

# Managing University Networks and Internationalisation

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## **Abstract**

*Using a meta-analysis of peer-reviewed scholarly research and policy documents, this paper analyses higher education Internationalisation. Cases from India, China, and the Himalayan University Consortium (HUC) are presented. Challenges of standardized quality assurance and ethical intentions of foreign institutions in developing cross-border education agreements emerge from the cases. Furthermore, the cases demonstrate the myriad potential benefits to be gained from international connectivity of universities ranging from improved teaching, learning, and research quality as well as the development and co-creation of best practices. Implications for the Royal University of Bhutan and other similar tertiary education institutions include the necessity of observing and adapting local approaches based in the experiences of other countries' universities already well-versed and practiced in the beneficial and adverse repercussions of internationalizing and networking institutions of higher learning.*

**Keywords:** *Higher education, Internationalisation, networks, cross-border education, quality assurance*

## **Introduction**

Internationalisation is a modern phenomenon experienced by higher educational institutions globally. More students and scholars are travelling away from their home countries to seek out educational experiences elsewhere. Marginson (2010) explains “higher education is nested in national government everywhere, and shaped by patterns of social investment. At the same time the cross-border or global dimension of activity is growing, especially in relation to knowledge” (p.6962). Furthermore the ubiquity of the Internet is making academic exchange much more accessible, even for those living in the developing world. Although utilities like electricity are not yet guaranteed in developing countries, increased access to mobile devices is making the Internet and all of the possibilities inherent for exchange available to people all over the world.

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UNESCO and OECD (2005) provide an aptly-timed definition of Internationalisation in tertiary institutions as “higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, program, institution or provider and course materials cross national-jurisdictional borders” (p. 19). Lan (2012) further concretises the topic using the phrase “network education” defined as “a kind of modern distance education created by the Internet development ... which provides network teaching environment and transfers digital teaching resources” (p. 1979). These definitions encompass many forms and formats for education which cluster around the exchange of ideas, people, and knowledge across geo-political, national, or digital borders. Culture and mobility are inextricably tied to these conceptions of higher education as under the influencing forces of both global trends and the digital era.

Although Internationalisation is a force currently experienced by many, the implications for higher education, especially in developing countries, are in some cases obvious. Tangible benefits of creating a more highly-skilled and employable labour force to meet the ever expanding needs of economic markets is one such potential benefit of greater exchange among academics. Furthermore the potential for scholars to co-create knowledge and evidence-based best practices that are culturally-embedded and in line with local ethics and values becomes increasingly possible through international academic exchange. These potential benefits are not as obvious as their economic counterparts. However positive these potentialities are, there are also subtle risks and challenges involved with greater international exchange, especially for the emergent economies of the developing world.

In consideration of the positive and negative potential outcomes, several cases can be considered to distil previous lessons learned and cautionary tales. From one

perspective of aggressive expansion and opening, China's case of international cooperation in higher education demonstrates the exponential positives possible from well-managed initiatives. From yet another perspective, India's approach to higher education Internationalisation demonstrates current trends, needs, and desired outcomes. The culmination of these unique experiences share a common thread of the necessity of Internationalisation and improved cooperation for the continued success of higher education as a means to supporting market forces and generating globally-competitive knowledge economies while also cautioning would-be networks to note the risks and challenges and to proceed with caution and deep knowledge of the situation at hand. The investigation of scenarios and cases from these regional neighbours reveals both how Bhutan can maximize the potential benefits of inclusion in a higher education network and how common pitfalls and missteps can be avoided.

