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**INTERNATIONALIZATION AS A CHALLENGE FOR UNIVERSITY
MANAGEMENT BOARDS ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF ECONOMICS AND HUMANITIES – A CASE STUDY**

Introduction. Progressive globalization brings the need to build the inter-cultural awareness, and, thus, to put greater emphasis on the knowledge of foreign languages, including the most popular, which is the English language. Back in the 19th century, John Adams, one of the founding fathers of the United States and their second president, said that: “English will certainly become a global language in the next centuries, as Latin used to be, and French is today” (Adams, 1852). This prophecy came true in the second half of the 20th century.

The concept of a "global language" finds authentic use in the first decades of the 19th century. Although the "lingua franca" concept had long been known, yet the idea of the English language to become a global communication instrument appeared after 1950 (despite many attempts to create an artificial global language). After World War 2, countries needed to find instruments not solely to talk and listen to each other, but also because the number of participating nations increased significantly. The number of member states in the United Nations rose from 51 in 1945 to 192 at the end of the century. As a consequence there appeared the need for a concept of a “working language" as an alternative to often impractical or expensive multilingual translation services.¹

The English language is a communication tool in the area of knowledge dissemination around the world, especially in such areas as science and technology. Education is a means of gaining access to knowledge which is regularly published in the media. If we pose the question – “why have so many nations introduced English as an official language or the main foreign language in schools?” – we will get the answer that one of the most important reasons for this is education. Since 1960, English has been one of the most widely used languages at universities in many countries. For over half a century, teaching English has been one of the most prosperous businesses in the world. Hence, the *sine qua non* condition for introducing the strategy of internationalization at universities in Poland is to expand the language offer, prepare English-language syllabi, and provide a wide range of mobility destinations for both

¹ http://www.unic.un.org.pl/poznaj_onz/historia3.php

students and staff. Internationalization should be a priority in the policy of every university due to the fact that today the concept of internationalism is understood in the context of mass access to higher education. This popular character resulted in the fact that today almost all occupations are covered by higher education. In the European context, the Bologna process is aimed at harmonizing the effects of teaching so as to build a dynamic, competitive economy based on sustainable development. Thus, all programs supporting the mobility of students, lecturers and staff of universities are supported by a common ECTS assessment system, and recognition of education and qualifications.

"Looking to the future, we can see that in the changing world there is a constant need to adapt our higher education system to these changes to be able to equip our institutions with competitiveness and ability to address the challenges that globalization brings"²

Research problem:

The aim of this article is to analyse the internationalization process of the education system at small universities on the example of the University of Economics and Humanities.

Hypothesis:

The process of internationalization is not the domain of big prestigious higher education institutions.

According to the above-mentioned report on the Bologna Ministerial Meeting in London in 2007, internationalization of education is obligatory in the face of progressive globalization. Internationalization takes on a variety of forms, and although the general meaning of internationalization is associated with mobility, it must be understood in a much broader perspective. Undoubtedly, mobility is a major factor, as it offers openness to other opportunities for educational institutions, such as lectures conducted by academic teachers from other countries, participation of foreign students in the education process, and, consequently, also in the academic and student life of a given university, adding it a unique character. Of course, the flagship mobility program in Europe is the Erasmus Plus. Formerly, it was the Erasmus LLP program, and it only concerned student mobility. Apart from this program, there were many other programs aimed at other target groups, such as pupils and the

² www.ond.vlaanderen.be/.../bologna/.../WGR2007/

elderly. Currently, the new edition launched in 2014 called Erasmus Plus, combining all previous programs, including a program that allows creating training and degree schemes within international strategic partnerships or university consortia in cooperation with international business. Undoubtedly, internationalization is a value added to universities' program activities.

"Internationalization is a process of an international, inter-cultural and global dimension with purpose, functions and ways of action of universities." [Jane Knight, Hans de Wit, 2003]³

Internationalization of the teaching process serves to shape students as global citizens through educating professionals and people with broad horizons and open minds for the domestic and foreign markets, which is in line with the university mission. Through the international dimension of the teaching process, graduates become more competitive on the labour market, thereby reducing the risk of unemployment. Also, they perfectly match the knowledge and information society. This is fostered by improvement of multilingualism and inter-cultural competences. Internationalization of higher education is also a top-priority issue for the Polish authorities. In the "Higher Education Internationalization Program" of 2015 we read:

"The Ministry of Science and Higher Education implements a series of initiatives for higher education internationalization. These include:

- "Erasmus+" program (jointly with FRSE);
- bilateral international and intergovernmental agreements (the treaty base includes approximately 190 agreements);
- scholarship programs aimed at supporting Polish communities as well as Eastern Partnership countries, especially Ukraine, including: "Polish Erasmus for Ukraine",
- *Ready, Study, Go! Poland* campaign, which popularizes the possibility of studying in Poland;
- "Mobilność Plus" program, which allows for participation in scientific research in renowned foreign centres under the watchful eyes of internationally recognized researchers,
- as well as the governmental program known as "Studies for the Outstanding", which began in 2016, and within its framework, thanks to the state support, 100 students a year can start studying at the best universities all over the world."⁴

3 <http://jsi.sagepub.com/content/8/1/5>

4 www.nauka.gov.pl/g2/oryginal/2015.

