

STAFF MOBILITY ROLE IN THE INSTITUTION'S INTERNATIONALISATION PROCESS

Jolanta Preidienė

Vilniaus kolegija / University of Applied Sciences

Abstract. The aim of article is to overview existing research made in the field of international staff mobility and its impacts on institution's internationalisation process. Internationalization of higher education is an integral part of higher education institutions' activities. One of the key activities in the higher education institution's internationalization process is its students and staff mobility. Mobility achievements are considered as one of the key criteria during evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions. Thus a deeper analysis of the current research made in the field is necessary in order to make quantitative and qualitative impact on the higher education institutions' internationalisation process.

Keywords: Globalisation, internationalisation, higher education, strategy, quality, staff mobility.

Introduction

Globalization and internationalization became inevitable realities of the 21st century. Internationalization of higher education is an integral part of higher education institutions' activities.

According to J. Knight (Knight, 2003), internationalization comprises integration of international and intercultural dimensions into studies, research and other fields of higher education institutions' activities.

One of the key activities in the higher education institution's internationalization process is its students and staff mobility. European organizations, particularly European Commission, give a huge support, including financial frameworks to this activity. Mobility achievements are considered as one of the key criteria during evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions. Those achievements include both quantitative and qualitative elements. International accreditation bodies are particularly interested, what measurable results the concrete mobilities bring, e.g., whether new projects are developed, research initiatives, joint publications initiated, etc. Thus, seeking for the better mobility achievements, institutions shouldn't exclude deeper analysis of mobility influence.

There are some basic investigations in the area of international staff mobility, mostly conducted following the initiatives of the EC. Much more research related to the international staff mobility focuses on the business companies' staff mobility and less attention is given to the academic staff of higher education institutions.

Therefore, the following research question can be formulated: Is there a significant and approved impact made by the international mobility to the academic staff performance? The hypothesis based on which the research question is formulated, is: International mobility influences academic staff performance.

The aim of the article is to overview existing research made in the field of international staff mobility and its impacts on institution's internationalisation process. This would contribute to the existing research with the new data related to higher education institutions. It can directly help management of higher education institutions in several different ways:

- To manage their staff (primary managerial task);
- To support institution's quality assurance planning;
- To increase international staff mobility.

This article also aims at supporting institutions and individuals seeking for better quality in the higher education field.

Materials and methods

The main method used in this article is scientific literature analysis, using scientific databases, e.g. Emerald, EBSCO, etc. Articles from the area of social sciences, mainly – human resource management - were taken into account. The main references come from the following journals: International Perspectives on Higher Education Research, Journal of Managerial Psychology, Career Development International, Journal of Organizational Change Management, Personnel Review. The main keywords used are the following: international staff mobility, academic career and performance, expatriate management and performance. In addition, relations between academic career and performance and expatriate management and performance were taken into account.

Analysis of the current research in the field

Internationalization is a broad term known already for many years. It has a big variety of sectorial understandings: internationalisation of business,

technologies, education, etc. It has also different meanings depending on the geographical coverage – institution, city, region, etc. In higher education the definition of J. Knight is currently most widely acceptable among the scholars and practitioners: “Internationalization 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 post-secondary education” (Knight, 2003).

Internationalization of higher education involves not only the higher education institutions, but lots of other different bodies, like government departments or agencies (UNESCO, UNDP, etc.), non or semi-governmental organisations (DAAD, NUFFIC, etc.), foundations and other organisations (Knight, 2008).

On the political level international mobility, both of students and staff, is stated as one of the key performance indicators of globalisation, internationalization and knowledge economy development processes. Currently European Commission emphasizes a crucial importance of the international mobility: “Strategic objective 1: Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality” (The Council of the European Union, 2009). Following this strategy, European Commission encourages and supports various initiatives of research of this field, especially via international projects at different sectors and levels. Nevertheless, it is recognized that further and deeper investigations of staff mobility are necessary (Bologna Follow Up Group, 2015).

As it was mentioned in the introduction, students and staff mobility are the key activities in the higher education institution’s internationalization process. Mobility achievements are considered as one of the key criteria during evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions. Those achievements include both quantitative and qualitative elements. International accreditation bodies are highly interested, what measurable results particular mobilities bring, e.g., whether new projects have been developed, research initiatives, joint publications initiated, etc.

Moreover, seeking for the better achievements, institutions shouldn’t exclude deeper analysis of mobility influence. In order to constantly improve institution’s performance, in this particular case - international staff mobility - management should be aware of the impact it does both on the institutions and on the individual.

