Internationalisation of Indonesian Higher Education:  
A Study from the Periphery  

Sri Soejatminah  
(Doctoral student)  
School of Education, Deakin University  
221 Burwood Highway, Burwood, Victoria, Australia  
Tel: 61-3-9244-6237   E-mail: ssoe@deakin.edu.au

Abstract

Globalisation as a global phenomenon has been influencing Indonesian Higher Education like other education systems in the world. Internationalisation in response to globalisation is a common feature in majority universities. It is also a feature of Indonesian Higher Education institutions, yet so far it seems that the way in which Indonesian higher education is responding to globalisation with internationalisation of its universities is not well reported. This paper aims to address this gap by examining relevant government papers, policies, research, reports and other documents available on line as well as at web sites of universities and other related web sites depicting how internationalisation has been conducted in Indonesian higher education. The paper attempts to reveal the perceived challenges of globalisation for Indonesian higher education and to what extent and in what form internationalisation has been achieved. Particularly, it will analyse the relation between policies and practices and identify barriers to internationalisation. However, it should be noted that this article is selective rather than comprehensive in reflecting on the internationalisation process in Indonesian higher education. Findings show that globalisation is perceived as a challenge requiring a response rather than as a threat to be dealt with. Many sources reflect that the government has been initiating and facilitating various programs to support internationalisation within the system. It appears that lack of capability at the institution level slows down the process. Under-representation of institutions reflected in the under-developed websites results in opacity of the real capacity of institutions. It seems that improving the basic factors shaping internationalisation such as capacities in English and ICT (Marginson, 2007) would trigger further the development of internationalisation in Indonesian higher education.

Keywords: Internationalisation, Higher Education, Globalisation, English, Indonesia

1. Introduction

Since the early 80s, increasing attention has been paid to internationalisation in higher education (Knight, 2003). It is a form of response from university toward the impact of globalisation, which is seen as “the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness” (Held et al., 1999, as cited in Marginson & Wende, 2007, p. 5).

According to Marginson and Wende (2007), in the global knowledge economy, universities are the medium for relationships and global movement of people, information, knowledge, technologies, products and financial capital. This results in “international mobility; global comparison, bench-marking and ranking; and the internationalisation of institutions and system” becoming important issues in government and universities around the world (Marginson & Wende, 2007) including Indonesia. However, ‘not all universities are (particularly) international, but all are subjects to the same processes of globalisation- partly as objects, victims even, of these processes, but partly as subjects, or key agents, of globalisation’ (Scott, 1998, as cited in Marginson & Wende, 2007, p.5). In the case of the Indonesian higher education system, although they are all subject to globalisation, it seems to be not clear how they respond in terms of internationalisation. This paper attempts to answer several questions regarding internationalisation, particularly in Indonesian higher education system. Firstly, what is the position of government in relation to internationalisation and how is globalisation perceived? Next, what are the practices of internationalisation in Indonesian higher education institutions? Further, if internationalisation is imposed by the government, what are the barriers for internationalisation?
2. Literature review

Internationalisation in higher education is a result of globalisation of the 21st century (Albatch & Teichler, 2001). The term internationalisation often is used to replace the term globalisation, while in fact they have two different meaning (Albatch, 2004). According to Knight (2003, p. 2), ‘internationalisation at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education’. Practically, the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee described that internationalisation of Australian universities includes a range of activities such as formal agreements with other countries, participation in international organisations, offshore activities, student exchange, international research collaboration, internationalisation of staff, internationalisation of curricula and recruitment of international students (AVCC, 2001). Moreover, the OECD (Henry et al., 2001, p. 148) defined a set of characteristics for international curricula as the following:

- curricula with international content such as international relations;
- curricula that add comparative dimension to traditional content;
- career-oriented curricula;
- curricula that address cross-cultural skills;
- interdisciplinary programs such as region and area studies covering more than one country;
- curricula leading to internationally recognised professions;
- curricula leading to joint or double degrees;
- curricula whose parts are offered at off-shore institutions by local faculty;
- curricula designed exclusively for foreign students.