## **Literature Review**

### ***The Case of India***

#### ***Increasing Demand***

India's higher educational capacity is steadily increasing, in parallel to the nation's economic and political expansions (David, Sanyal, & Wildemeersch, 2006). Three disparate yet connected forces are converging toward this reality. Higher education in developing countries, including India, experiences several areas of increasing demand: the market's growing need for skilled and intellectual workers, larger numbers of students completing compulsory education and seeking out university education, and finally more universities seeking out international cooperation to meet the needs of students and of the market (Knight, 2006). Other market studies corroborate that cross-border education in India, among other nations in the South Asian region, will continue to grow for the near future (Skidmore & Longbottom, 2011). Mitra (2010) makes this consistent

growth concrete in stating that “the number of universities has increased from 20 in 1947 to 378, and students’ population in higher education from 1 lakh in 1950 to over 112 lakhs in 2005” (p. 106). These numbers unequivocally indicate the strong expansion, and ever-growing need, of higher education in India.

### ***Policy Initiatives***

India’s higher educational institutions intend to meet the needs of its students and markets. Toward this end, the “Mysore Statement” from the Association of Indian Universities was adopted in 2001 (Mitra, 2010). This agreement addresses several facets of Internationalisation. The issues covered range from the understanding that increased international cooperation will become a more pressing necessity in the future to an agreed-upon indication that this cooperation with other higher education institutions will only serve to increase the quality of teaching, learning, and research, and also that international cooperation cannot be an act undertaken by only India’s universities because governmental support will also be necessary to ensure good working relationships and adequate resources (Knight, 2006; Mitra, 2010). While the objective of India’s institutions toward greater Internationalisation is clear, so too is the need for policy-level governmental supports to bring this change to fruition.

The need for governmental support that emerges from the Mysore Statement can be seen most poignantly from issues of finance and mobility. With the advent of Internationalisation in higher education great numbers of foreign students are seeking out study in India and also Indian students are more commonly studying abroad. Supportive international level policies are needed in areas of finance and visa agreements to adequately support academic mobility.

Higher education institutions in India alone cannot bear the brunt of paying for scholars’ international activities nor can they afford to subsidize foreign

academicians' interest in scholarly pursuits within India. Although some mechanisms already exist to financially support international mobility of scholars, such as the Fulbright Scholarships and the Erasmus Mundus Programme, inter-governmental cooperation and dialogue on this topic can greatly expand the possibilities for academic scholarship and mobility.

### ***Potential Risks and Mitigating Factors***

While the Mysore Statement intimates the tangible benefits for India and those outside countries with which it becomes connected, the challenges, risks, and other needs are also implied. The current lack of an expansive quality assurance methodology or model for Internationalisation (Knight, 2006), the potentially ulterior motives of foreign institutions seeking to establish higher educational institutions within India (David, Sanyal, & Wildemeersch, 2006; Mitra, 2010), and the unaddressed need of values-based qualification and quality metrics (David, Sanyal, & Wildemeersch, 2006) present murky areas in need of further consideration. Skidmore and Longbottom (2011) elaborate that some cross-border educational initiatives are largely ad hoc and unaligned with the host institutions' existing frameworks and policies. David, Sanyal, and Wildemeersch (2006) explain further that there are not evident methods for handling instances of "cross-border academic frauds and malpractices" (p. 8). While these areas, untreated, present subtle risks to Internationalisation efforts, with proper institutional, national, and international policy these areas can be properly addressed to minimal effects on the vast benefits of Internationalisation of higher education.

There is a great need for caution in adopting cooperation with outside institutions. Especially in India, there is a large untapped market for the expansion of higher education, but also unsettled issues of entry and status for foreign institutions.

India presents a ripe market for higher education institutional expansion (Skidmore & Longbottom, 2011) because “only 10 percent of the age group receive university education, which is half the rate in China and well below the rate in most developing countries” (Mitra, 2010, p. 109). With so few university-aged persons availing the opportunities currently available, foreign institutions are presented with a great opportunity, both in supporting India’s and the world’s knowledge economies, but also to generate profits.

