces** in the global and national contexts, the organizational goals and the influence of internal actors. The findings show that the HEIs embedded in a global context more frequently conceive internationalization as an **instrumental to prestige and status symbol for their functioning**. The national contexts do not greatly affect HEIs' rationales, and the amount of resources is less important than the competition for resources. Organizational goals as well as the influence of students, faculty members and middle managers on the internationalization process partly predict the prominence of specific rationales. (Seeber *et al*).

Further one might argue that an Indian student entering higher education is faced with a critical question—Where to study, in India or abroad? With a gross enrollment ratio of around 20% in the tertiary sector, only one in five in the 18 to 23 age group of a 140 million eventually gets to answer the question. But those who do, and whose numbers are rapidly increasing, pursue higher education abroad in response to a range of choices presented not only by increasing domestic provision in higher education but also through **increased international collaborations** (for instance, through branch campuses) that Indian students can avail of without leaving the country. As a result, this presents problems for characterizing the Indian student pursuing higher education abroad. By placing emphasis on the multiple transitions across spaces and tensions between “controlled” and “emergent” mobilities. The conceptual framework with which to understand potential pathways into higher education, so that policy makers and educational providers can better understand international mobility in the Indian higher education sector.

Internationalization is a complex phenomenon in the field of higher education. Its complexity emerged due to the vast concept and evolution of its meanings, approaches, elements and its strategies. One of the greatest challenges of internationalization is the diversity of its related terms. Till to date, there is no single agreed definition on internationalization of higher education (Teichler, 2003; Elkin et al., 2005).The terms are very much differs and evolve due to the different waves of internationalization. Factors influencing this may be

time, the country or region, the changing environment and the different phases of development in higher education globally (Chong Pui Yee 2003)

2.1 Internationalization at Malaysia

The dimension of the internationalization of higher education in Malaysia, which is international student. Flow of international students will continue to increase and grow worldwide in the foreseeable future (Woodfield, 2010). This dimension of internationalization will continue to be placed as important by HEIs. Malaysia aspires to be an international education hub and in achieving this, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has put in place internationalization of higher education as one of the strategic trusts as stipulated in Malaysia National Strategic Plan of Higher Education (PSPTN) Phase 1 (2007-2010) (Ministry of Higher Education Undated, 2007). The objective of this strategic trust is to build world recognition, marketable graduates, attract international students and generates innovation through research and development (Ministry of Higher Education Undated, 2007). This strategic trust will eventually help to build the brand and reputation of Malaysia as international education provider. Subsequently in PSPTN Phase 2 (2011-2015) (Ministry of Higher Education Undated, 2007), MoHE had introduced 23 Critical Agenda Project (CAP) in its effort to transform higher education in Malaysia. Among the 23 CAPs, internationalization has been identified as one of the CAP. One of the objectives of CAP-Internationalization is to realize Malaysia as the higher education hub in the ASEAN region and globally through increasing the number of international students. In both phases of PSPTN, it can be observed that the ministry had consistently placed the importance of international students, apart from international academic staff and collaborations. With that, MoHE has set the target to attract 150,000 international students by year 2015 and 200,000 by 2020, with average consistent growth of 13.5 percent annually (Ministry of Higher Education Undated, 2007).

Even though there are studies (Akiba, 2008; Banumathy and Vikneswaran, 2008; Nur Sofurah, 2011; Slethaug and Manjula, 2012; Abdul Rahman, 2013) that shed light on the **dimension of international students' learning experience, staff teaching experience and administrators working experience**. However, study focusing on staff competency for internationalization is extremely limited. The role of human resource, focusing on staff competency in managing international students is almost non-existence.

Based on the review of literatures the article attempts to map the activities of the select HEI of South India to provide insight and recommendation in managing students from the perspective of home country and also in managing human resource for focusing on staff competency.

