



Temas actuales de investigación en las áreas de la Salud y la Educación

Comps.

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Introducción

We are currently witnessing a constant globalization process which is progressively reaching new heights. Universities are part of the sectors involved in this process, and it is currently common to find students from different nationalities in university campuses, as well as to require among teaching staff training and stay periods abroad.

With the advent of the Treaty of Bologna in 1999, university education in Spain began a process of rapid change. One of the main pillars of the Treaty was to create a competitive European Higher Education Area. Among the main objectives of the Treaty is the promotion of mobility, with particular emphasis to: a) with regard to students, the access to educational, training and related services opportunities; b) as for teachers, researchers and technical and administrative staff, the recognition and valuing of research periods in European contexts related to teaching and training, without prejudice to the rights acquired (EHEA, 1999).

Different authors have also supported that one of the main goals of higher education today is to prepare students in cultural and language skills that enable them to work efficiently with people from diverse backgrounds (Carnevale, 1999; Mori, 2000; Sandhu, 1995; Smith & Schonfeld, 2000; Zhao, Kuhm, & Carini, 2005). However, internationalization refers not only to mobility, but it also encompasses different policies and initiatives of countries or individual academic institutions or systems which deal with global trends. Some examples of internationalization include: policies on collaboration with academic institutions in other countries, the incorporation of foreign students or the establishment of international campus headquarters (Altbach, 2015). In this respect, students from countries such as America now have these opportunities. Since 2001, the number of international students in universities in the United States was about 550,000, which represented an increase of 6.4% over the previous year, the largest increase in the last 20 years (Institute of International Education, 2002). Of these, 56% come from Asia, followed by 14% from Europe, 12% from South America, 6% from Africa 6 and 5% from of North America and Oceania (Institute of International Education, 2002).

The percentage that comes from Europe is not negligible; however, these mobilities are not only occurring from Europe to other continents, but mainly among intra-European countries. Erasmus scholarships are a clear example of this increasing mobility and they contribute precisely to the creation of a European feeling among students. One of the objectives of the European Union (EU) has been the homogenization of the degree programs and structures in order to facilitate the transfer of students among universities, as commonly occur in the US. This commitment to internationalization is also increasing the position of the European countries as hosting places for international students (Altbach, 2015).

Focusing on the topic at hand, in Spain, the government launched in 2008 a new internationalization strategy for the national university system, the University Strategy 2015 (SU, 2015). The main objective was to promote the maximization of the potential of Spanish universities to contribute to economic and social development. 2015 was the date set out as the horizon to adapt the different aspects of the Spanish

universities to the recommendations of the Modernization Agenda of the European Commission (Commission of the European Communities, 2006). This objective is based on solid education and research and contributes to the global production of knowledge and a sustainable economic development (Delgado & León, 2015). Therefore, we are at a key moment, reached the 2015, to take stock and assess the extent to which the objectives are being achieved. These include: an adequate dissemination of the academic and research offer; the command of foreign languages by the members of the university community and the enhancement of mobility processes, among others.

The approach of this pilot study focuses on the importance of examining the internationalization level not only in the main Spanish universities, where this compliance is more likely, but also in other smaller universities, such as a university in southern Spain, the University of Almería.

As there are no standardized tools for this purpose, another objective of this study was to create an instrument, based on the European IMPI (Indicators for the Mapping and Profiling Internationalization) project, consisting of a set of indicators of 22 components and 9 domains on internationalization at universities. This instrument is aimed at identifying the needs of different institutions in Europe to assess their performance on internationalization (Beerkens et al., 2010).

The objective of this new instrument created, inspired by the IMPI Project, is to track the following aspects of internationalization: integration of internationalization in institutional planning and evaluation; internationalization of the curriculum and the promotion of multilingualism; participation of students, faculty and administrative staff in mobility programs; interest of students to study abroad, learn languages and take advantage of learning opportunities at international levels; institutional structure and internationalization plans; institutional investment in internationalization; international dissemination; student recruitment; distance between institutional rhetoric and reality.