Some countries are largely seeking to maximize their profits by creating higher education initiatives on foreign soil, so the developing world is seen as a viable place to make this happen with low thresholds for entry and even lower costs of operation. Therefore Internationalisation can become a threat to emergent economies if the national governments do not create a viable framework for analysing intentions, risks, and outcomes from higher education connections with outside institutions. Knight (2006) elaborates on the interplay of the Global Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) with local governments’ autonomy saying that the agreement’s language is intentionally vague to allow adequate room at the local level to develop policy for quality control. However, actually establishing and enforcing an “effective regulatory mechanism is necessary to ensure quality higher education” (Mitra, 2010, p. 109) and also to diminish solely predatory profit-maximizing initiatives, distinguishing between for-profit corporate education businesses and those accredited international institutions seeking to expand learning possibilities.

So-called “brain drain” is another challenge in supporting higher education Internationalisation in India. Often students and scholars who leave their home countries to study abroad do not return to their native homes to contribute their knowledge and intellectual development (Knight, 2006; Varghese, 2009). It is

globally sound for academics to exercise improved mobility now possible in this modern age of Internet accessibility and improved international relations allowing for the physical movement of scholars to share experiences and to learn from others. However, this movement can be a threat, especially to emergent economies, when academics find their home countries unaccommodating of their desires or needs, either professionally or personally. Especially in India and other developing countries, retention of higher education academicians is an essential aspect of that nation's future successes and continued ability to compete globally (Knight, 2006).

### ***Proceeding with Caution***

India is proceeding cautiously to continue to expand the Internationalisation of its higher education institutions. Although risks are present, the potential benefits outweigh them. The issuance of the Mysore Statement confirms both the risks and the requested governmental and policy supports while emphasizing the inevitability and positive outcomes of Internationalisation (Mitra, 2010). Again, with proper management and the introduction of requested supports, significant gains are anticipated in the improvement of teaching and learning practices as well as the reinforcement of domain-specific research methodologies (Knight, 2006). Developing partnerships with foreign educationalists and institutions can build strong relationships to cultivate and hone evidenced-based best practices for pedagogy, research, and cooperative development (Skidmore & Longbottom, 2011). India's approach thus far to Internationalisation presents areas of concern as well cautious optimism.

## ***The Case of China***

### ***Policy Supports & Decentralization***

China's approach to internationalizing higher education is rather advanced. Compared with India, China has more years and examples of exchanges with foreign countries in pursuit of expanding their higher educational offerings. With greater numbers of Chinese students studying abroad and also an increase in foreign scholars coming to China for academic pursuits, Gide, Wu, and Wang (2010) emphasize the already strong presence of international forces in China's higher education, also making China an influential force in foreign higher educational institutions. Thus this country's approach presents greater detail in both the benefits to be reaped and also the most pressing challenges to be addressed.

Policy supports and the pursuit of decentralization are two areas of current successes in support of China's Internationalisation of higher education (Baskan & Erduran, 2009; Lan, 2012; Zhang, 2013). These triumphs have not arisen overnight, however. As early as the mid-1980s, China's governments and tertiary education regulatory bodies were drafting policy documents to address collaboration with and the establishment of higher education institutions, physically and virtually, in China (Baskan & Erduran, 2009; Lan, 2012; Zhang, 2013).

Initially education reforms were closely linked with China's economic policies and intentions. Hawkins (2000, in Baskan & Erduran, 2009) discusses the financial and management aspects of these policies which lead to a certain degree of decentralization or delegation whereby authority was transferred from some large, top-tier regulatory bodies to those closer to the local levels. However central authority is largely retained by the national government. This can be seen in the "National Medium and Long-term Educational Reform and Development



Plan, 2010-2010” (2010, in Lan, 2012, p. 1981). This policy document establishes targets directly related to the expansion of Internationalisation including plans to “attract international high-quality digital teaching resources” (Lan, 2012, p. 1981). In spite of transferring some decision-making responsibilities to lower levels, the central authority is still retained by the government and national level policies.