On the other side, globalisation is defined as the economic, political and societal forces pushing universities toward greater international involvement (Albatch & Knight, 2007, p.291). Marginson (2007) explained further that globalisation results in ‘the interconnected of universities around the world, world-wide research, cross borders education and share of the ideals of intellectual freedom and student security among academic around the world’.

There are various motivations for internationalisation including commercial advantage, knowledge and language acquisition, enhancing the curriculum with international content and it is represented with specific initiatives such as branch campuses, cross-border collaboration, programs for international students (Albatch & Knight, 2007).

3. Indonesian higher education

Indonesia is a country with population of 220 million, 81 public and 2,514 private higher education institutions; and 3.5 million students (Puruhito, 2006). Provision of higher education in Indonesia is managed by the Ministry of National Education (MONE) through the Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE) and other ministries such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Finance.

Government has been reforming its public universities by giving a State-owned Legal Entity status (BHMN), which gives more independence in the management of financial, human resources, physical plant, organisation, decision making and new accountability (DGHE, 1999). A Law of Education Legal Entity covering issues on legal entity and status of higher education institution has recently been passed which aims to empower public universities with autonomy, transparency and accountability (DGHE, 2008).

Other important issues in Indonesian higher education involve unmet increasing demand on high quality of higher education, equity and participation, funding, internal efficiency, relevancy and governance (Tadjudin, 2005, p.30). Currently, there are about 5,000 international students in the country, while around 20,000 Indonesian students study overseas annually.

4. Internationalisation of Indonesia Higher Education

Perceptions on the impact of globalisation on higher education and how to response are varied. The impact of globalisation on Indonesian higher education may be seen in the use of international ranking of universities around the world by organisations such as The Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) and Shanghai Jiao Tong University, as an orientation to evaluate performance (Djanali, 2007). Moreover, cross border education as one form of globalisation seems to become a thread to local universities in attracting local students (Tadjudin, 2005, Nizam, 2006). It is argued by some that globalisation might also endanger national education in term of the intrusion of foreign values on national characters and identity; and global competition between local and overseas graduates to enter the local workforce (Tadjudin, 2005). However, the government’s response to globalisation with the need to move toward international standard of quality, for example accreditation from international professional bodies seems to be the rationale for internationalisation.
4.1 Government Position

Perceiving globalisation as a challenge, the government asserts the necessity of internationalisation for universities. Internationalisation is grounded in the National Education Strategic Plan and the Higher Education Long Term Strategic (HELTS) 2003 – 2010 (Mohandas, 2007). The first document mentions about the importance of national competitiveness in its vision, mission and the goal for national education. Whilst in the latter document, internationalisation of higher education is seen as a means to increase national competitiveness. In this context, every university is expected to play a role with the support of the DGHE to improve national competitiveness as well as to counter the possibility of negative effects from globalisation. Moreover, the DGHE has used international collaboration as a criterion to rank institution positions within the system (Djanali, 2007). However, with regard to individual institutions’ capacity, continuous quality improvement is much more appreciated than global engagement.

Governments support internationalisation through various programs including seminars/ workshops on internationalisation, network establishment such as Indonesia Higher Education Network and Global Development Learning Network (Irwandi, 2008), the production of a book titled The-50 Promising Universities and scholarships.

4.2 Current practice of internationalisation by universities

Indonesia covers a vast range of higher education institutions in terms of type, size and quality with total of 2684 higher education institutions. Investigation for this paper focuses only on the internationalisation movement within the-50 promising universities selected by the DGHE which are classified as having academic credibility and eagerness to collaborate with overseas institution (DGHE, 2006). The selection is based on consideration on awards, student life, facility, research and community service and international collaboration (Indonesian market introduction, n.d.). To capture the dynamic within this group, the analysis will consider the types of institutions, which consists of 28 public and 22 private institutions. As mentioned before, this study is conducted by analysing information/ data on internationalisation which is available on the website of individual institution (Attachment no.1). Since internationalisation in Indonesia is still in early stage, the indicators such as English and ICT are selected to investigate the capability for internationalisation (Marginson, 2006). Moreover, other indicator - commitment toward internationalisation -- is chosen to investigate the attitude toward internationalisation. In addition, this study examines common typology for internationalisation including international academic / research collaboration, internationalisation of staff, student body and curricula (AVCC, 2001). Other indicator such as international engagement with international organisations was not covered in this study. Therefore this study is much about internationalisation of higher education as reflected in universities’ websites. Attachment 4 presents summary of the finding.

