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# The model of internationalization in higher education institutions

## Introduction

Higher education “is at the heart of the Europe 2020 Strategy” (COM(2013) 499 final, 2013: 2). It contributes to the creation of innovation and it provides a highly skilled human capital needed in knowledge-based economies, to generate growth and prosperity. The Strategy presents three priorities: smart growth (an economy based on knowledge and innovation), sustainable growth (an economy that is more resource-efficient, greener and more competitive) and inclusive growth (high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion).

One of the flagship initiatives in the first priority, smart growth, is “Youth on the move”, aimed to enhance the performance of higher education systems, to reinforce the international attractiveness of higher education in Europe and raise its’ overall quality. These goals can be achieved, among others, through promoting student and academic staff mobility. Students’ learning (transnational) mobility is one of the fundamental ways in which young people can strengthen their future employability. In this context, the new priorities for European higher education call for an internationalization approach, based on the learning mobility.

Internationalization of higher education institutions is a “process of multilateral changes whose aim is to acquire transnational competences and exchange experiences taking place in the cultural, linguistic and geographical space” (Pluta-Olearnik 2015: 171, author’s translation). It has become a key strategy for higher education institutions and the motivations include, among others, gaining a commercial advantage, the acquisition of knowledge and language and enhancing the curriculum with international content (Altbach, Knight 2007). De Wit points out that internationalization in European higher education, in the last few decades, has developed from a marginal point of interest to a central factor, and he calls this process the mainstreaming of internationalization (de Wit 2017).

In Sułkowski’s opinion, over the past few decades, the area of activity of the higher education institutions has changed, from a national, through international, to global

scale and that this fundamental transformation is observed also in Poland. Because of this, in the world, as well as in Poland, higher education institutions are seeking effective models of internalization which would facilitate the process of internationalization (Sułkowski 2017).

The goal of the paper is an attempt to determine the model of internationalization for Polish higher education institutions. It's a functional (theoretical) model of higher education, and might be perceived as a basic reference point in the discussion on specific solutions for higher education in the area of internationalization. The basic research methods are literature review and statistical data analysis.

This article raises the following three research questions:

- What internationalization models are dedicated for enterprises?
- Are there any internationalization models dedicated for higher education institutions?
- What elements should the internationalization model for Polish higher education institution include?

This paper begins with a presentation of the existing internationalization models used in enterprises. Next, given is a definition of the internationalization in higher education. Afterwards, displayed are numerous models dedicated for higher education institutions. Finally, internationalization model in Polish higher education institution is presented.

## Internationalization models in enterprises

In economic literature, internationalization is generally defined as the process of increasing the involvement of an enterprise in international markets, although there is no agreed definition of internationalization. Rymarczyk proposes a definition according to which internationalization means the “process through which an enterprise undergoes its development from national, through international to global” (Rymarczyk 1996: 18-19, author's translation).

The researchers' interest in the internationalization process occurring in the enterprises has resulted in the creation of many theories, concepts and models. Models of internationalization, understood as a certain process developing over time, describe the essence of the enterprises' participation in international activity.

Andersen (1993) distinguishes two ways of describing the firm's internationalization process: the Uppsala model and the Innovation-Related Internationalization Models, focusing on internationalization as an innovation for the firm. Whitelock (2002) considering the basic features of the theories of internationalization of the enterprise, presents four major models: the eclectic paradigm, the interactive network approach, the business strategy approach and the Uppsala model.

The eclectic paradigm suggests that a company, as a result of transaction cost analysis, builds its own organizational structures, thanks to which it will achieve

a competitive advantage. The network approach connects market success with the company's ability to use the network to connected it to the environment. The strategic approach emphasizes the importance of formalizing the strategy of internationalization in the process of building effective market activities of the company (Fonfara 2012).