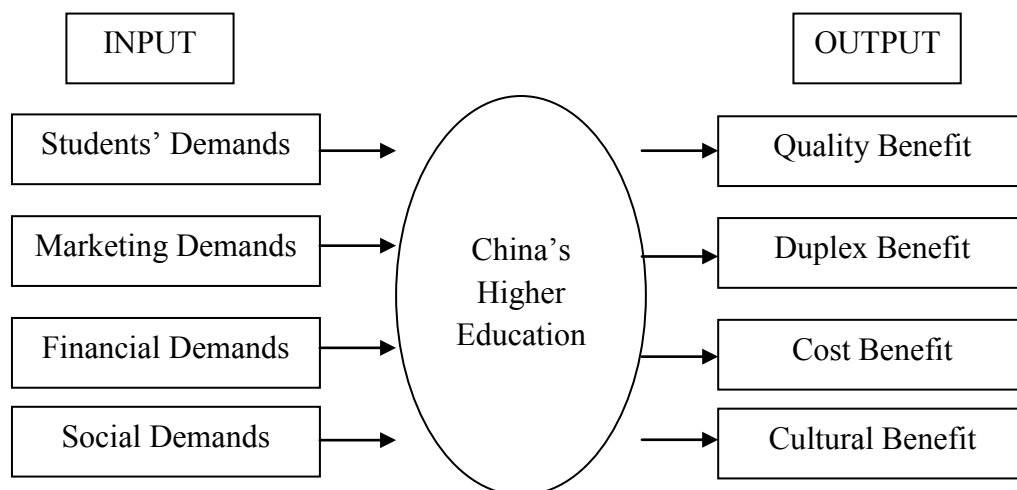
Educational reforms and policies have resulted in improvements, however. For example “the number and quality of teachers” (Baskan & Erduran, 2009) has progressed and a transition away from purely traditional education methods in support of “developing network education as a significant strategic target” (Lan, 2012, p. 1980) has been achieved. China’s case provides one approach to the evolution of higher education in the region with strong central, policy-level control with a gradual transition toward decentralization. Regardless of the methods to the end, however, China’s case emphasizes similar desired outcomes to India in meeting human resource and market demands. Baskan and Erduran (2009) state that “...improving the performance of education systems is necessary for socioeconomic development”, “economic competitiveness” (p. 348), and “human resource development” (p. 350).

### **Needs for Internationalizing Education**

Initially China’s focus in education reform was purely on economic development, seeking to expand China’s market. However, in the 1990s, the emphasis transitioned slightly away from pure economics toward the development of skills and human resources (Baskan & Erduran, 2009) which created more flexibility in higher education to address the needs of students and also of national and international employers regarding specialized skills development (Gide, Wu, & Wang, 2010).

In describing the multi-faceted demands currently informing educational change in China, Gide, Wu, and Wang (2010) identify four main areas of pressure for continued change, summarized in *Figure 1*, including the demands of students, markets, finance, and society.

**Figure 1 Four main demands and benefits of higher education Internationalisation in China**



*Source: Gide, Wu, & Wang, 2010, p. 5677.*

Liang (2004, in Gide, Wu, & Wang, 2010) elaborates on the student demand as one which expects the cultivation of globally-relevant curricula by higher education to instil in graduates the skills necessary to compete in the global market. This demand is closely-tied to market demands, which relate to the mobility of would-be employees. More students from China are studying and working elsewhere and similarly more foreign people are studying and working in China, thus creating a “two-way market” (Gide, Wu, & Wang, 2009, p. 5678).

Similar to the strong connection between students’ and market demands, is the connection between market and financial ones. Although more Chinese citizens are travelling for work and scholarship, often the cost is prohibitively high (Gide,

Wu, & Wang, 2010). Finally, social demand is the compounding experience of the previous three (Gide, Wu, & Wang, 2010), resulting in increasing attention and response to Internationalisation from the micro level of students and families rising to the meso level of institutions and finally the macro level of national policy.

Policy documents and emerging techniques in China's higher education trends toward Internationalisation are actively supportive of the four areas of demand named by Gide, Wu, and Wang. However, creating specific strategies and unifying standards of quality for the establishment and the intended outcomes of higher education networking are necessary to ensure success. This holds true in China and other areas interested in pursuing Internationalisation of higher education institutions.