4.2.1 Web-site in English

Since English is needed to engage globally, existence of a website in English is the key criterion for this study. The graph below shows that among the 50 promising universities, most of the institution do not have website in English; the institution’s website with almost fully in English is less than 50%. In detail, there is around 54% public institutions using English wholly or partially, while in private group only 41% of institutions fall under this category. These data might suggest that the English usage for website requires serious attention. Attachment 2 provides clearer picture of the result.

4.2.2 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Apart from English, ICT (as global interconnectivity) is another basic need for internationalisation, particularly for the system in the early stage of internationalisation. The development of ICT in an institution could be reflected virtually in the website with the presence of various products including digital library, e-learning/paper and forum/network. This study focuses the investigation into the availability of digital library to represent the establishment of ICT. The finding shows similar picture between public and private institutions where there are about 68 % institutions with a digital library.

4.2.3 Acknowledgement of internationalisation

Since internationalisation is initiated and facilitated by the government, it is necessary to investigate how institutions’ responses to the government opt toward internationalisation. This could be inferred from the policy statements such as vision, mission, objective and strategic planning which might reflect how an institution frames internationalisation. Approximately 58% institutions appear to show intention and awareness of internationalisation with the use of phrases such “addressing global challenge”, “to be world class University” or to “collaborate globally”. In contrast around 42% of institutions did not indicate global awareness at all in their policy statements. There is not much different between public and private institutions, with only half of them seeming to be aware about the importance to acknowledge internationalisation as part of their policy.
4.2.4 Website for International matters.

This indicator also aims to capture the level of commitment of universities to recognising the importance of internationalisation. It might reflect a higher level of commitment to internationalisation. Around 50% of private universities have a particular segment online describing their international engagement, while only around 30% of public institutions have a particular site for internationalisation.

4.2.5 Internationalisation of the student body

To promote internationalisation of student body, the government provides several scholarship programs for foreign students such as Darmasiswa (MONE, n.d.) and Kemitraan Negara Berkembang (MONE, n.d.). Apart from this, there are also international students who study on a private tuition basis to attend programs such as twinning or double degrees as well as regular degrees (International class at UGM, n.d.). Furthermore, some universities have collaborations on student exchanges.

The following represents the national data on international students. The top five of preferred study areas includes medical, social sciences, engineering, Indonesian language, and pharmaceutical. The main countries of origin are Malaysia, East Timor, South Korea and Japan (Rembuk nasional, n.d.). Attachment 3 shows the distribution of international student among public and private institutions during 2005 to 2007. From the 50 group, around 70% of institutions have international students, in which more public institutions have international students than private institutions.

4.2.6 Internationalisation of academic/staff collaboration

This indicator refers to the international activity conducted by academic and management staff both to enhance quality and global perspective including conference/seminar, exchange/visiting, research and further study. This initiative is supported with program called Program Academic Recharging (PAR) A, B and C (Antara, n.d.). PAR A involves management staff of postgraduate programs to increase collaboration on management aspect of the postgraduate program. PAR B aims to re-invigorate academic skills of senior academic/professor by completing activity such as academic writing for book or international journal. PAR C is intended for academics with doctoral degree to enhance research collaboration.

Other scholarships- sandwich and twinning programs are available for academics both at public and private institutions since 2008. Sandwich program allows the doctoral students to do some activities at overseas university such as lab analysis, literature studies and short course to enhance research quality for about four months. While twinning programs provide master degree students with the opportunity to do half of their studies at an overseas university. At the national level, the top five destination countries for these scholarships are Australia, Malaysia, Japan, UK and Netherland.