The Uppsala model, the best known Swedish model created in the '70s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is based on the concept of empirical knowledge and it is most often featured in international business literature. The authors of the model are Johanson, Wiedersheim-Paul (1975) and Johanson and Vahlne (1977). They assumed that the company's behavior in the internationalization process is determined by its practical knowledge. The most important thesis of the Uppsala model is that the internationalization process is of a sequential, phase, staged, evolutionary or gradual nature. Therefore, the company enters the foreign markets gradually, along with increasing knowledge about these markets within a certain time.

Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul identified four stages in the internationalization processes:

1. no regular export activities
2. export via independent representatives (agent)
3. sales subsidiary and
4. production/manufacturing (Johanson, Wiedersheim-Paul 1975: 307).

In their paper they pointed out that they simplified the issue of internationalization and they emphasized that the development doesn't always follows the whole four steps chain.

To explain the incremental nature of the internationalization process, Johanson and Vahlne (1977) formulated a dynamic model in which the effect of one cycle of internationalization activities is the starting point for the next cycle.

The theories of phased internationalization, including the Uppsala model and innovative models of internationalization assume that the internationalization of the enterprise is sequential (Nizielska 2012). These theories proclaim that the internationalization process proceeds sequentially and gradually. However this concepts, based on the sequential model, have been criticized. The thesis about the stage and cumulative nature of enterprise internationalization was questioned, which caused the appearance of the concept of unconventional internationalization.

The unconventional internationalization means that the company does not necessarily direct expansion to the markets closest to the mental distance point of view, and that the internationalization process does not go through successive stages proposed in the Uppsala model. An example of the theory that undermines the philosophy of the sequential model is "born global" (Nizielska 2012).

Despite the criticism of the Uppsala model, it was the inspiration for many further developments. A common feature of the concept referring to the idea of the sequential nature of the internationalization is to propose different stages of internationalization.

For example, Cavusgil (1980) distinguished several stages of internationalization: domestic marketing, pre-export stage, experimental involvement (in which the company is mainly limited to exports, and activity on foreign markets is marginal), active involvement (in which the company's activity increasingly absorbs the attention of the management), and committed involvement (meaning permanent, advanced involvement in the internationalization process).

However at present, the shortening of the internationalization cycle of many enterprises can be observed, due to a faster transition or moving to the next stages of internationalization, what is favored by the development of ICT, the unification of markets, a higher level of education of societies and the increase of experience with an international and intercultural dimension (Pluta-Olearnik 2012).

## Definition of internationalization in higher education

According to Teichler (2004), the internationalization of higher education has two aspects. One is a growth of specific international bordercrossing operations (e.g. student and staff mobility, cooperative didactic and research activities) and the other is a trend towards universalization, globalization, internationalization and regionalization of the substance and functions of higher education.

The most commonly accepted definition of internationalization in higher education is the one proposed by Knight, whereby it is "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education at the institutional and national levels" (Knight 2008: 21). Internationalization as defined by Knight is a process and it reflects a set of activities that higher education institutions formulate in order to respond to globalization.

Also de Wit points out that there are different accents and approaches in the issue of internationalization. In his opinion „internationalization strategies are filtered and contextualized by the specific internal context of the university, by the type of university, and how they are embedded nationally" (de Wit 2010: 5). In 2015 he proposed a new definition of internationalization, which combines the two definitions above: "The intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and re-search for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society" (de Wit 2015). In this paper in the definition proposed by de Wit in 2015 is adopted.

The definitions presented above suggest that there are many dimensions of internationalization and that it is a dynamic process of institutional change. Huang, screening a wide range of publications, indentified seven broad themes on higher education internationalization:

1. Mobility of students and staff
2. Mutual influences of higher education systems
3. Internationalization of the substance of teaching, learning and research
4. Institutional strategies of internationalization
5. Knowledge transfer
6. Cooperation and competition
7. National and supranational policies as regards the international dimension of higher education (Huang 2014: 3).