### **Challenges in Unique Education Networking Strategies & Quality Assurance**

Challenges to Internationalisation in China's case include the strong need for unique education networking strategies, which encompasses a range of issues, as well as the requirement of a unified quality assurance method for integrating local and foreign higher education institutions (Baskan & Erduran, 2009; Lan, 2012; Xue, 2012; Zhang, 2013).

As is the case in India, China experiences a finance insufficiency for higher education generally, but Internationalisation thereof specifically. Contributing factors for this issue come from China's investment in education as well as a conservative approach to international exchange. A reporter to the UN High Commission on Human Rights' education report, Katarina Tomaševski, noted China's very low comparative global investment, at "only 2% GDP for education, which is one-third of the level recommended by the UN" (Baskan & Erduran,

2009, p. 353) ranking China among the lowest for educational spending globally. Compared with China's very large population, this exceptionally small national expenditure is especially paltry. Lan (2012) explains that this financial challenge is exacerbated because of the national policy to be exceedingly guarded, in comparison to other countries, in trade and finance issues outside of China. Furthermore, Baskan and Erduran (2009) elaborate that with a small national budget for education, "families and other sources of private funding" (p. 353) bear the extraordinary brunt of paying for education.

In addition to the cautious approach in terms of financial exchange, China also proceeds cautiously in establishing quality metrics for international educational endeavours. Although China has more experiences as of now in this arena than India, for example, the country has not yet created a strong, enforceable quality assurance mechanism for all aspects of international cooperation. Lan (2012) notes that over the past 10 years China has made great strides toward improved and expanded Internationalisation and networking via "over one hundred related documents" (p. 1983), but that a quality assurance methodology "integrating network systems" (Xue, 2012, p. 1757) is not yet in place. One success in China toward quality assurance, however, is the establishment of one standardizing body for networking technology. Lan (2012) states that "the technology standard system of network education with Chinese characteristics is established" (p. 1981).

However criteria for research, entrance competencies of students, and curriculum specific to Internationalisation have yet to be decided. Comprehensive quality assurance "not only controls the key quality factors of cross-border network education, but also requires the overseas network education to meet Chinese students' demand on the basis of ensuring the same quality as Chinese education

offers” (Lan, 2012, p. 1984). Elaborating on this theme, Zhang (2013) affirms the need for broad quality assurance for “Sino-foreign cooperative education institutions” (p. 113) on the basis of sustainable development, which does not merely address commercial interests such as the “profitable running of the school” (p. 113) while overlooking the obligations toward teaching and learning. These statements obviously indicate the overarching need for a quality assurance mechanism, but most subtly allude to the need for a culturally-appropriate mechanism, especially in the inclusion of the concept of meeting Chinese students’ expectations on par with their previous educational experiences within their own culture.

### **Benefits**

In spite of the imminent needs of the Chinese approach to Internationalisation and networking of higher education, benefits in the Chinese market for network education also surface. This is surprising due to the shift in the 1990s of China’s policy initiatives for higher education *away from* purely economic reform. This outcome indicates that merely supporting and facilitating improvements in Internationalisation, including networked education, can reap large economic benefits, in addition to the primary goals of improved educational offerings.

Due to the implementation of the technology quality and standardization method discussed in Lan (2012), Chinese institutions which use it are more adept in acclimatizing to more stringent standards used by foreign institutions that are in cooperation with Chinese counterparts. Furthermore, this introduction of one standardizing mechanism for technology in university networking aids Chinese institutions in participation in “international cooperation and competition” (Lan, 2012, p. 1981). The claims made by Lan (2012) are evidenced in the rapid expansion of China’s network education market from 2008 to 2012, an increase

from 35.2 billion Yuan to 72.3 billion Yuan as reported by the China Online Education Industry Research Report (2009, in Lan, 2012).

