แนวทางการพัฒนาความเป็นนานาชาติของการศึกษาชั้นสูง
ในประเทศเกาหลี: กรณีศึกษา SKY
(มหาวิทยาลัยโซล, มหาวิทยาลัยเกาหลี และ มหาวิทยาลัยยอนเซ)
Internationalization strategy of Korean Higher Education:
A case study of SKY (Seoul National University,
Korea University and Yonsei University)

MANIPRON SAMART

Master of Arts in Korean Studies, Graduate School, Chulalongkorn University
Chaloem Rajakumari 60 Building, 14th Floor, Phyaathai Road, Pathumwan, Bangkok, Thailand 10330
Tel. (+66) 9336 898, Email: msam062@yahoo.com

บทคัดย่อ
โลกในศตวรรษที่ 21 คือโลกยุคโลกาภิวัตน์และโลกาภิวัตน์นี้ทำให้สถาบันอุดมศึกษาที่อยู่ในโลกนี้ให้ความสนใจกับการพัฒนาความเป็นนานาชาติ (Internationalization)เป็นอย่างมาก ประเทศไทยมีเป็นหนึ่งในประเทศที่มีการพัฒนาความเป็นนานาชาติของการศึกษาอย่างยาวนานและปัจจุบันรัฐบาลประเทศไทยได้ให้มุ่งเน้นพัฒนาโดยมีภูมิปัญญาสูงสุดในการเป็นสุ่ยส์กลางการศึกษาระดับโลก (World-class education hub) รัฐบาลและมหาวิทยาลัยต่างๆในประเทศได้ออกกลยุทธ์ที่มีประสิทธิภาพและปฏิบัติได้จริงเพื่อทำความล้าเว้าไปสู่จุดสุดหมายนั้น งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์หลักเพื่อศึกษาผลกระทบที่เกิดจากการพัฒนาความเป็นนานาชาติในปัจจุบันของมหาวิทยาลัยในเกาหลีใต้ โดยเป็นการวิจัยเชิงทฤษฎีเพื่อจากกลุ่มฐานเป็นประจำจักร ผ่านกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ได้รับการเลือก กลุ่มตัวอย่างนี้คัดเลือกมาจากกิตติศัพท์ของมหาวิทยาลัย เช่นประสิทธิภาพการดำเนินงาน, ประวัติ และอายุตัวขององค์กร เพราะว่าสิ่งเหล่านี้เป็นสิ่งที่แสดงให้เห็นถึงความสำเร็จของนโยบายมหาวิทยาลัย จากการศึกษาพบว่าแนวทางการพัฒนาความเป็นนานาชาติในปัจจุบันของมหาวิทยาลัยในเกาหลีใต้คือการเน้นไปยังการพัฒนาชีวิตการแข่งขัน โดยเฉพาะด้านวิทยาศาสตร์และเทคโนโลยีขั้นสูง, การเสริมสร้างการสอนแบบสร้างสรรค์เป็นฐาน (Creativity-based learning) โดยเน้นไปที่การสร้างลักษณะเฉพาะตัว (Character Building)ของนักเรียนและการพัฒนาโดยมุ่งเน้นสู่การเป็น
Abstract

The world in 21st century is a world of globalization and many higher education institutions in the world have been heavily influenced by the trend. South Korea is also one of the countries which have been experienced with the internationalization of education for a long period of time. Currently, the government is pursuing an ultimate goal of becoming a world-class education hub. The Korean government and domestic universities have designed effective and practicable strategies to reach a goal. The purpose of this research is to find current internationalization strategies using by the universities in Korea. This is a secondary research, studies from empirical evidences of the samples. These samples are chosen base on university’s reputations such as performance, historical background and world ranking because these are factors represented the success of institution’s policies. The results indicated that the current trends of internationalization among Korean universities are 1) the development toward competitiveness, especially in advance S&T, 2) to enrich creativity-based learning thought the creation of character Building and 3) striving to become a regional education hub. The internationalization strategies which have been used are such as the expansion of oversea partnerships; the establishment of international campus and IT assisting to internationalize institutions.