Knight notes that there are two key components in the internationalization. One is internationalization “abroad”, understood as all forms of education across borders: mobility of people, projects, programmes and providers. The second one is internationalization “at home”, which is more curriculum-orientated and focuses on activities that develop international or global understanding and intercultural skills (Knight 2008: 22-24). Among these activities international mobility remains the most visible.

In Knight’s opinion internationalization “abroad” includes a diversity of activities such as the following (2008: 24):

- movement of people (movement of students in different programs and movement of academic teachers for purposes of teaching and research);
- delivery of programs (models of delivery include franchising, double/joint degree);
- mobility of providers (the institution/provider moves to have a physical or virtual presence in the receiving country, examples are: branch campuses and franchise models);
- international projects (these projects might include joint curriculum development, research, benchmarking, technical assistance, e-learning platforms, professional development, and other capacity building initiatives).

The above two components in the internationalization mainly concern the education process. There is a lack of the inclusion of elements related to scientific research. For this reason Kwiek complements the approach proposed by Knight, pointing out two aspects of scientific research: increasing the number of national publications functioning in the international scientific circulation (understood as internationalization “at home”) and strengthening international scientific cooperation (understood as internationalization “abroad”) (Kwiek 2015). It is also worth adding that the manifestation of the internationalization “at home” in the context of the research activity is incorporation of internationalization aspects into scientific research and publishing in English, instead of in national languages.

In Poland, internationalization is understood mainly as “short-term student mobility from the European Union into Poland and international recruitment for full-cycle studies from non-EU countries. Internationalization is sometimes seen as international partnerships or joint projects. It is almost never perceived as the application of an international perspective to taught subjects and research or intercultural communication on campus through processes of internationalisation at home” (Egron-Polak et al. 2015: 147).

Also B. Siwińska notes that in Polish higher education system not all forms of internationalization are present, neither on the national nor institutional levels as well as that the activities undertaken in the scheme of internationalization are not on an advanced level. She proposed simple and transparent classification of the forms of internationalization in Poland (Siwińska 2014: 150-156):

- support for outgoing mobility;
- support for incoming mobility (attracting foreign students);
- mobility of the programs and institutions;
- development of the culture of internationalization at the HEI;
- building internationalization strategy at the state level.

Among the less noticeable forms of internationalization, Siwińska (2014) indicates the small presence of professors from abroad, rare cases of inclusion in the strategic documents issues related to internationalization and imperceptible presence of Polish higher education institutions abroad.

## Internationalization models in higher education institutions

General definition of enterprise internationalization, understood as the process of increasing its involvement in international markets might be also related to higher education institutions. Then, based on Rymarczyk (1996) and de Wit (2015) definitions, it can be concluded that internationalization is the intentional process through which higher education institutions undergo its development from national, through international to global, in order to enhance the quality of education and research, to make a meaningful contribution to national and global society.

The researchers' interest in the internationalization process existing in higher education institutions has resulted in the development of many concepts and models. Selected models will be presented in a chronological order.

Rudzki noticed that the growth of international activities among higher education institutions takes different forms, starting from "the ad hoc (reactive) to the strategic (proactive)" (Rudzki 1995: 421). The author indentified the key elements within internationalization process and provided a framework for assessment of international activity. He proposed two introductory models of internationalization: The reactive model and the proactive one, which' basic elements are presented in the Table 1.

There are three models of internationalization, proposed by van der Wende (1999: 233-234):

1. Internationalization as a policy outcome. This model refers to the institutional level. It is aimed at involvement of international phenomena into teaching, and research, introduces co-operation, exchange and an internationalized curriculum into higher education functioning. International elements used are generally expected to contribute to the quality and competitiveness of the system and its outcomes at different levels.

**Table 1.** Rudzki's models of internationalization

Stage number	The reactive model of internationalization	The proactive model of internationalization
Stage 1	Contact	Analysis
Stage 2	Formalization	Choice
Stage 3	Central control	Implementation
Stage 4	Conflict	Review
Stage 5	Maturity or decline	Redefinition of objectives/plan/policy

Source: own elaboration based on Rudzki 1995.