Turning up to the scientific level it appears that main researchers on international staff mobility were in relation to the business companies, job mobility, expatriates.

Staff mobility is not a new issue, especially for the labour market. The concept of job mobility is similarly used with the concept of staff mobility. Already at the end of the last century it was clear

that mobility became inevitable reality in Europe and in the world. At the same time it was recognised that quite little is known how organisations manage job mobility and how it is associated with the staff training and career development policies; how mobility influence men and women; influence on their families and children (Forster, 1990).

Haines and Saba indicate that career support, being recognized as important condition of expatriate success, is critical for encouraging women to accept international assignments. Family-supportive international mobility policies and practices indicate no significant gender differences; and financial support has similarly high ratings by both women and men (Haines & Saba, 1999).

Labour mobility is a reality of market economy. However, analysing labour mobility, there is a tension being observed between greater productive efficiency – point of view of neoclassical economists – and a desire to maintain and enhance friendships – point of view of consumers (Piderit, 1998). The latter can be related to the psychological and intercultural aspects of labour mobility.

The increasing complexity of international professionals’ mobility is observed too. Staff mobility is not a self-contained aim – it is fully understandable that it makes an influence not only on the mobile individuals but on the organisation as well. There are traditional and progressive trials to evaluate it via different forms. Thus alternative forms of international assignments (short-term, commuter, flexpatriate) should be developed as well as further research on international professionals mobility should be conducted (McKenna & Richardson, 2007). It is also observed, that pre-departure training for international business managers has an important role and should be investigated more carefully (Hurn, 2007).

In general, businesses are concerned about uncertainty and stress arising from international relocation for work, therefore “organizations should consider employee’s international relocation mobility readiness (IRMR)” (Andresen & Margenfeld, 2015).

Turning up to the academic area, the investigations of different aspects of international staff mobility are also carried on. International mobility, as a process, has three main phases: preparation, execution and evaluation. The latter usually is understood as a report writing period. But actually this phase should be treated as one of the most important, as only after the mobility, and usually not just immediately, the real impact of this activity on individual’s personality and performance can be observed and identified.

Thorn indicates, that for academicians, importance of the cultural and travel opportunities and career motives are discovered as the most important motives in a decision to be mobile (Thorn, 2009).

Academic mobility in relation to migration issues was more investigated in English speaking countries, e.g. Australia, UK, USA. Many of those publications can be found at the book series “International Perspectives on Higher Education Research”. E.g., research, conducted in Australia, stated that “it is important to explore the professional and personal impact of internationalization on academics and academic environment” (Balasooriya, Asante, Jayasinha, & Razee, 2014). Internationalization, as it was mentioned earlier in this article, encompasses staff and students mobilities as the key elements. Transitions to a new academic environment evolve unique challenges which impact on teaching and research experiences and professional identity (Balasooriya et al., 2014).

Example of UK case related to academic migration – research on the experience of non-UK nationals in UK universities, the challenges, including first of all, intercultural elements, and opportunities as well as their contributions to the host institutions (Kreber & Hounsell, 2014). International academic career encloses a “darker side” – difficulties of cross-cultural adjustment, unfulfilled expectation/opportunities of promotions (Richardson & Zikic, 2007).

A linkage between international experience and academic career is relatively unexplored. Managers in higher education institutions face a number of concerns particularly when dealing with the management and recruitment of international faculty (Richardson & McKenna, 2003). F. Hallett and M. Y. Eryaman analysed live experiences of academic mobility of selected researchers. This analysis has an aim to find differences between academic mobility and mobile academics. In addition, this research analyses the impact of academic mobility on the changing process of academic identity formation (Hallett & Eryaman, 2014).

M. Suárez-Ortega and A. Rísquez explored the personal and professional implications of academic mobility and their impact on the career development (Suárez-Ortega & Rísquez, 2014). The relationship between organizational identity and knowledge creation of academic workers is also being examined (Lee, Park, & Kim, 2014).

There are examples of case from particular fields. E.g., T. Kidd analysed librarians’ mobility – motivation and staff development outcomes of the mobility participants. A definite improvement was observed in motivation and performance of librarians after participation in staff mobility (Kidd, 1995).

Classical mobility is influenced by the new technologies creating conditions for so-called virtual mobility. When tradition mobility can be limited due to position at the higher education institution, background or even gender, the virtual mobility removes those obstacles. Nevertheless, the virtual

mobility lift new challenges, e.g. communication competences (Sylvia G.M. van deBunt-Kokhuis, 2001).