2.2 Indian Government and Internationalization Policy

In the draft NEP (National Education Policy), there is an emphasis on developing a distinctly Indian approach to internationalization of higher education. Recommendations to build the soft power potential of Indian higher education by facilitating international research collaborations and international expansion of Indian universities and programs, etc., could be viewed in this context. Some of the major recommendations of the draft NEP with regard to internationalization follow:

- Provide low-cost, quality education to attract international students
- Simplified visa and Foreigner Registration Regional Office processes and internship policies for international students.
- Additional funds for Indian universities that aim to become attractive destinations for international students to develop specially designed courses. Special schemes that offer research scholarships to students from developing countries
- **Twinning, international research partnerships and more MoUs for mutual recognition of degrees will be encouraged**
- **Global immersion programs for Indian students**
- Public and private Indian universities that meet specified eligibility criteria will be encouraged to set up campuses in select countries particularly in the global South
- Select universities (those from among the top 200 universities in the world) would be permitted to operate in India. A legislative framework facilitating such entry would be put in place.

Although the NEP is still in draft form, its importance cannot be underestimated. This is because some of the core recommendations are already in the implementation stage. The internationalization agenda of the Narendra Modi government in Indian higher education has been closely correlated with ongoing global changes in the sector (Elhdo Mathews 2019)

III. CONSIDERATIONS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HEI

The following are the significant considerations of the Internationalization process :

● **Memorandum of Understanding** : Two institutions from home country and host country come in contact to sign an agreement for the purpose of various educational benefits exchanged with both countries.

● **Collaboration and Partnership** : This includes all forms of internationalization activities of college level with cross border character, multi cultural environment, which can be structured in the mobility of students, staff exchange, institutions, courses, programmes, and research and R & D Activities.

● **Degree / Level of Internationalization** : Late Internationalizers and international among others are the degree and level of Internationalization strategy which benefits the HEI. Since Early internationalizing may not be possible for the select HEI to strategically combating with the host country institutions.

● **Institutional Commitment & control factors**: The level of commitment and control are more when internationalization takes place. The link between mission, strategy, planning and assessment mechanisms, and the communication channels within and outside the university, in order to assess whether and how stakeholders perceive the definition of internationalization as a priority for the university.

● **Globalization** : Students are benefited through the Global intervention and exchange of information with the host country.

● **Student International Exchange** : The movement of students from one home Institution to Universities abroad, as well as students from various countries to study at a University in the country.

● **Institutional Structure for Internationalization** : The Institutional structure comprises of flexible system of having its hierarchy to decide upon the process of internationalization, Proactiveness of the management and work for implementations according to the framework outlined in institutional commitment.

● **Policy for Faculty Exchange programmes** : The policies and practices outlined for the university's human resources management, since these are the pillars for implementing the internationalization, whether in teaching, and in research/services activities or in their ability to detect opportunities to establish international partnerships and collaborations.

● **Psychic Distance** : The geographical distance with the host country is also plays a role in entry level or internationalizing to the first country. But for creating a learning atmosphere, psychic distance may not play a role while taking decisions to go abroad.

● **Dimensions of Institutions : Objectives, functions, structure and participants.**

● **Intensity of Learning** : The customized module and recent trends in learning are helpful in internationalizing.

● **Internationalization of the Curriculum** : Is a concept that focuses on the internationalization of educational programs in general, such as curricula, learning outcomes, or language requirements.

Internationalization and globalization are fundamental components of the learning process where living and reflecting upon the experiences a student has when studying abroad greatly enhances the learning experience (Perry & Southwell 2011). However, due to the international financial crises and especially as far as emerging economies are concerned, it is the Internationalization at Home (IaH) measures which might be the answer, at least for now, in preparing the graduates for the global economy through the development of **intercultural competences of the students** (for IaH see Beelen 2011, Jon 2013, Soria & Troisi 2013, Harrison 2015).

3.1 Specific Skill development through Multi cultural Environment

❖ Gain knowledge of the world's peoples, economies, environments, and political and social systems, and their interdependence; gain understanding of culture, its values and norms, and differences between cultures.

❖ Develop flexibility and adaptability in new environments; develop comfort with people of diverse backgrounds.

❖ Learn from challenges to values and beliefs; develop respect for self and others; understand value of cultural diversity; develop a sense of curiosity and discovery about others.