2. De-nationalization (transnationalization) of higher education. This approach includes several processes which underlie and facilitate the expansion of higher education systems to other countries. It is caused by the increasing competition, globalization and decreasing financing of higher education from public funds. These phenomena enhance the interest of higher education institutions to expand their activity beyond the boundaries of the national state.
3. Regionalization of higher education. This model is based on international cooperation between two or more neighbouring states. It is a type of international co-operation that emphasises structural educational and administrative co-operation to make systems in both countries more responsive to the needs of regional labour markets and to enhance mutual access. As the effect of this model joint programmes and degrees are being developed. It might be the basis for future institutional mergers.

Poole developed a model describing the effective management of international activities undertaken by higher education institutions. His "Strategic Advantage Model of Internationalisation" synthesized the author's research findings and is based on the models existing in the literature. Poole (2001) presented the stages in the internationalization process:

1. Awareness.
2. Commitment.
3. Planning.
4. Structure.
5. Operationalisation.
6. Review.
7. Reinforcement and Reward.

These stages might be implemented in a broader context at the institution within the framework defined by four strategic advantage elements, which are: (1) strategically decentralized leadership, (2) leverage of organizational and strategic competences, (3) development of international business competencies, and (4) pursuit of executional advantages (Poole 2001).

Mazzarol (2003) pointed three strategic options for international education:

1. Opening branch campuses (usually in conjunction with joint venture partners).
2. Partnering with private sector groups to provide “corporate university” delivery models.
3. Using ICT-based delivery to create “virtual universities”.

Turcan and Gullieva (2013) put forward “Process model of university internationalization”, based on the assumption that the process of internationalization is dependent on the institutional autonomy in the target country and globalization and is mediated by the internationalization capacity of a university.

Hawawini (2016) distinguishes five forms of international reach:

1. The import model.
2. The export model.
3. Academic joint-ventures.
4. Academic partnerships, alliances and consortia.
5. Campuses abroad.

He points out that the five alternative forms are neither mutually exclusive nor sequential, as some higher education institutions are both importers and exporters, besides an institution may open a campus abroad without having engaged in academic joint-ventures.

Finally, in the model proposed by Popowska (2016), five stages can be distinguished:

1. unilateral trips of students and staff,
2. bilateral exchange,
3. joint study programs and research projects,
4. distance learning,
5. off-shore campuses.

In addition to the above models dedicated for higher education, attempts are also made to use in this sector models intended for enterprises. The eclectic paradigm was analyzed by Ilnytsky (2015), the interactive network approach was examined by Sworowska (2018), Chow and Loo (2015), the business strategy approach was recognized by Pluta-Olearnik (2015) and the Uppsala model was interpreted by Healey (2008).

Undoubtedly, the Uppsala model is the most suitable and popular for analyzing the company’s internationalization process (Gorynia 2007). Because higher educational institutions around the world are becoming more commercial more and more often, models proven in business are used in relation to them. However, the internationalization of higher educational institutions for commercial purpose is a comparatively new concept and there is limited amount of publications in this field. A little researchers’ effort has been made to see internationalization process of higher education institutions through the Uppsala model.

Looking at higher educational institutions, through the prism of the Uppsala model, Healey (2007) indicated examples of actions in the four stages mentioned in the model:



1. No regular export activities – phase called by Healey “exporting”. This stage manifests itself in activities consisting in export of educational services to foreign students who enroll on their home campuses. It is often supplemented by virtual higher education exports (that is distance and on-line learning).
2. Export via independent representatives – otherwise named “licensing production” and more usually known as “franchising”. This stage is a situation in which a higher education institution sub-contracts a local provider in another country to submit part or all of its degree programme.
3. Sales subsidiary – that is “joint ventures”, according to Healey. This is the standard organisational form of the third phase, aiming at delivery of joint, specialist postgraduate programmes in the branch campus established in another country. It means establishing branch with the local partner.
4. Production – referred to by Healey as “sole ventures”. The example of this activity is a wholly-owned branch campus located in any place the world, but also international study centre for use by visiting students from the foreign university’s home campus.