One could think that internationalization is only for large universities that have full-time and part-time studies, where it is easier to adapt the whole policy and strategy to internationalization needs. However, this belief is fundamentally false. An example of a systematic, effective implementation of the internationalization process is the University of Economics and Humanities in Bielsko-Biała.

The University of Economics and Humanities was established in 1997 under the original name of the Higher School of Marketing and Management, using the premises, material base and experience of THE TOP College. Dynamic development and creation of two new faculties in humanities – philology and political science changed the name to the University of Economics and Humanities. The university is still working closely with THE TOP College, which as the oldest language school in the Podbeskidzie Area and co-founder of the university gave it its rich experience and tradition. The University of Economics and Humanities became a pioneer in the Podbeskidzie Area in the field of humanities. From the beginning of its establishment, the University has placed special emphasis on teaching sciences, foreign languages and offering student work experience, which, in the conditions of Poland's membership in the European Union, is particularly important for graduates, for the region and the country. The university is a supra-regional university – students from all over the country and from abroad study there. The University of Economics and Humanities focuses on shaping civic attitudes and abiding the principles of tolerance that result from solid ethical education in line with Cato the Elder's statement: *orator vir bonus dicendi peritus*. It means that an educated man, that is an orator, a speaker, and a politician as well, a teacher and a man managing and influencing others, should not only be an expert in the use of words and knowledge, but he should also be good, that is obliged to respect ethical principles. Such principles are followed by the whole academic community, constituting a foundation of the Statute of the University of Economics and Humanities."⁵ Both the mission and the development strategy of the University of Economics and Humanities twenty years ago provide for a systematic internationalization of the teaching process. For 20 years of its presence on the education market, the school has developed many undertakings aimed at internationalization of the teaching process, by systematically increasing the number of foreign lecturers at the university. The driving force behind the university's internationalization is the authorities who have always surrounded themselves by people open to innovation and experimentation. In the early period of the university's

⁵ <https://wseh.pl/historia.html>

functioning, the most dynamic faculty was philology, so it was, by principle, part of the international trend not only because of the languages of instruction, but also because of the process of building a framework of international staff. Managing the staff of foreigners, even if there are just few of them, is not a simple matter. The entire administration and staff of the university were involved. Over time, appropriate procedures have been developed to facilitate the foreigners a smooth transition to the requirements of higher education in Poland. The search for only the best lecturers from friendly or partner universities abroad was important, because taking care of the highest quality of education is also a top priority of the authorities. Moreover, foreign lecturers were employed at the faculty of management, therefore, at present, the University employs 9 foreign lecturers, which accounts for 30% of all lecturers, and seven of them are full-time employees. By working full-time, they prevent the temporary and sporadic nature of contacts. The widely understood language support for students to help overcome the lack of foreign languages fluency to diminish a barrier to content acquisition. At present, 13 foreign students are studying at the university, which accounts for 6% of all students.

In the internationalization process, personal contacts between lecturers play an important role. These contacts, established primarily during conferences and seminars, result in joint research and projects. This was the possibility to establish contacts with the creators of the international project known as "X-Culture". It is now possible to start closer cooperation with scientists involved in this project. The school faced the challenge to provide lecturers, outstanding management professionals associated with the international "X-Culture" project and the students the possibility to build a platform for the exchange of scientific thought and common research projects. The X-Culture project was initiated in 2010 by Dr. Vas Taras. The idea of the project was created during preparation of a course in International Business, when Dr. Taras decided to contact a lecturer from another country who was teaching a similar subject. Students from both countries worked on-line on a particular project, thus experiencing challenges and gaining first-hand knowledge from foreign colleagues. Dr. Taras (in 2010) sent invitations through the mailing list of the International Business Academy to get partners for his project. To his surprise, he received dozens of responses from professors around the world in a short time. The first edition of the project was attended by approximately 400 students from seven countries. Since then, the project has grown steadily and in 2015 almost 4,000 first and second degree students from more than 100 universities in 40 countries on six continents took part in international classes. The best projects were selected by independent experts from around the world, and the

creators were invited to present their works at the annual AIB-SE conference in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in 2012. The participants had the opportunity to meet personally for the first time, tightening their further cooperation. Since then, the best projects are awarded this way each year.⁶ By recruiting lecturers focused around this project, the university has a chance to take part in this unique undertaking which, in turn, will raise its internationalization index.

Internationalization of the educational process as well as the whole activity has become a priority of the University's authorities. For this reason, the language teaching structure at the Foreign Languages College has been changed, enabling students to take part in free participation in a greater number of lecture hours beyond the formal syllabus. What is more, the students have the opportunity to participate in language programs co-financed by the European Union, which offer free teaching in the distance learning system, followed by international examinations. The program includes English, German and French.