Method

Instruments and data sources

The instrument used was based on the European IMPI (Beerkens et al., 2010) questionnaire. It consists of 61 items divided into nine fields distributed as follows: (a) Field 1. Integration of internationalization in institutional planning and evaluation (4 items); (b) Field 2. Internationalization of the curriculum and the promotion of multilingualism (17 items); (c) Field 3. Participation of students, faculty and administrative staff in mobility programs (7 items); (d) Field 4. Interest of students to study abroad, learn languages and take advantage of learning opportunities at international level (5 items); (e) Field 5. Institutional structure and internationalization plan (3 items); (f) Field 6. Institutional investment in internationalization; (g) Field 7. International dissemination (8 items); (h) Field 8. Student recruitment (8 items); (i) Field 9. Distance between institutional rhetoric and reality (2 items). Some items were responded by yes or no answers while others also required a specific percentage, as detailed in the Results section.

This pilot study involves the University of Almería, a public European university in southern Spain which was founded in 1993 and currently has around 13,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The questionnaire was completed by the staff of the Vice-Chancellorship of Internationalization.

Design

A longitudinal descriptive pilot study with two measures was carried out, one during the academic year 2011/2012 and another one during the academic year 2014/2015.

The study was conducted with the approval of the people responsible for the plan of internationalization at the University of Almería at that time, in particular, the Vice-President for Internationalization.

This study is part of the Project of Excellence entitled "Indicators of Internationalization in Higher Education: Definition, analysis and evaluation", funded by the Spanish regional government, proposed

by a research group at the University of Almería. This was one of the reasons why this university was chosen as one of the first ones to evaluate.

Procedure

A questionnaire to assess the internationalization level of Spanish universities was designed. The University of Almería was selected as it was where the research group which was awarded the project financing was located. The completed questionnaire was sent to the Vice-Chancellorship of Internationalization of that university in two different periods: the academic years 2011/2012 and 2014/2015. It was requested on the guidelines that the data were as reliable as possible, in order to avoid erroneous results.

The Vice-Chancellorship of Internationalization also needed the help of the Data Unit of the university to complete all the required data.

Data analysis

Once the data were received, different analyses were carried out using the statistical package IBM SPSS 22. Descriptive analyses were performed: percentages and exchange rates.

Results

According to the results obtained, in the first evaluation carried out (2011/2012), the percentage of items which met the objectives of internationalization amounted to 85.25%. In 2015 the number of items answered affirmatively, not only did not worsen, but it amounted to 86.88%.

In the breakdown of results by fields, we will observe, on the one hand, the percentage of items which favors internationalization, and on the other hand, the increase percentage of the main items, where it was required. Some data were not available, so the initials NAD (not-available data) appear on that sections.

As we can see in Table 1, no changes were observed in Field 1 from the academic year 2011/2012 to 2014/2015.

Table 1. Field 1-Item Analysis

Item Analysis	2011	2015
Field 1. Integration of internationalization in the institutional planning and evaluation		
Item 1. Does the institution have a clearly defined internationalization strategy? (If yes, please attach a copy)	YES	YES
Item 2. Does the institution have a specific organizational structure for internationalization?	YES	YES
Item 3. Does the institution have clear quantitative / qualitative objectives about internationalization?	YES	YES
Indicador 4. ¿ Does the institution have an internationalization assessment plan?	NO	NO

With regard to Field 2, some changes were appreciated between the academic year 2011/2012 and 2014/2015 (See table 2).

Most of these changes were an improvement in the internationalization of the university, although some meant a worsening. Among the latter, three are most significant: item 10, in which there were no longer courses taught in a foreign language different from English; and Item 15, in which there were no longer courses on internationalization and multiculturalism. By contrast, most of the items kept in positive or improved with a high exchange rate. In particular, the items regarding the number of courses and credits taught in a foreign language increased (Items 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12).