### **The Himalayan University Consortium**

The Himalayan University Consortium (HUC) is a conglomeration of universities in the Hindu Kush region under the auspices of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). Universities currently claiming membership in the HUC span many countries, including: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. The website for the HUC (n.d.) publishes an extensive list of intended outcomes. The aim is to build a dynamic mountain knowledge partnership among universities, ICIMOD, and regional member country partners to promote research and learning. ICIMOD and universities will work together to strengthen capacity by developing joint research and knowledge management programmes on contemporary topics and, in so doing, help ease some of the shortcomings that regional institutions may have in terms of capacity and funding. (ICIMOD, n.d.)

As Bhutan's Royal University of Bhutan is a member of this initiative, it can anticipate to enjoy these benefits of shared knowledge creation, increased research capacity, and also financial assistance. ICIMOD's webpage titled "Knowledge Management" (n.d.) indicates that although modernization has lowered the threshold to access and use of knowledge, "the local capacity in developing countries to absorb, digest, and act upon available knowledge is lagging behind." Although, the HUC presents unique benefits for Bhutan in its intensive environmental and sustainable development approach, there are also areas of higher education unaddressed by the HUC that must be attended to separately for Bhutan's higher education institutions to reap the maximum benefits of Internationalisation and networked operations.

## **Method**

This analysis and subsequent recommendations emerge from a meta-analysis and review of peer-reviewed scholarly literature, case studies, and policy documents about Bhutan, China, and India.

## **Discussion**

The presented cases from India and China present both positive outcomes to replicate and also areas that need caution to avoid problems. The addition of the Himalayan University Consortium example adds nuance in highlighting the localized need for a broader university networking initiative to fully-avail the benefits indicated by the cases of India and China. Specific to Bhutan the areas of caution include the need for strong quality control mechanisms and governmental policy supports of academic finance and mobility while the advantages range from improvements in the excellence of teaching, learning, and research, in addition to the greater ease of digital mobility for the nation's scholars.

Furthermore, the Royal University of Bhutan's membership in the Himalayan University Consortium is a laudable first step toward broader participation in the global dialogue and knowledge creation surrounding higher education's evolution and growth in the Hindu Kush region. Membership in the HUC comes with inherent benefits of stronger regional connectivity of academicians as well as involvement in the support and creation of regionally and culturally appropriate curricula, specifically for sustainable mountain development, the primary objective of ICIMOD. Although the HUC is a commendable program, it is limited in scope specific to sustainability and mountain development topics. While these are essential to Bhutan's and the other member country's progress with respect to environment protection, the HUC does not, and should not, serve all the needs of positive Internationalisation.

## **Conclusion**

India's case of internationalizing higher education demonstrates potential boons of expanding economic markets due to converging effects of scholars' demands and the inclusion of greater numbers of international study options. India also shows by example the need for governmental policy level supports for quality assurance. India's case includes valuable lessons.

Wisdom gleaned from China's case indicate that decentralization and policy support are essential to reap the benefits of Internationalisation, but also that primarily supporting educational reform will lead to greater economic benefits than purely socioeconomic reforms. China also confirms the need for centralized, standardized quality assurance and networked education development strategies from the policy level. China's case also includes relevant scenarios.

The inclusion of the Himalayan University Consortium in this comparative analysis draws out the need for the regional expansion of higher education connectivity. Although the HUC is exceptionally supportive of knowledge co-creation among universities, ICIMOD, and other regional knowledge economies, and is an incomparable starting point for greater cooperation among the institutions of higher education in the region, the potential benefits of university Internationalisation are limited in this project by the intensive focus largely on environmental issues. Again, while environmentalism and curricula creation regarding sustainable development are essential, especially for the delicate ecologies of the Hindu Kush region, the HUC is not broad enough to sustain all the potential benefits of university Internationalisation. Another limitation of the HUC emerges in its regional focus. Although knowledge and curricula creation relative directly to this corner of the globe is supportive of environmental protection strategies, it is not sustainable for other areas of knowledge relevant to



higher education. In addition to the cases of India and China the HUC demonstrates some best practices specific to cooperation and knowledge creation, especially when these practices are expanded beyond the current regional focus.

