

# Readiness of Higher Education in Southern Philippines: Internationalization of Higher Education System in the Philippines

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**Abstract.** Universities around the world have been pressured to cope with the external environments because of the new key player in the educational system- the globalization. In the Philippines, the government has recognized the need for the internationalization of the educational system. This has paved the way to Commission of Higher Education to give support to significant researches on this innovative change considering the number of HEIs operating in the country. In-line with this persistency of the country's educational system to globalized its operation, this study determined the extent of readiness of two public higher education institutions in Southern Philippines on the internationalization of educational system in the Philippines in terms of: a.) Mission, Goals and Plans of the University; b) Structures and Staff; c) Budget and Implementation; d) International Dimension on Research Activity; e) Support System; f) Promotion of International Affiliation; g) Internationalization of the University Curriculum; and h) Joint Programs with External Organizations. Using descriptive-survey research design, it was found out that the HEIs are slowly building structure and connections to bring an international standard of education to diverse people.

**Keywords:** Internationalization, Mission, Goals, Plans of the University

## INTRODUCTION

The universities around the world have been pressured to cope with the external environments because of the new key player in the educational system- the globalization. It is a force acting in educational institutions that is tied to culture, economy, politics, business, and power. Higher education institutions (HEIs) have developed approaches in response to this growing globalized population while internationalization was regarded by experts to be the prompt action of the HEIs to this phenomenon [1]-[2]. Internationalization of higher education is the process of change where each individual aims to achieve the interest and needs of higher education [3]. The main goals of internationalization of higher education are to connect the educational system across the world and to improve the students' skills, reading, teaching and learning. In this generation, internationalization of higher education is not only a mobility and understanding of each student but also developing a future leader [4].

In the Philippines, the government has recognized the need for the internationalization of the educational system. The Commission of Higher Education has risen to give support to significant researches on this innovative change considering the number of HEIs operating in the country. They also ordered all HEIs to enhance the quality of

teaching and formulate necessary mechanisms ensuring that graduates can deal with the competitive nature in the global arena (CMO 46, s. 2012, art. 1, sec. 2) [8]. Despite these initiatives, education in the Philippines is still afflicted by perennial problems like substandard quality, insufficient budget, incompetent teachers, poor facilities, lack of teaching staff, and poor understanding of vision and direction. These are the reasons why Philippines ranked among the low performing countries with limited adaptation of international education system that integrates ICT in the teaching-learning process. These are also a downside of the drastic change to K to 12 that created a big gap on the ratio of teachers, students, classrooms, textbooks, and facilities. These problems that the country is encountering in the area of its educational system are a dire call to enhance and level it to standards that can produce competent addition to the work force [9].

## METHOD

This study is by nature quantitative and is aided by descriptive research design. Quantitative Research is the collection of data to be quantified and subjected to statistical treatment to either support or refute the "alternate knowledge claims". Descriptive Research Approach was used as the study determined the readiness of public higher education institutions in Southern Philippines. School presidents, vice-presidents in the areas of academic affairs, research, extension, and production, and administration and finance, directors, deans, faculty, and student trustees were involved as respondents.

The researchers conducted the data collection through a survey at Cotabato City State Polytechnic College and Mindanao State University-Maguindanao. Purposive Sampling Technique was used in this study as it is done with the purpose, where particular individuals are produced within the group. It is the best sampling technique because it will depend on the context in which researchers are working and the nature of their research objectives (Palys, 2008).

The survey consisted of a total of 73 questions with eight (8) indicators that determined the readiness of schools in terms of internationalization. The indicators were adopted from Allen who drafted internationalization indicators for universities. The respondents indicated whether they agree or disagree with the given statements. They recorded their answers by checking the number that best represents the extent of their agreement with each

statement: 5 – strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 – moderate, 2 – disagree, 1 – strongly disagree.

## RESULT

### *Mission, Goals and Plans of the University*

The Table 2 on the readiness of HEI in terms of mission, goal, and plan shows that the state colleges and universities are moderately ready in the area of foundation as implied by mean value 3.27. This is further indicated by the claims of the respondents that HEIs in Southern Philippines have moderate readiness in strategic plans and goals ( $\bar{x} = 3.2$ ), that their internationalization policies of the institutions are moderately articulated as part of their basic policies ( $\bar{x} = 3.27$ ), and those internationalization policies are well-articulated and have concreteness ( $x = 3.06$ ).

Moreover, the Table 2 shows that the HEIs are moderately ready in their plans and administrative policies ( $\bar{x} = 3.4$ ), and in the area of implementation body (responsible department) ( $\bar{x} = 3.27$ ). They are also ready at a moderate extent because their goals and plans are recognized and shared internationally by their partner schools ( $\bar{x} = 3.33$ ), and they have an authorized person in-charge of international exchange activities (such as exchange students, exchange of faculty, collaboration on research and et cetera) who acts independently from the College President ( $\bar{x} = 3.6$ ). Their moderate readiness is further indicated by the claim of the respondents that the HEIs have concreteness of goals in the area of publications ( $\bar{x} = 3.67$ ). These imply the commitment of HEIs in embracing the challenges of the internationalization of educational system in the Philippines, and their response on the rapidly changing globalized world that the Commission on Higher Education describes to be an era of “global competitiveness”. However, despite the

concreteness of the goals and of having authorized persons in-charge, the strategies taken into considerations by HEIs in implementing their programs, their articulation of internationalization in their basic policies, and the recognition of their goals and plans by their partner schools, the overall mean of 3.34 reveals that they are still on their way to take-off.