This study shows that more public institutions have international collaboration involving academic and management staff than private ones. In total about 70% of the 50 Group has engaged in this form of collaboration.

4.2.7 Internationalisation of the curriculum

Internationalisation of the curriculum includes curriculum preparation in the light of international collaboration consisting for inbound and outbound student mobility. This initiative is heavily involved with curriculum arrangement for sending students abroad under various programs such as sandwich, twinning and double degrees. However, these terms have been applied interchangeably. A twinning program also means double programs, for example professional chemist/pharmacist and magister program in pharmaceutical (Note 1). Double degree could also mean double bachelor degrees offered by the local institutions (Note 2). International class refers to collaboration on twinning or double degree programs with overseas institutions (Note 3). It might also mean the delivery of class in English for international student (Note 4).

Collaboration on internationalisation of curriculum has been supported through the government scholarships such as sandwich, twinning and double degree programs for academics and beasiswa unggulan (MONE, n.d.) for prospective academics to continue their study overseas.

Internationalisation of curriculum also refers to curriculum prepared for international students who come under various means such as scholarships, exchange or private. Indeed, it is hardly to find English as the medium for international students (International program in Indonesia, n.d.). All international students are required to learn Indonesian as Indonesian is the medium of instruction in Indonesia.

Data for this indicator reveal that many institutions have collaborated on curriculum arrangement with overseas institutions both to send and receive students. About 70% of institutions have a curriculum arrangement with overseas partners. Further, the data suggest that public institutions have more collaborations than private institutions.
5. Discussion

Indicators such as internationalisation of student body, academic/staff and curriculum show a positive image that around 70% of the institutions in the 50 Group have collaborated with overseas universities. However, it should be noted that these data did not represent the volume of collaboration. The data appear to indicate that international collaboration has been increasing.

Obviously, the government has been promoting and supporting through various programs. It appears that the initial motive for internationalisation is to improve quality and to solve the problem of unmet demand on quality education. Internationalisation through partnership programs such as twinning and double degree with overseas prestigious universities might meet this expectation. This type of collaboration appears to be able to give opportunities on quality and image enhancement for local education.

Among the seven indicators the usage of English for the website needs attention. It seems that improvement on the usage of English in website is crucial since it reflects the performance of an institution including institutional capacity for global engagement. Underrepresentation in the website might give a poor image for the national system in the global network. As for this study, the institutions’ website seems does not contain enough required information since it did not represent the real situation. Some of the data were collected from overseas institutions to reveal the internationalisation initiatives such as research/academic collaboration (AVCC, 2003).

The ‘website for international collaborations’ indicator shows only around 40% of the institutions have a separate segment for international collaboration. It might mean that most of the institutions have a small volume of collaboration which does not require a special space on the website.

The ‘acknowledgement of internationalisation’ indicator which is around 60% might suggest the need for further socialisation on internationalisation efforts although the DGHE has been conducting several avenues for this purpose. It could also indicate that the institutions did not intend to engage globally but rather to focus on national commitment.

To sum up, the government effort in facilitating internationalisation appears to be flourishing, as the majority of institutions do have collaboration globally. The improvement of a website presence and the use of English in public documents (including websites) might improve capacity, reputation and competitiveness of individual institutions.

6. Conclusion & implication

As internationalisation requires communication in English, the presence of well developed websites including a version in English is paramount. As it might reflect the capacity of an institution, under-performance of websites might present a poor image on the quality of university. Although universities have other roles apart from internationalisation, not to engage in global market does not mean that universities should ignore the importance of ICT and English. Being informed and highly visible internationally is imperative for local universities to develop their capacity to fulfil their roles in contributing to the national development.

Internationalisation in Indonesian higher education is an important agenda that the government suggest for all institutions to participate. As improving quality of education seemed to be the goal for internationalisation, the use of international student numbers as a criterion to evaluate institution performance by the DGHE (Djanali, 2006) might need to be reconsidered.