Referring to the above mentioned research examples, it can be stated that impact of international mobility on the academics’ performance is raised as an important issue and asks for further investigations. Psychologists agree (e.g., according to Maslow), that individuals should be satisfied with their results. Moreover, referring to main management purpose, the result of individual’s activity, in this case of his/her mobility, is critically important for the organisation. Management is an impact to any object with the aim to seek for the desired condition. Also, from the point of view of management functions, controlling is one of its elements. Organisation should be able to control its staff performance, in this case – implications made by international mobility.

An idea of exploring performance is discussed in recent publications. “Performance management creates significant value within a highly educated workforce through bringing together individual capability and expertise to focus on delivering the strategy. Obstacles to success such as routine complaints of “time-wasting” and “pointlessness” can be overcome by wide and deep engagement with employees throughout the design and development of the approach” (Bird, 2015). Talking about the methods of performance evaluation, even very concrete methods, like balanced scorecard are suggested as a method for measurement of performance of academic (Dorweiler & Yakhou, 2005).

On practical level, further investigations of mobility of all groups of staff in HEIs is raised as a key issue when it comes to internationalising higher education systems and institutions knowledge circulation (e.g. different EC, BFUG reports).

Suggestions for further research

Referring to the overview given in the previous chapter, it is obvious, that international staff mobility is a hot topic having political, scientific and practical importance. There are trials to analyse international staff mobility from different aspects: business and academic world perceptions, relations to gender issues, technologies, etc. Thus, the relevance of the research question is rather significant. From the overview given above it can be concluded that a lot of research on international companies’ staff mobility was conducted and academic field remains with bigger gaps, especially when having in mind mobility implications to the individual’s performance. In the practice of higher education institutions’ international offices, there are many empirical statements about such implications. But as overview indicates quite clearly, a linkage between international experience and academic career is re-

latively unexplored and further research on international professionals' mobility should be conducted. In other words, there are no clear performance indicators which would help to answer this question. The existence of this problem indicates, that there is lack of information, which could help solving new tasks. Moreover, it is equally important both for higher education institution managers and for their academic staff to know the ways how the international mobility impacts academics' performance.

Results and discussions

In this article, current and basic scientific works on the academic staff mobility and its' impact on the institution's internationalisation process were analysed.

The proposed research for further investigations has the following limitations:

- The proposed research refers only to academic staff performance. Therefore further investigations can be initiated for administrative and technical staff performance.
- It is also not intended to focus particularly on gender differences and their perceptions.
- Only traditional mobility is suggested to be investigated, without taking into account virtual and other types of mobilities, which can again become a separate investigation area.

Conclusions

1. Literature review revealed that staff mobility is not a new issue, especially for the labour market. The concept of job mobility is similarly used with the concept of staff mobility. Mobility became an inevitable reality in Europe and in the world, nevertheless still not enough is known about this issue.
2. There are different fragmental research carried on in the area of international mobilities: family-supportive international mobility policies and practices, psychological and intercultural aspects of labour mobility, tension between greater productive efficiency and a desire to maintain and enhance friendships, increasing complexity of international professionals' mobility, importance of the cultural and travel opportunities and career motives, importance of the cultural and travel opportunities and career motives, impact on teaching and research experiences and professional identity, etc.
3. Nevertheless, it is obvious that further research on international professionals' mobility should be conducted in order to support higher education institutions with the data and methods of international mobility evaluation and support for further growth.

References

1. Andresen, M., & Margenfeld, J. (2015). International relocation mobility readiness and its antecedents. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 30(3), 234–249. <http://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-11-2012-0362>
2. Balasooriya, C., Asante, A., Jayasinha, R., & Raze, H. (2014). Chapter 7 Academic mobility and migration: Reflections of international academics in Australia. In: *International Perspectives on Higher Education Research*. (M. Tight, Ed.). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/S1479-362820140000011013>
3. Bird, H. (2015). Appraising clever people: lessons from introducing performance reviews for academics in a UK University. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 47(2), 81–85. <http://doi.org/10.1108/ICT-10-2014-0069>
4. Bologna Follow Up Group. (2015). REPORT OF THE 2012-2015 BFUG WORKING GROUP ON MOBILITY AND INTERNATIONALISATION. Retrieved from http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/SubmittedFiles/2_2015/144209.pdf
5. Dorweiler, V. P., & Yakhou, M. (2005). Scorecard for academic administration performance on the campus. *Managerial Auditing Journal*, 20(2), 138–144. <http://doi.org/10.1108/02686900510574557>
6. Forster, N. S. (1990). Employee Job Mobility and Relocation. *Personnel Review*, 19(6), 18–24. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/EUM00000000000783>
7. Haines, V. Y., & Saba, T. (1999). International mobility policies and practices: are there gender differences in importance ratings? *Career Development International*, 4(4), 206–212. <http://doi.org/10.1108/13620439910270580>
8. Hallett, F., & Eryaman, M. Y. (2014). Chapter 4 Beyond Diaspora: The Lived Experiences of Academic Mobility for educational researchers in the European higher education area. In: *International Perspectives on Higher Education Research*. (M. Tight, Ed.). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/S1479-362820140000011010>
9. Hurn, B. J. (2007). Pre-departure training for international business managers. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 39(1), 9–17. <http://doi.org/10.1108/00197850710721354>
10. Kidd, T. (1995). International library staff exchanges: how do you organize them, and do they do you any good? *Librarian Career Development*, 3(1), 9–13. <http://doi.org/10.1108/09680819510076604>
11. Knight, J. (2003). Updating the Definition of Internationalisation. *International Higher Education*, (33), 2–3.
12. Knight, J. (2008). Higher Education in Turmoil. The Changing World of Internationalization. *Global Perspectives on Higher Education*, 13, 9–11.