Table 2. Field 2-Item Analysis

Item Analysis	2011	2015	Exchange Percentage
Field 2. Internationalization of the curriculum and promotion of multilingualism			
Item 5. Does the institution have a multilingualism plan / strategy or a foreign-language course teaching program?	YES	YES	
Item 6. Of all the credits offered by the institution in an academic year, which proportion is taught in a foreign language?	225.1	427.5	89.92%
Item 7. Of all the courses offered by the institution in an academic year (excluding language courses) which proportion is taught completely in a foreign language?	24	80	233.33%
Item 8. Of all the courses offered by the institution in an academic year (excluding language courses) which proportion is taught partially in a foreign language?	22	36.5	65.91%
Item 9. Of all the credits offered by the institution in an academic year in a foreign language, which proportion is taught in English?	204.1	427.5	109.46%
Item 10. Of all the credits offered by the institution in an academic year in a foreign language, which proportion is taught in other languages? Please specify.	21	0	-100%
Item 11. Of all the non-language degrees offered by the institution in an academic, how many offer at least one course taught in a foreign language?	7	14	50%
Item 12. Of all the academic staff of the institution in an academic year, which proportion teaches any course in a foreign language?	46	100	117.39%
Item 13. Is there any language requirement by the academic staff to teach courses in a foreign language? Please, specify.	YES	YES	
Item 14. Does the institution offer degrees taught completely in a foreign language or bilingual/plurilingual degrees? How many?	YES	YES	
Item 15. Of all the courses offered by the institution in an academic year, which proportion is focused on international or intercultural matters?	65	10	-84.62%
Item 16. Of all the BA degrees offered by the institution in an academic year, which proportion belongs to international double/joint degrees?	0	0	0%
Item 17. Of all the POSTGRADUATE degrees offered by the institution in an academic year, which proportion belongs to international double/joint degrees?	0	0	0%
Item 18. Of all the degrees offered by the institution, how many foresee the development of professional internships abroad?	100	100	0%
Item 19. Is there any language requirement in the institution for the access or completion of studies by the students?	YES	YES	
Item 20. Does the institution offer specific language learning programs for academic staff?	YES	YES	
Item 21. Does the institution offer any grant for language training addressed to the academic staff?	YES	YES	

Field 3 also shows some changes between the academic year 2011/2012 and 2014/2015 (see Table 3). Some indicators worsened, as the percentage of academic and non-academic staff who participated in exchange and mobility programs (Items 23 and 24 respectively). However, in terms of internationalization, the percentage of non-academic staff engaged in international matters in the institution increased (Item 25), while the percentage of academic staff working in such matters decreased (Item 28).

Table 3. Field 3-Item Analysis

Item Analysis	2011	2015	Exchange Percentage
Field 3. Participation of students, academic and administrative staff in mobility programs			
Item 22. Of all the students in an academic year, which proportion participates in exchange or mobility programs?	536	568	5.63%
Item 23. Of all the academic staff in an academic year, which proportion participates in exchange or mobility programs?	25	20	-20%
Item 24. Of all the administrative staff in an academic year, which proportion participates in exchange or mobility programs?	27	22	-18.52%
Item 25. Of all the administrative staff, which proportion is engaged exclusively in internationalization tasks?	20	22	10%
Item 26. Does the institution offer any grant for the promotion of internationalization of the academic staff?	YES	YES	
Item 27. Does the institution offer any grant for the promotion of internationalization of the research staff?	YES	YES	
Item 28. Of all the academic staff, which proportion participates in tasks related to internationalization (student mobility, etc.)?	179	75	-58.1%

Field 4 does not reveal significant changes between the academic year 2011/2012 and 2014/2015 (see table 4), except regarding the percentage of students who apply to participate in mobility or exchange programs, which decreased in the latter year (Item 29).

Table 4. Field 4-Item Analysis

Item Analysis	2011	2015	Exchange Percentage
<u>Field 4 Interest of students in studying abroad, learning foreign languages and taking advantage of learning opportunities at an international level</u>			
Item 29. Of all the students in an academic year, which proportion applies to participate in exchange or mobility programs?	700	568	-18.86%
Item 30. Of all the students in an academic year, which proportion has an officially certified language level?	NDA	NDA	NDA
Item 31. Of all the students in an academic year, which proportion is enrolled in courses taught in a foreign language?	NDA	NDA	NDA
Item 32. Does the institution offer information to the students on study opportunities abroad?	YES	YES	
Item 33. Does the institution offer any training/monitoring language/cultural program before the departure of exchange or mobility students?	YES	YES	

Similarly, Field 5 does not reveal significant variations between the academic year 2011/2012 and 2014/2015 (see table 5). The only caveat is that the percentage of academic staff belonging to international visiting staff increased (item 36), while the percentage of staff (both academic and non-academic staff) having a foreign nationality decreased (item 35).