Keywords: Internationalization, Globalization, Korean higher education, Education hub
1. Introduction

According to Knight (2003), Internationalization is “a process of integrating and international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education at the national, sector, and institutional levels” [1, p. 2]. It is a worldwide phenomenon that has begun several decades ago after the world has been influenced by globalization. Basically in education sector, internationalization is a means of development process. The final goal is to create quality education, depending on student’s demands and needs so after graduated; they will be well-adjusted within globalized world [2].

The turning point of Korean education’s internationalization is when the Republic of Korea joined World Trade Organization (WTO) in January 1st, 1995. Korean government led by the President Kim Yong-Sam was aware that Korea might be inferior to other countries in the world market economy because of its lack of competitiveness in higher education. Therefore, the government had introduced the May 31 Education Reform Plan shortly afterward. The plan was prioritized deregulation, competition and marketization in higher education Korea [3].

Globalization in Korean society is another event which influence the rising of Korean overseas study. Literally, it began around the times of the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games and the Korea financial crisis of 1997 and so on. After those incidences occurred, Koreans began to realize the significance of English [4]. During that time, Korean scholars and students began to travel overseas for the purpose of education.

The demand of overseas education is gradually increased because there is an intense competition for entering a prestigious university, a stressful classroom and tutoring environment, and the lacked of internationalization within universities [5]. All of these reasons are leaded to the rapidly increasing numbers of Korean study aboard. In accordance with table 1, there were 190,364 Korean students study overseas in 2006 and the numbers were continuously rising. This number included both degree students and language student. It represents the fact that Koreans regarded foreign-training as the better quality of education for the better opportunity for life, while regarded domestic education as a lack.
Korea realized that the size of the 18 to 25 year-old age group will be decreased soon and it will definitely affect the education. One of the problems is student shortage [6]. In Korea, domestic higher education institutions rely mostly on tuition fees from students. The government is worried that student shortage in domestic institutions may cause problems to Korean education so ‘Study Korea’ program the government had introduced in 2004. The aim is to replace the losing numbers of Korean student study overseas with the numbers of foreign students. This program was very success on attracting foreign students to Korea, especially students from Asian countries such as China, Japan, Vietnam and Mongolia.
Table 2 Numbers of Foreign student in Korea

Source: the Ministry of Education

As can be seen on the table 2, the numbers of foreign students increase consistently since 2004. One important reason is the increase interest in Korean popular culture (also known as ‘Korean wave’). Although inbound student mobility is stably increased but, the number of outbound student also never declined—at least until 2012 (table 1). The seriousness of student shortage is getting up closed because of Korean declining of birth rate and a losing economic scale for middle class households in Korea [7]. As a result, Korean middle class are paying more attention on the spending comparing to the past and for some, international schooling is no longer affordable.

Korean government is foreseen the opportunity to reverse the situation and the opportunity to develop Korean Education system especially higher education sector. Therefore, with long term goal of establishing Korea as a world education hubs [3,8], the government invests a lot of financial support on domestic education. The important key strategy is to internationalize education system. The growing number of domestic universities’ enrollment, the continuously increasing of international students and the reward from OECD as the world best educational system have played a supportive role and enhances confidence to Korean government.

Regarding as one of the best education system in the world, it would be benefited to study the current development process; step-by-step of Korean higher education. The thesis was analyzed Korean government performances toward higher education’s internationalization, focus especially on the policies over the last two presidents; President Lee Myung-Bak (2008–2012) and President Park Geun Hye(2012–2015). Three selected universities, viz.: Seoul National University, Korea University and
Yonsei University (abbreviated as SKY) have been chosen as a sampler. The aim of the thesis is first to find the current trend(s) of Korean Universities’ internationalize strategy. Secondly, is to seek for possible future direction(s) of universities in Korea.

2. Literature Review

Internationalization of Higher Education in Korea: An Historical Overview

Kiyong Byun and Minjung Kim explain that there are two stages in process of internationalization Korean education which are after the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonialism and after the globalization wave hit Korea. There are five factors as a driven forces: 1) the independence of Korea from Japan, 2) the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, 3) the establishment of the WTO and May 31 Education Reform Plan in 1995, 4) the Asian financial crisis in late 1990 and 5) Korean’s falling birth rate in 21st century [3].