Each case presented herein provides varying degrees of success and shortcomings. By giving close attention to the pathways and methods of each, Bhutan can pave a smooth way toward optimal university networking and Internationalisation. To ensure the best possible outcomes for Bhutan's scholars, it is necessary to become aware of the challenges and benefits experienced in other places and also why or how these realities came to be.

### **Implications**

As is the case with many knowledge domains, Bhutan must create its own best practices for higher education Internationalisation, embedded in scholarship and experiences of other similar nations. Bhutan's culturally specific and unique best practices can be developed from several sources of evidence. The cases of India, China, and the HUC present viable pathways to successful development of broadened cross-border education. However, unheeded and unaddressed, these cases' challenges and risks of financial exploitation and unchecked, poor quality can become reality.

Presented together India and China convey for Bhutan unforeseen challenges to be avoided, but also benefits to be obtained from international cooperation. As Internationalisation expands in Bhutan, so too should efforts to ensure high quality, evidenced based best practices be expanded. Quality mechanisms can be established from the top-down in cooperation with reputable international institutions (Marginson, 2010). Furthermore ensuring quality educational offerings can aid in culling and banning disreputable, profit-only-driven

educational businesses from increasing their bottom line at the expense of Bhutanese citizens. Another benefit of a strong quality assurance strategy for Bhutan is the steady increase in the value of education including teaching, learning and research. By only allowing collaboration with reputable, accredited institutions with values aligned with those of Bhutan, educational outcomes will improve.

Another area of best practice suggested by the cases of India, China, and the HUC is greater flexibility for academicians' mobility. The Internet has greatly eased the facilitation of interactive dialogue, but even the highest quality virtual call cannot replicate the authenticity of an in-person, multiple participant debate. Easing the restrictions for cost of travel and also of travel restrictions and accessibility to academics within Bhutan who wish to travel within the country and also in surrounding areas would greatly serve to support the benefits of Internationalisation. Furthermore, to eradicate brain drain and rather to promote brain gain, Bhutan can create competitive, globally attractive conditions for academicians, including flexibility for mobility.

Ideally the Royal University of Bhutan will become an active participant in the activities of the Himalayan University Consortium. Involvement in the HUC activities is a viable opportunity to practice many activities relevant to broader Internationalisation. Aims and activities of the HUC range from cooperative, domain-specific curricula creation, to practical experience in increased, advanced research methodologies in collaboration with regional academicians, and furthermore practice in the communication and flexibility techniques to develop broader cross-border education cooperation in higher education.

Finally Bhutan's tertiary education institutions are uniquely positioned philosophically and geographically to promote and sustain positive outcomes of

Internationalisation beyond the economic and market arena alone. As the home of Gross National Happiness, the substantive, multifaceted well being metric used in tandem with GDP, Bhutan has the potential to focus intensively on holistic higher education, transcending the purely monetary aspects and intended outcomes of university education. Furthermore, this can be achieved through culturally tailored quality control mechanisms with a high threshold for Bhutan-centric values and ethics (David, Sanyal, & Wildemeersch, 2006). Marginson (2010) substantiates this claim saying “the role of higher education is not limited to fostering the economic development of nations and the provision of opportunities for individuals, it extends also to the promotion and harmonization of cultural diversity, political democracy and economic trade” (p. 6963). The governmental policy toward developing this metric to serve the needs of Bhutanese citizens uniquely positions Bhutan as a potential powerhouse and trail-blazing example of how higher education can be shaped to engender citizens with holistic development intentions.

Although much can be learned from India, China, the Himalayan University Consortium, and other countries with similar attributes to Bhutan, higher education and governmental leaders will have to determine the best pathways to success specifically for Bhutan and its citizens. Hussein (2010) summarizes this point saying, “there is no blue print that is valid for all countries; globalization is neither the cause of troubles nor is it the sole path towards success” (p. 7357). Lessons can be shared among nations and regions, but ultimately Bhutan’s path to success in internationalizing its higher education institutions is yet to be determined.

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