Table 5. Field 5-Item Analysis

Item Analysis	2011	2015	Exchange Percentage
<u>Field 5. Institutional structure and internationalization plan</u>			
Item 34. Does the institutional governance plan have a specific section for internationalization issues?	YES	YES	
Item 35. Of all the staff (academic and non-academic staff) in an academic year, which proportion has a foreign nationality?	9	4	-55.56%
Item 36. Of all the academic staff in an academic year, which proportion belongs to international visiting staff?	44	50	13.64%
Item 37. Does the institution have a quality certificate regarding internationalization?	YES	YES	

Field 6 reveals some of the most relevant changes between the academic year 2011/2012 and 2014/2015 (see table 6). The exchange percentage of the budget addressed to internationalization (item 38), international mobility of local students (item 39) and multilingualism (item 42) increased. Only the amount addressed to international promotion decreased (item 43).

Table 6. Field 6-Item Analysis

Item Analysis	2011	2015	Exchange Percentage
<u>Field 5. Institutional funding on internationalization plan</u>			
Item 38. Of the whole institutional budget in an academic year, which proportion is addressed to the internationalization department?	178,000€	222,500€	25%
Item 39. Of the whole budget addressed to internationalization, which proportion is addressed to the international mobility of local students?	80,000€	169,500€	111.875%
Item 40. Of the whole budget addressed to internationalization, which proportion is addressed to grants for international students?		20,000 €	20,000 €
Item 41. Of the whole budget addressed to internationalization, which proportion is addressed to international research grants for international students?	0	0	0%
Item 42. Of the whole budget addressed to internationalization, which proportion is addressed to the internationalization of study plans/curricula or plurilingualism?	12,721€	30,000€	135.83%
Item 43. Of the whole budget addressed to internationalization, which proportion is addressed to international promotion?	45,725€	40,000€	-12.52%

Field 7 shows some changes between the academic year 2011/2012 and 2014/2015 (see table 7). Although the major dissemination media remained: a translated and easily accessible web, a section for

international students, etc.; in some items the percentage decreased, e.g. the promotional documents (item 49). However, the percentage of visits to other institutions or international universities improved (item 50).

Table 7. Field 7-Item Analysis

Item Analysis	2011	2015	Exchange Percentage
Field 7. International dissemination.			
Item 44. Does the institution have a clearly defined international dissemination strategy?	YES	YES	
Item 45. How many international fairs or events does the institution participate in in an academic year?	20	3	-85%
Item 46. Does the institution have a website translated at least into one foreign language?	YES	YES	
Item 47. Does the institutional website an easily accessible section for international students?	YES	YES	
Item 48. Does the institution make use of social networks or any other online resources for international promotion?	YES	YES	
Item 49. How many brochures or promotional documents does the institution create in an academic year for international promotion?	6500	8000	23.08%
Item 50. How many visits to international universities / institutions does the institution have in an academic year?	2	4	100%
Item 51. Does the institution participate in national or international internationalization-supporting networks?	YES	YES	

In Field 8 all items remain stable or improve from the academic year 2011/2012 to 2014/2015 (see Table 8). E.g. in the last year, a mentoring or "buddy" system to support foreign students (item 54) was found. Likewise, the number of active collaboration agreements with foreign institutions increased up to 50.33% (item 52) and the number of international students who belong to mobility or exchange programs was higher than in the former academic year (item 53).