### *Structures and Staff*

Institutional responses to globalization’s challenges and opportunities also include the formation of organizational structures that oversee internationalization concerns. The participants agreed in 4 out of 9 questions. As revealed by the data, the institutions have a college committee for internationalization ( $\bar{x} = 3.33$ ), and that they have a new set of organizational structure ( $\bar{x} = 3.00$ ). In terms of records of opportunity announcement, the institutions are moderately ready with the mean of 3.47. Also, the participants agreed that the institutions have personnel allocation of department involved in international activities ( $\bar{x} = 3.2$ ), and the institutions have a new roles of the faculty ( $\bar{x} = 3.13$ ). Meanwhile, the participants agreed that the institutions have information disclosure and democratic decision with the mean of 3.6. furthermore, they agreed that the institutions have organizational goals ( $\bar{x} = 3.87$ ). The data generated reveals that the participants agreed that their institution has a competency required for the job with the mean of 3.67 and a job descriptions including responsibility sharing descriptions ( $\bar{x} = 3.6$ ). The over-all mean of 3.43 indicates moderation on the readiness of HEIs in terms of Structure and Staff.

Table 1 Mean Values on the Readiness of HEI in terms of Structure and Staff

| Statement   | Mean | SD   | Description |
|---|------|------|-------------|
| The institution has college committee for internationalization.                               | 3.33 | 1.11 | Moderate    |
| The institution has Information disclosure and democratic decisions.                          | 3.60 | 1.06 | Agree       |
| The institution has organizational goals.   | 3.87 | 0.99 | Agree       |
| The institution has new set of organizational structure.                                      | 3.00 | 1.00 | Moderate    |
| The institution has competency required for the job.  | 3.67 | 1.11 | Agree       |
| The institution has job descriptions and responsibility sharing descriptions.                 | 3.60 | 0.99 | Agree       |
| The institution has records of opportunity announcement.                                      | 3.47 | 0.92 | Moderate    |
| The institution has personnel allocation of departments involved in international activities. | 3.20 | 1.20 | Moderate    |
| The institution has new roles of the faculty.   | 3.13 | 1.06 | Moderate    |
| OVERALL MEAN  | 3.43 |      | Moderate    |

### *Budget and Implementation*

One of the perennial problems in terms of internationalization is lack of budget. It was shown in the data that the budget for internationalization is moderately consistent. This can be interpreted that the allotment for the program might not be prioritized by the institution. The

budget meetings and financial targets are also not done frequently according to the mean scores.

The institution is moderately consistent in terms of its budget when it comes to internationalization with the mean of 3.27. The institution is moderately open on the financial aspects of internationalization with the mean of 3.27. The institution moderately organizes budget

meetings for internationalization with the mean of 3. The participants agreed moderately that the institution has financial targets set up in the meeting with the mean of 3.33. With the mean of 3.4, the participants moderately agreed that institution has secured the budget of the school for the new project given for internationalization.

Furthermore, the participants moderately agreed that the institution has an overall strategy for the internationalization with the mean of 3.2. Data shows that the participants moderately agreed with the mean of 3.13

reveals that institution regularly evaluated its partnership. Lastly, the institution has a moderate governance structure that supports internationalization with the mean of 3.27. The over-all mean of 3.23 gives an idea that the institution is moderately ready on its budget and in implementing the internationalization of the HEIs. This perhaps due to their insufficient allotment for the projects, time for budgeting meetings, and financial targets. Henceforth, providing an idea that the budget for internationalization is not entirely secured that might affect the readiness of HEI.

Table 2 Mean Values on the Readiness of HEI in terms of Budget and Implementation

| Statement   | Mean | SD   | Description |
|---|------|------|-------------|
| The institution has consistency of the budget when it comes to internationalization.                        | 3.27 | 1.03 | Moderate    |
| The institution is open on the financial aspects of internationalization.                                   | 3.27 | 0.96 | Moderate    |
| The institution organizes budget meetings for internationalization.   | 3.00 | 1.07 | Moderate    |
| The institution has financial targets set up in the meeting.  | 3.33 | 0.98 | Moderate    |
| The institution has secured the budget of the school for the new project given by the internationalization. | 3.40 | 0.91 | Moderate    |
| The institution has an overall strategy for internationalization.   | 3.20 | 0.86 | Moderate    |
| The institution is regularly evaluated its partnership.   | 3.13 | 1.13 | Moderate    |
| The institution has a governance structure that supports internationalization.                              | 3.27 | 0.88 | Moderate    |
| OVERALL MEAN  | 3.23 |      | Moderate    |

## CONCLUSION

This study found out that there is an evident effort from the higher education institutions in southern Philippines in responding to the growing demand of globalization. An analysis on the readiness of the institution shows that the institution is slowly building structure and connections to bring an international standard of education to diverse people. The readiness on mission, goals, and plans of the state colleges and universities is moderate. The institutions have a moderate understanding of their goals and plans. It was observed that there are constraints being experienced in some areas of internationalization. This is evident on the moderate rating given to the institution's structure and staff, budget and implementation, international dimension on research activity, support system, promotion of international activities, internationalization of the university curriculum, and joint programs with external organizations. Additional research needs to be conducted to know the constraints in the part of the institution that slow down the process of internationalization.

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