Jeong-kyu Lee, on the other hand, argued that the pioneer of internationalization of Korean higher education occurred much earlier. Christian missionaries were the first group to bring internationalization to Korean education. Began in late 19th century, when a Christian missionary school was first established and some of them are still remaining in Korea until now [9]. Therefore, Christian missionary schools should be regarded as the internationalization education of Korea [10]. However, during the Japanese colony (1910–1945), the process of internationalization was paused until the liberation of Korea nation had occurred in 1945 [3].

Apart from Byun and Kim’s factors, Lee has an addition of one factor which drive internationalization to Korean education—the Korean War (1950–1953). The early 1960s, after the end of Korean War there were many foreign organizations such as United Nations Civil Assistance Command, Korea (UNCACK), and the Korean Civil Assistance Corps (KCAC) etc., participated actively in the education development. Many Korean scholars were granted support and received foreign trained in advanced scientific skills in other developed countries [10]. It was a great expanding period of internationalization in Korea.

Another turning points have occurred when there was the establishment of the WTO and May 31 Education Reform Plan of 1995 as explained in the introduction and currently in 21st century, the trend is shifted again when the government attempts to reverse the outbound student mobility to
inbound mobility, converts the education policy from quantity improvement into quality improvement and strive for becoming the world education hub. With this increasing multicultural in campus, the misunderstanding between different culture have emerged and also many Korean scholars are concerned that Koreans may lose their social and cultural identities from bluntly follow western style of internationalization without understanding the real meaning of it. This topic will be explained in detail on the next section: the issues of internationalization in Korean higher education.

Rationales motivations: approaching to the internationalization

The internal influence on internationalization education is when Korean government began supporting students and scholars for study aboard, especially to the developed country such as the US [11]. It was the process of reconstruct the nation from the Japanese colonial period. After those scholars returned, they usually held high working positions in politics-related firms and become elites leading the society. There was not much improvement of domestic university and other stage of education. Basically, the motivation for internationalization of higher education during this time is to maintain the country’s international security for the economic reconstruction. The whole process was continuing until the establishment of WTO occurred in the mid-1990s.

After the Republic of Korea has joined WTO in January 1st, 1995, the motivation of the internationalized university was changed. The government was particularly concerned on how to maintain the nation’s economic competitiveness. The president had declared “Initial Plan for Opening the Higher Education Market to Foreign Countries”, aiming to develop education as an industry approach in the collaboration with oversea partners [12]. Also, they introduced the series of Education Reform plan which mainly emphasize on the important of marketization and a concept of global competition to domestic universities. Therefore, internationalization of university become an essential. Since then, economic rationale is a primary reason on the government’s policies toward internationalization.

In addition, due to the rise of competitiveness in today market, the Korean government has again turned the strategies to attracting not only foreign students but also domestic ones by creating a positive reputation to Korean education such as rising world ranking, improving admission and evaluation system and increase funding support. Brain Korea 21 (the BK 21) project is one of the example project and it was established with the aim to develop Korean research institutions as the top 10 best research-
oriented universities in the world. The government projects are created mainly to rise and stabilize the positive reputation to Korean universities as the branding rationale is becoming more important in order to expand and maintain nation’s economic prosperity.

The issues on internationalization within universities in Korea

The loosen identity of Korean education is the newly concern for the Korean universities’ internationalization process. Many scholars were aware that the current government’s internationalized policy is in fact—Americanization [11]. There are several evidences and one of them is the government’s English Medium Instruction (EMI) policy. The policy creates a difficult life for Korean students and faculty members as English is neither a native language nor official language use in Korea so it seems inconvenient to use in daily campus life [13]. Therefore, instead of blindly follow other’s model, Korean government should adapt and develop Korean version. Also, ensure that it work best on Korean culture and society. Social and cultural rationales should receive more attention, not only economic rationale. New internationalized strategy should be promoted and represented both Korean culture uniqueness and multicultural integration [3,14]. Otherwise, people believe that the existing of EMI policy will definitely cause the loss of integrity and value to Korean higher education institutions.