Table 8. Field 8-Item Analysis

Item Analysis	2011	2015	Exchange Percentage
Field 7. Student recruitment			
Item 52. In an academic year, how many active collaboration agreements does the institution have with foreign institutions?	298	600	50.33%
Item 53. Of all the international students in an academic year, which proportion belongs to exchange or mobility programs?	482	642	24.92%
Item 54. Does the institution have a mentoring or "buddy" system to support foreign students?	NO	YES	
Item 55. Does the institution offer the same help and services to local and international students?	YES	YES	
Item 56. Does the institution offer an initial contact person for international students?	YES	YES	
Item 57. Does the institution have a central information office for international students?	YES	YES	
Item 58. Does the institution offer relevant information to international students upon their arrival (academic and administrative information, legal regulations, accommodation, university services, sport and cultural activities, etc.)?	YES	YES	
Item 59. Does the institution offer support to social activities addressed to international students?	YES	YES	

No changes between the academic year 2011/2012 to 2014/2015 were observed in Field 9 (see table 9).

Table 9. Field 9-Item Analysis

Item Analysis	2011	2015	Exchange Percentage
Field 9. Distance between institutional rhetoric and reality.			
Item 60. How many of the objectives outlined in the internationalization strategy of the institution are achieved in an academic year?	7	7	7
Item 61. What instruments are used to measure the achievement of these objectives?	NDA	NDA	NDA

As for the budget section, some changes between the academic years 2011/2012 to 2014/2015 were perceived (see Table 10). The amount of staff, both the total amount and in the two sectors (academic and non-academic staff) decreased. However, the number of postgraduate students (Masters and PhD) increased, but the number of undergraduate students decreased. Finally, the total percentage addressed to internationalization also decreased slightly (19.38%).

Table 10. Budget section-Item analysis

	2011	2015	Exchange Percentage
NUMBER OF STAFF (TOTAL)	1.316	1227	-6.76%
- Number of academic staff	819	752	-8.18%
- Number of administrative staff	497	475	-4.43%
NUMBER OF STUDENTS (TOTAL)	13.789	14176	2.73%
- Number of BA students (1 st and 2 nd cycle)	12.243	10543	-13.88%
- Number of MA students	915	945	3.17%
- Number of PhD students	626	983	36.32%
ANNUAL BUDGET (TOTAL)	88.599.414,31€	53.249.590,70€	-39.89%
- Budget addressed to internationalization	276.000€*	222.500 €	-19.38%

Discussion

After the analysis of the results, it is noted that the University of Almería, despite its small size, already fulfilled more than 50% of the internationalization objectives in 2012. Nevertheless, this internationalization process has been improving progressively, amounting to 86.88% in 2015.

These changes are related to different fields, most of them represent an increasing percentage regarding the previous years, although in some items a slight decrease occurs.

With regard to Field 1. Integration of internationalization in the institutional planning and evaluation, the objectives fulfilled in 2012 remained in 2015. This indicates that the goals on internationalization are more and most integrated in the university planning and assessment. These data relate to the University Strategy 2015 (SU, 2015) put into practice by the Spanish Government in 2008 in order to promote internationalization in the Spanish university system which, as stated above, placed its horizon in last year 2015. Likewise, it collaborated in the homogenization of undergraduate degree programs, one of the aims of the European Union (EU) to facilitate the transfer of students among European universities (Altbach, 2002).

With regard to Field 2. Internationalization of the curriculum and the promotion of multilingualism, results show that the situation slightly worsens in some items, as the offer of courses taught in additional languages different from English. These data may point to an increase in the importance of the English language as the main foreign language, or lingua franca, to the detriment of other alternatives. English seems to be becoming the new Esperanto. As Baker (2006) states, it could be considered as strong ways of bilingual education, since the achievement of a level of functional competence in the foreign language is sought. In fact, it could be even noted that it is ‘bilingual immersion’, since it is applied to those programs in which, at least, 50% of curricular content is taught through the medium of English as a foreign language (Swain & Johnson, 1997; Swain & Lapkin, 2005). As the results of this study show, in the items related to this field, a high percentage of courses taught in English is evidenced.

The works by Salaberri (1999, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2008), Salaberri & Appel (2003); Salaberri & Sánchez (2014, 2015), Sánchez & Salaberri (2015a; 2015b), have provided contributions on the importance of the teaching of English as a foreign language, and in bilingual Education at tertiary level, which support these results. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that not only the teaching of English is relevant, but also the teaching of other languages, especially if we look at Europe in terms of standardization and internationalization, as some studies attest (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Grimshaw, 2007; Van-Damme, 2001).