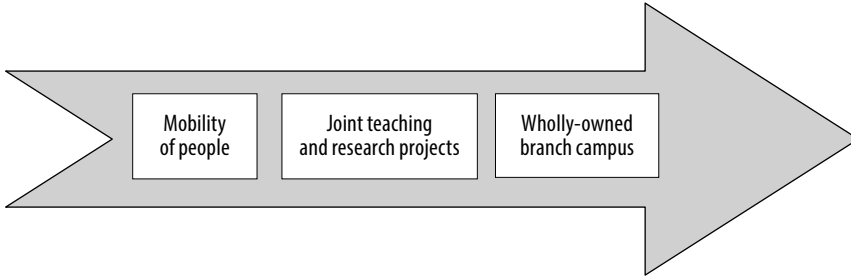
## **Internationalization model in Polish higher education institutions**

The two middle stages of the Uppsala model: “Export via independent representatives” and “Sales subsidiary”, in the context of higher education institutions often permeate and they contain similar activities. For this reason, it is worth combining them into one stage in the internationalization model proposed in this study. As a result, the suggested by the author of this paper solution, is based on the Uppsala model and the Knight’s key components of the internationalization, and it consists of three stages:

1. Mobility of people (understood as movement of students in different programs and movement of academic teachers for purposes of teaching and research (Knight 2008), but also development of the students’ international understanding and intercultural skills, enrollment of foreign students and employing academic teachers from abroad).
2. Joint teaching and research projects (meaning delivery of programs, providers and international projects (Knight 2008), e.g.: franchising, double/joint degree, joint curriculum development, research, e-learning platforms, branch campuses, cooperation with partners from abroad).
3. Wholly-owned branch campus abroad.

The model presenting the internationalization phases is shown in Figure 1.

The selected examples of activities carried out in Poland will be described below.



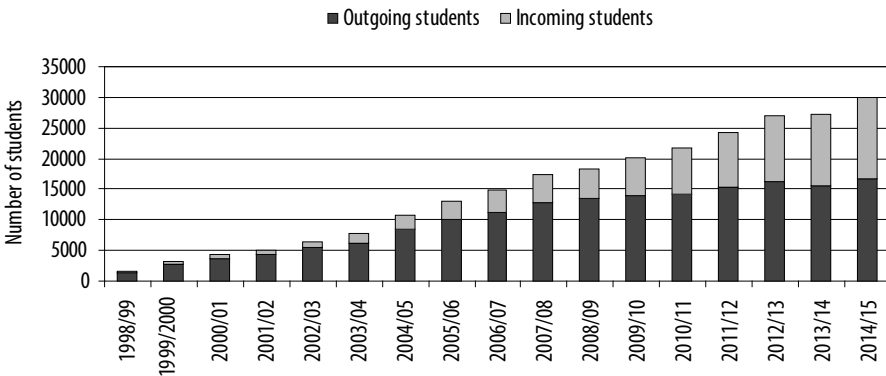
**Figure 1.** The internationalization model in Polish higher education institutions

Source: own elaboration.

Stage 1: Mobility of people

In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of foreigners undertaking studies at Polish higher education institutions. In comparison with the falling number of Polish students, this means a rapid increase in the percentage of foreigners in the group of all students (about 1% in 2009/2010 and almost 5% in 2016/2017). The number of foreign students at Polish higher education institutions in the academic year 2016/2017 amounted to less than 66 thousand people. The largest group of foreigners were students from Europe, of which more than half are people from Ukraine – 35.6 thousand (Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2011 and 2017).

The Erasmus program (currently Erasmus+) is of key importance for the development of student mobility. Chart 1 presents the number of outgoing and incoming students to Poland under this program.