‘Eastern spirit western science’ is often regarded as the academic culture and institutional identity of Korean universities [10,15]. The reason is that internal society within contemporary Korean universities is remained very local and homogeneous in practice. In case of professors, for instance, tend to follow traditional social hierarchy strictly. In fact, those graduated in foreign country, they tend to become more nationalistic and local mind than those graduated domestically [15]. Therefore, regardless of education background; domestic or overseas, Korean professors are relatively Confucian–influenced which sometime create a lack on freedom of speech in classes. This is sometime creating a sense of inequality between foreigners and Koreans. The example case is that foreign academics often have an image of lesser qualified than Korean academics [14–16]. Not all foreign scholars got accept to work within university with Ph.D. degrees. Some of foreigners received an offer by just holding M.A. degree, especially in subject areas like English as a second language. Therefore, they are often treated as a functionary, rather than a professional [15–16]. This is created an unequal feeling for both Korean scholars and foreign scholars. The situations like this have a potential
of diluting the significant of internationalization in Korean education. It also affected on the expanding quantity of Korean education (e.g. the number of foreigners, classes taught in English and publications) and leading to the problem of quality development [14]. So it is recommended to encourage the collaboration activities among domestic and foreign faculty in order to improve relationship between Koreans and foreigners.

3. Methodology and Data

The research is based on a content analysis as a method and empirical evidences providing from the government of Korea and SKY universities as resources. Knight (2004)’s pattern on internationalization strategies at institutional level has been used as a framework in order to identify internationalization strategies among these universities.

A number of previous research studies have been explored to find issues, development processes and rationales related to internationalization processes in the past and present. So the possible future strategies for Korean internationalization processes can be predicted.

4. Research result and Conclusion

After carefully researched on the topic, the results are shown that the current trends of internationalization in Korean education are: 1) to develop toward competitiveness, especially in advance S&T, 2) to enrich creativity–based learning thought the creation of character Building, and 3) striving to become a regional education hub.

In term of internationalization strategies using by these institutions, it can be mainly generated into three categories which are: 1) the expansion of international networking: this included study aboard programs and R&D projects. It is a process that universities in Korea began to expand courses and research projects by collaborate with the oversea partners. 2) The establishment of international campus: the domestic universities in Korea are currently interested in the development of international campus. At the moment, there are two ways of development, either establishing the new international campus or internationalizing the existing campus. In addition, domestic institutions also develop the OIA office in order to assisting international members of the university, and 3) The development of IT assisting
institutions: IT service such as internet access in administrative service, library data and course information have been developed because it can create a borderless and limitless education.

The difference between them is that these institutions’ goals are differences as they are created the internationalization policies according to an institution’s self-interest and professional fields. All universities have been led to the same direction of pursuing to become a regional education hub. However in research development, they have pursued towards different areas of studies according to university’s vision and specialization. Yonsei University is specialized in biomedical science and engineering so they are specifically develop and increase research competitiveness in this field [17]. Korea University, on the other hand, is known to be specialized in Law areas so there are lots of supports from university and outside sources [18]. Finally, regard as the best nation university and most prestigious university in Korea, Seoul National University (SNU) is specialized in various fields—ranging from business, S&T, medicine engineering and international studies. As an only national university among these three, SNU receives the most support from the government and spend the most support on research and development projects [18].

To conclude, Universities in Korea are currently on the way to developing the quality of internationalization after realized some drawbacks from the previous policies. All sectors—national or institutions are running toward the same direction to pursue the ultimate goal of becoming a world-class education hub. However, there are other trends which influenced the internationalization in Korean institutions. They are the development toward competitiveness, especially in advance S&T, and the enrichment of creativity-based learning thought the creation of character Building in order to nurture future talents from the government. In addition, the internationalization strategies which have been used are 1) the expansion of international networking: this included study aboard programs and R&D projects; 2) The establishment of international campus; and 3) The development of IT assisting institutions. These trends and strategies seem to be alive in the process of internationalization of Korean higher education for a period of time.
5. Bibliography