This study did not reveal the depth or how far the internationalisations have been conducted by the 50 promising universities; instead it offers fundamental information on the readiness and attitudes toward internationalisation. Further study might be useful to investigate the motives and identify the strength for internationalisation. Finally, evaluation and monitoring of internationalisation process is suggested to keep it on the track as intended (Knight, 2001), particularly for the government as the main supporter.

References


Notes


Attachments

Attachment 1. List of Universities in the 50 Promising Universities

Public institutions:

1) Airlangga University: www.unair.ac.id
2) Bandung Polytechnic for Manufacturing: www.polman-bandung.ac.id
3) Bandung State Polytechnic: www.polban.ac.id
4) Bogor Agricultural University: www.ipb.ac.id
5) Diponegoro University: www.undip.ac.id
6) Gadjah Mada University: www.ugm.ac.id
7) Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Jogja: www.isi.ac.id
8) Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Denpasar: www.isi-dps.ac.id
9) Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Surakarta: www.stsi-ska.ac.id
10) Institut Teknologi Bandung: www.itb.ac.id
11) Institute Teknologi Sepuluh November: www.its.ac.id
12) Jakarta Institute of the Arts, The: www.ikj.ac.id
13) Jember University: www.unej.ac.id
14) Jenderal Soedirman University: www.unsoed.ac.id
15) Padang State Polytechnic: www.polipdng.ac.id
16) Padang State University: www.unp.ac.id
17) Palangkaraya University: www.upr.ac.id
18) Sebelas Maret University: www.uns.ac.id
19) Sriwijaya University: www.unsri.ac.id
20) State University of Malang: www.malang.ac.id
21) State University of Medan: www.unimed.ac.id
22) Tadulako University: www.untad.ac.id
23) Udayana University: www.unud.ac.id
24) University of Bengkulu: www.unib.ac.id
25) University of Indonesia: www.ui.ac.id
26) University of Mataram: www.unram.ac.id
27) Yogyakarta State University: www.uny.ac.id
28) Padjadjaran University: www.unpad.ac.id

Private institutions:

29) Achmad Dahlan University: www.uad.ac.id
30) Atma Jaya Catholic University Jakarta: www.atmajaya.ac.id
31) Atma Jaya University Yogyakarta: www.uajy.ac.id
32) Bina Nusantara University: www.binus.ac.id
33) Bunda Mulia University: www.bundamulia.ac.id
34) Maranatha Christian University: www.maranatha.edu
35) Merdeka University – Malang: www.unmer.ac.id
36) Muhammadiyah University of Malang: www.umn.ac.id
37) Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta: www.ums.ac.id
38) Pancasila University: www.univpancasila.ac.id
39) Parahyangan Catholic University: www.unpar.ac.id
40) Pasundan University: www.unpar.ac.id
41) Pelita Harapan University: www.uph.ac.id
42) Sanata Dharma University: www.usd.ac.id
43) Satya Wacana Christian University: www.uksw.edu
44) Soegijopranata Catholic University: www.unika.ac.id
45) Supra School of Business and Computer: www.supra.ac.id
46) Telkom School of Engineering: www.sttelkom.ac.id
47) University of 17 Agustus 1945, The: www.untag-sb.ac.id
48) University of Surabaya: www.ubaya.ac.id
49) Widyagama University of Malang: www.widyagama.ac.id
50) Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya: www.wima.ac.id

Attachment 2. Distribution of the usage of English in the Website among Institutions

Attachment 3. Number of International students 2005 – 2007
Attachment 4. Picture of internationalisation of universities in the 50 promising universities (Note 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Public (28) (%)</th>
<th>Private (22) (%)</th>
<th>Total (50) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Website in English</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>ICT: digital library</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Acknowledgement of internationalisation (in vision, mission, objective and strategic planning)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Website for international collaborations</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Internationalisation of student body</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>78</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>International academic/staff collaboration</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Internationalisation of curriculum</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>