**Chart 1.** Number of outgoing and incoming students to Poland as part of the Erasmus program

Source: own elaboration based on: [www 1](#) and [www 2](#).

For several years, there have been no major changes in the number of outgoing students from Poland to study abroad. However, a dynamic increase in the number of students incoming to Poland is noticeable.

### Stage 2: Joint teaching and research projects

Due to the limited volume of this work, only several examples of activities carried out by selected higher education institutions in Poland, in the second stage of the model, will be indicated. These are study programmes offered in foreign languages, research projects, partnership agreements and branch campus.

In 2016, students were enrolled in 17,388 fields of study, of which 3.5% were conducted in a foreign language. The largest number of fields of study in foreign languages is at the level of second-cycle studies. In terms of the number of fields of study conducted in foreign languages, the most internationalized are the ones assigned to the area of humanities (Narodowy Kongres Nauki 2016).

A crucial source of funding for Polish international research projects are Framework Programs of the European Union. In the period from 2013 to 2016, 200 competitions were held in the Program HORIZON 2020. In these competitions contracts were signed with 11,818 organizations from the European Union, including – 304 organizations from Poland. Polish science has been co-financed with 136 million euros (1% of the co-financing amount for European Union participants) (Narodowy Kongres Nauki 2016).

An important determinant of internationalization is the conclusion of partnership agreements between Polish and foreign higher education institutions. In 2014 there were 25,708 concluded contracts. Their vast majority (70.7%) was connected with the implementation of the Erasmus program. Other contracts, unrelated to Erasmus, concerned: (1) scientific and didactic cooperation, (2) joint research, exchange of experience, publications, (3) exchange of students and academic staff, and (4) didactic cooperation (joint diplomas). The Jagiellonian University in Kraków had the largest number of such contracts – 980, which was 13% of the total number of contracts (Narodowy Kongres Nauki 2016).

As an example of a university branch that operates outside of Poland, an example of the branch of the University of Białystok can be given. The branch in Vilnius was established on the basis of resolutions of the Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Government of the Republic of Lithuania and its Ministry of Education and Science. This branch campus is the first branch of the foreign higher education school in Lithuania and the first faculty of the Polish higher education institution situated outside the territory of the country (www 3).

### Stage 3. Wholly-owned branch campus abroad

Currently, wholly-owned branch campuses outside of Poland do not exist.

## Conclusion

Higher education institutions are not the same as enterprises, therefore maximizing profits is not their main goal. Decisions to establish foreign operations, as opposed to enterprises, are based on factors specific for education and research. In the case

of higher education institutions internationalization is not a goal in itself but it is a means to enhance the quality of the education, research, and service functions of higher education (de Wit, Leask 2017).

In this paper, four major internationalization models dedicated for enterprises were identified: the eclectic paradigm, the interactive network approach, the business strategy approach and the Uppsala model. Not all of them are possible to be used in higher education institutions, especially European ones, still commercialized to a small extent. It appears that exploring internationalization of a non-profitable organization under Uppsala model may not be the best approach.

The article also displays numerous examples from literature illustrating the variety of approaches to the problem of developing an internationalization model, dedicated for higher education institutions. The following models were presented:

- Rudzki's reactive and proactive models of internationalization,
- The three models of internationalization, proposed by van der Wende,
- Poole's "Strategic Advantage Model of Internationalisation",
- The three strategic options for international education by Mazzarol,
- "Process model of university internationalization" by Turcan and Gullieva,
- Hawawini's five forms of international reach, and
- The five stages internationalization model proposed by Popowska.

In conclusion, it is worth bearing in mind, that here is also no one model of internationalization that fits for all higher education institutions in the world. For this reason an attempt to create internationalization model for Polish higher education institutions was made. The elaborated model consists of three stages: (1) mobility of people, (2) joint teaching and research projects and (3) wholly-owned branch campus abroad. Nevertheless, the proposed model should be treated as a preliminary proposal, that will be developed in future research.

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