As for Field 3. Participation of students, faculty and administrative staff in mobility programs, while the percentage of teaching staff participating in mobility programs decreased, the percentage of non-teaching staff engaged in internationalization matter increased. This shows the increasing relevance addressed to this issue, since more staff is employed to work on it. On the other hand, it should be interesting to deepen into the grounds for the lower implication of academic staff in mobility programs. One of the reasons could be the increase of part-time employments of both teaching and non-teaching staff due to the current Spanish economic crisis of the country, which results in the availability of little extra time to participate in mobility programs. However, this aspect is merely speculative and deeper exploration on this point would be necessary to improve these items.

Regarding Field 4. Interest of students to study abroad, learn languages and take advantage of learning opportunities at international level, the compliance with the indicators remained over time. The only exception is the decrease in the percentage of students who apply to participate in mobility or exchange programs. Again, it is relevant to explore the reasons for this decline. If we continue along the previous vagary line, it should be wondered whether this decline is due to an impairment of the purchasing power of families of these students, as a result of the economic crisis. Most mobility grants are considered more as an academic opportunity than an economic one, so, without financial support, it is difficult to cover all the costs generated in the host country (Eurydice, 2015).

With regard to Field 5. Institutional structure and internationalization plan, an increase in the international academic visiting staff was observed. In this sense, the choice of Spain as a country of interest is highlighted. The question in this sense is whether this interest is due solely to academic criteria or other external circumstances such as climate, standards of living, etc.

As for Field 6. Institutional investment in internationalization, some of the most significant positive changes occurred. These improvements in investment are addressed to the budget in internationalization, international mobility of local students and plurilingualism. Despite this investment increase in internationalization, perhaps it should be further increased, especially considering that the number of mobilities of local students has decreased, as well as the number of foreign languages in which subjects are taught. One might consider likewise whether these exacerbations are not due to a matter of budget, but to marketing and promotion, where a decrease in the budget occurred in the last academic year studied. This last point may seem unimportant, however, any training or exchange program –whatever the quality is- may have a low demand if the information does not reach the target population. Moreover, an increase in the number of graduate students was observed, contrary to what happens with undergraduate students, so an increase in the budget for Master's, predoctoral and postdoctoral research grants in this sector would be desirable.

Regarding Field 7. International dissemination, the changes observed in previous academic years remained in 2014/2015. The only items which decreased refer to the number of international fairs and events in which the Institution participated, as well as to the promotional documents used. This may be due to the progressive increase in the dissemination, promotion and communication through other media like the Internet. The proliferation of social and working networks, online working groups, email, WhatsApp, etc., are making face contact and paper dissemination less essential than in previous years. However, face to face contact should not be obviated, in order not to dehumanize and impoverish the internationalization of education, whose essential element is contact between cultures.

One of the aspects that most improved at the University of Almería in the latter academic year regards Field 8. Student recruitment. In the last year, the university had a mentoring or "buddy" system to support international students, as well as a greater number of active agreements with foreign institutions and international students belonging to mobility or exchange programs. The University of Almeria is becoming a space for cultural exchange of students from around the world, where they find not only a beachfront university with all kinds of facilities, but also a host of quality and a wide educational offer.

Finally, with regard to Field 9. Distance between institutional rhetoric and reality, no changes were neither found between the two academic years, which imply that the progress already achieved in previous years were still maintained, where the distance between the purposes and what ultimately takes place was increasingly closer. This is, in fact, the key to progress in an internationalization process in order to bring us progressively closer to the world and to enrich us culturally while we do it with them at the same time.

Conclusions

The results of this study reveal the reality of the internationalization process in a small university, in this case, the University of Almería. The data point to a growing compliance with the landmarks previously marked, and evidence that this process is not only a matter of larger and more prestigious institutions.

On the other hand, these data can help University Authorities, faculties and departments to be aware of the real progress being made in areas such as international exchange of students, plurilingualism, etc., as well as the path that lies ahead and the points on which one must continue to abound focusing on improving the internationalization of this and other universities in the country. Therefore, it is important to continue the research in this field, not only locally, but also at a regional and a national level.

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