13. Kreber, C., & Hounsell, J. (2014). Chapter 2 Being an international academic: A phenomenological study of academic migrants adjusting to working and living in Scotland. In: *International Perspectives on Higher Education Research*. (M. Tight, Ed.). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/S1479-362820140000011000>
14. Lee, J., Park, N. K., & Kim, H. (2014). The effect of change in organizational identity on knowledge creation by mobile R&D workers in M&As. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 27(1), 41–58. <http://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-12-2012-0195>
15. McKenna, S., & Richardson, J. (2007). The increasing complexity of the internationally mobile professional. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 14(4), 307–320. <http://doi.org/10.1108/13527600710830331>
16. Piderit, J. J. (1998). LABOR □ Labor mobility and social wellbeing under international capitalism. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 25(11/12), 1684–1698. <http://doi.org/10.1108/03068299810233349>
17. Richardson, J., & McKenna, S. (2003). International experience and academic careers. *Personnel Review*, 32(6), 774–795. <http://doi.org/10.1108/00483480310498710>
18. Richardson, J., & Zikic, J. (2007). The darker side of an international academic career. *Career Development International*, 12(2), 164–186. <http://doi.org/10.1108/13620430710733640>
19. Sylvia G.M. van deBunt-Kokhuis. (2001). Academic Pilgrims: Faculty Mobility in the Virtual World. *On the Horizon*, 9(1), 1–6. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/10748120110803626>
20. Suárez-Ortega, M., & Riquez, A. (2014). Chapter 5 The impact of mobility on the lives and careers of female and male academics in higher education. In: *International Perspectives on Higher Education Research*. (M. Tight, Ed.). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/S1479-362820140000011011>
21. The Council of the European Union. (2009). Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (“ET 2020”). *Official Journal of the European Union*, (2009/C 119/02). Retrieved from [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528(01)&from=EN)
22. Thorn, K. (2009). The relative importance of motives for international self-initiated mobility. *Career Development International*, 14(5), 441–464. <http://doi.org/10.1108/13620430910989843>

PERSONALO MOBILUMO VAIDMUO INSTITUCIJOS INTERNACIONALIZACIJOS PROCESĖ

Santrauka

Šio straipsnio tikslas yra apžvelgti mokslinius tyrimus, kurie analizuoja aukštojo mokslo akademinio personalo tarptautinį judumą ir jo poveikį aukštojo mokslo internacionalizacijos procesams. Aukštojo mokslo internacionalizacija yra neatsiejama aukštojo mokslo veiklos dalis. Studentų ir akademinio personalo judumas yra sudėtinė internacionalizacijos dalis ir vieni iš svarbiausių rodiklių, vertinant ir akredituojant aukštojo mokslo institucijas. Straipsnyje keliami hipotezė – personalo tarptautinis judumas įtakoja akademinio personalo darbą ir karjerą.

Pagrindinis tyrimo metodas, naudotas šiame straipsnyje, yra mokslinės literatūros analizė. Analizuoti socialinių mokslų srities personalo išteklių valdymo moksliniai straipsniai. Tyrimas rodo, jog tarptautinis akademinio personalo judumas yra nepakankamai ištirta sritis, kuriai reikia skirti daugiau dėmesio, siekiant gerinti aukštojo mokslo kokybę.

Raktiniai žodžiai: globalizacija, internacionalizacija, aukštasis mokslas, strategija, kokybė, personalo mobilumas.