❖ Develop skills such as resourcefulness, creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, visualization, socialization, negotiation, leadership, and teamwork in cultural diverse settings

The benefits of internationalization to students are the different views on competency levels, refers to **Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes** (Delamare-Le and Winterton, 2005). It can be called as KSA in short which has been commonly adopted by human resource practitioners during the development of job analysis so that person who holds the job is able to perform the job adequately. (Chong Pui Yee 2013). KSA is also being used to determine the kind of training needed for the job (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2012). This suggests that competency can be learned through training and development (Czinkota et al., 2005; Delamare-Le and Winterton, 2005). Besides KSA, other researchers also include behaviours, work habits, abilities and personal characteristic that formed a broader aspect of competency (Delamare-Le and Winterton, 2005).

3.2 Teaching- Learning Dimensions

S.No	Teaching- Learning Dimensions	Functional Aspects
1	CORE PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative Learning Adaptation Of Global Standards In Education Preparation Of Students For Better Employability And Skill Development Experiential Learning methods
2	CORE OBJECTIVE	To send two or three batch of students from the core area of Commerce, Management, Computer Science and Science & Humanities every academic year. Staff exchange programmes to collaborate teaching and learning process.
3	LEARNING OUTCOME	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students will get an experience of global exposure and respond to demanding situations in life. 2. The students are trained by the faculties of a hosting university and the standard of learning atmosphere is set on par with global expectations. 3. The students create and present global assignments and present their reports by exhibiting presentation skills.
4	PARTICIPANTS	Students belonging to each department where they show willingness for experiential learning outside the country. A cohort of more than 25 students in a batch are accommodated in a programme of their choice.
5	CURRICULUM	The syllabi for the course is designed accordingly for meeting the needs of the requirement of each school is concerned. A programme of fortnight (15 days) or a semester of one course is designed for the credit transfer.

3.3 HEI Characteristics

The select HEI institution has the following characteristics for Internationalizing.

SELECTION OF VARIABLES –MANAGERIAL CHARECTERISTICS

1. Demographic Factors - Students' & Faculty strength.
2. Industry & Management Know how - Experienced Management in International exposure.
3. International outlook and intention of study abroad programmes.
4. Risk Taking ability & innovativeness in curriculum
5. Role of Management in international involvement.- The people belonging to Management are having foreign exposure by the way of studied in abroad and lived in abroad had developed the intention of Internationalizing the HEI.

Finding the relationship with Demographic factors and Performance of the firm considering the following factors will help us to know the intensity of internationalization..

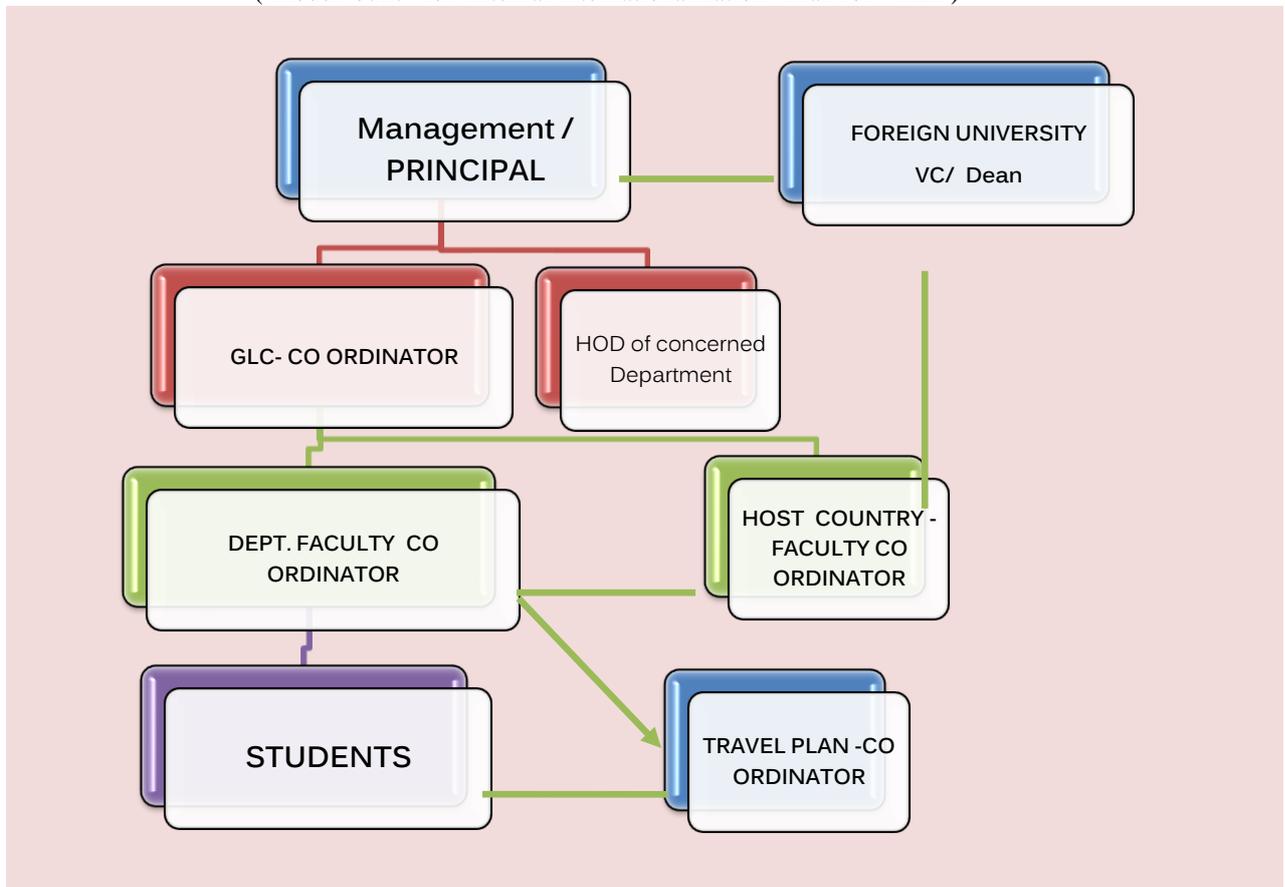
1. **Size of the Institution**(Number of students pursuing higher education and Faculty with International Exposure)
2. **Increasing number** of Foreign programmes and connectivity.
3. **International intervention** has helped the select institution for staff exchange programmes and exploring new global curriculum.
4. **Total growth** of the institution which reflected in futuristic Educational environment in the home country.
5. The institution has **experience** in the field of Education for more than 3 and half decades which has the vision of students moving out with Global mindset and accepted global professionals.
6. **Developing Intercultural competencies:** The students will develop competencies of survival skills, managing multi cultural environment, Negotiating skills and necessary Managerial skills in presenting.
7. **Choice of Country and Entry Mode** : The choice of country in internationalizing is the most significant factor for the institution. The HEI has taken a careful decision on choice of country for easy access and travel plans.

3.4 Organizational Structure for Internationalization:

3.4.1 Internal Internationalization

The organizational structures that support the implementation of internationalization according to the framework outlined in the institutional commitment. A centre which is created especially for supporting foreign learning environment is necessary for exchange of students and faculty. A coordinator to be appointed by the institution will help in liaising and supporting the students for arranging classes, curriculum and module designing, coordinating with host country staff and arranging travel agenda of students.

Organization structure of Global Learning Centre (GLC)
(Model built for Internal Internationalization Plan for HEI)



3.4.2 Model & Architecture for External Internationalization

Knowledge aspects	Specific Internationalization knowledge	Institutional Knowledge Govt. Policies, Procedures	Country Knowledge
Degree & Level of Commitment	Degree of Internationalization	International orientation	Market commitment & Control Factors
Management (Proactiveness)	Resource Management	Role of Management	Decision maker's Characteristics
Process approach	Path Dependence	Time and Stage Development	Growth Orientation
Internal Factors	Internal Internationalization	Flexibility & Curriculum	Teaching Learning Dimensions

		Compatibility	
Environmental Factors	Home Country - External Educational environment	Competition	Performance & Measures

(source : constructed from the process approach of Internationalization)

IV. INSTITUTIONAL (HEI) PERFORMANCE& GROWTH FACTORS

Internationalization of HEI has directly impacted the performance and growth of the institution in the way of setting standards, Educational Objectives, Programme outcomes, Brand Building, Higher volume of foreign commitment in teaching learning process, Brand Identity, Students involvement, Proactiveness of the Management will reflect on the following growth factors of the select HEI of South India. The growth factors will have a positive impact on the institutional performance.

- 1. Increased Commitment (Foreign Commitments and Increased Liableness)**
- 2. Internal Internationalization**
3. Student Participation and learning in new environment
4. Buidling Competency among the students for better Job seekers.
5. Proactiveness of the Management
- 6. Brand Building**
- 7. Student Satisfaction.**

On all these overall growth perspectives, the institution has lead toward total growth and performance which ended up in student’s satisfaction. The measurement of Internationalization plan will further reveals the growth strategy of the institution which reflected a sudden growth in a span of three years.

4.1 Strategic considerations of Internationalizing HEI

The lessons to be learnt by the experiences in internationalization are as follows.

It is very important to gain and have experience and prior knowledge on international activities and issues which will help the HEI to attempt for further internationalization into more countries.

In case of emerging economies it has to be considered for building a basis of subjects to learn from abroad, core and elective, new subjects of great value which include intercultural competencies amongst learning outcomes. The programme Educational Objectives of the departments to reflect the clear outcomes through setting curriculum objectives. This is to be achieved through renovation of the curriculum and teacher training, mainly.

The internationalization at home should be taken as seriously as encouraging students to enroll in study abroad programs, because learning occurs continuously within and outside the classroom, and the HEIs should take an organized approach with foreign universities and participating in various programmes. Inviting foreign students and to organize where events with international students and encourage students and other student-run entities to open up internationalization related events at the campus.

The students of Commerce and Management should place more emphasis on studying international trade and interdisciplinary collaboration, such as introduction of international relations and other political and social science subjects which enhances at least one of the dimensions of intercultural competence – knowledge of one’s surrounding world. Recent trends in accounting and Commerce, courses on Artificial intelligence and Machine Learning programmes will attract more students for studying abroad.

Further, the life-long learning theory allows the students to take into account and assess the development of the intercultural competences overtime and see the complete set of ingredients for success of a strategy based on means and measures. This includes post- study abroad experience which needs to be shared and exchanged between student returnees and non-mobile local students studying in the institution.

In the world where both the young graduates and people without formal schooling are more than ever required to deliver, to ‘make it work’, to ‘make it happen’ on multiple tasks and in multiple contexts, including varied cultural contexts, the intercultural competences become increasingly important. It is due to the fact that the graduates are no longer required to be skilled in something or be ‘an expert’ in something (this comes with years of experience, as the words of common root indicate); they are required to gain and then employ

the competences to deliver results. Thus, soft skills should be the outcomes of curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities where students learn by interacting.

Finally the institution has ended the cycle/ process by making and promoting Domestic Students' Interaction with International Students and student returnee's from abroad to share their experiences on gaining Intercultural Competence.

Further more the institution has to conduct a need analysis to discover how international student priorities can be met within the classroom and translated into staff-development programs (Slethaug and Manjula, 2012) to review the pedagogic practices of the foreign country. The rationale for HEI internationalization and its considerations (academic, Cultural & social, Economic, Political) are yet another challenge when it gets moved and expanded to next level. The internationalization rationale requires the extensive initiatives and strategies to be considered are in place for the country. The study aims to evaluate the rationale for international cooperation in the Indian higher education internationalization agenda which will explicitly prove the growth of the country.

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Dr G Jayanthi. "Experiential Knowledge leads to Internationalization of HEI (Case study of Cross Border Activities)." *International Journal of Business and Management Invention (IJBMI)*, vol. 09(08), 2020, pp. 01-10. Journal DOI- 10.35629/8028