An important incentive to deepening internationalization was a change in the educational structure from single academic area to two-area system with an important humanistic component in the form of inter-cultural and linguistic activities, needless to say that these classes are taught in English. The Business Studies speciality in the first level of management in the English language has been developed, and the "Arts and Cultural Management" speciality has been developed for the management faculty, master's degree scheme. This is an innovative speciality program taught in the English language. In present times of globalization and multiculturalism, skilful management of high and low culture and the knowledge and deep understanding of its content are important elements of training and preparation for managers of culture and its goods.

What is more, a good orientation in new cultural phenomena, such as the use of advanced visual techniques, is an absolute requirement for managers. An added value is the clash of different approaches to cultural assets management through the involvement of experts from partnership countries.

While discussing the Erasmus Plus program, it is impossible to forget about such an important element of internationalization as the already mentioned mobility. Thanks to a wide circle of foreign partners, the students can contribute to the cultural and academic life of the whole academic community. Lecturers from friendly universities also visit our institution, giving lectures and developing closer friendships, which often results in joint projects.

⁶ <http://x-culture.org/home/17-2/>

Moreover, despite obstacles of a family or professional nature, our students choose to spend part of their studies at partner universities in Portugal, Turkey or Slovakia, as part of the Erasmus Plus program, and our teachers have already taught in Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia. We have regular, short visits of lecturers from Bulgaria, and our employees travel to the Czech Republic and Slovakia for short training. The mobility under the Erasmus Plus program is systematically developed, and bilateral agreements were signed with nine universities and two companies that mediate in international internships before 2010.

Apart from the Erasmus Plus program, another step towards internationalization is the signing of bilateral agreements with countries from outside the European Union, and so an agreement was signed with the State University of Sumy in Ukraine, under which the students of the Sumy National University can accomplish part of their studies at the University of Economics and Humanities in accordance with the double diploma stipulations. A similar agreement is currently being negotiated with the King's Own Institute in Sydney.

It goes without saying, that international cooperation raises the quality of joint research, enriches the learning process, and is an important culture-making factor, as well as contributes to breaking stereotypes.

Internationalization factors	Number
Foreign lecturers on contracts	9
Foreign lecturers arriving as part of Erasmus +	2 per year
Foreign students at the UEH	13
Subjects taught in foreign languages	7
Summer Polish language courses for foreigners	3 editions in 2017
English language speciality in offer	2
English language speciality in preparation	1

Fig.1. Factors of internationalization in HEI⁷

The next step towards internationalization was the organization of international conferences at the University and outside. These resulted in publications and monographs in foreign languages. In 2014, the Senate approved the establishment of the International

⁷ <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042815058619>

Institute for Educational Research (MIND – Międzynarodowy Instytut Naukowo Dydaktyczny), which publishes the MIND Journal that features academic publications from both the university and other academic institutions from Poland and abroad. It is worth adding that the journal is also open to university students. The university is also the publisher of another scientific journal known as the Polonia Journal where the main areas of interest are the issues related to the situation of the Polish diaspora around the world.

All of the aforementioned activities make the university a vibrant centre of international thought. The University hosts scientists from distant countries like Japan and the United States, giving the students an opportunity to accept the challenge of different ways of communication and learning different opinions. Internationalization is also the best way to reject stereotypes that are largely due to ignorance and the lack of knowledge. Therefore, as part of the Cultural Anthropology classes, students have developed research projects related to the existence of stereotypes and advocating positive approach to cultural diversity. The projects concerned countries Polish people know very little or nothing about. The results were surprising. It turned out that Poles know little about our neighbours, and this knowledge is based on individual cases. Whereas our knowledge of distant countries is quite extensive and 80% of the respondents gave correct answers about the culture of countries like the United States. Sadly, the respondents show negative attitude towards Syria. When asked "What stereotype of a Syrian prevails in Poland?" as much as 90% of the respondents described it as "negative". Whereas the traits of a Syrian citizen most often mentioned were cruelty and aggressiveness. Asked about their own attitudes towards the Syrians, 35% identified them as hostile, and as much as rather hostile. Only 5% of the respondents assessed their attitudes to the Syrians as friendly. In turn, the analysis of responses related to the Czech Republic gave quite predictable results. Although Poland and the Czech Republic seem to be similar countries and there are no significant cultural and social differences, the Czech reality differs significantly from the Polish one. This does not concern the reality at the level of social conditions, wealth or standards of life. Differences occur at the level of mentality and cultural determinants [Kasperek 2012].⁸

According to surveys conducted on a sample of 100 people, knowledge of Polish people about other cultures is based on a rather superficial pieces of information drawn mainly from films and the media.

⁸ *Pogranicze-sąsiedztwo-stereotypy, przypadek polsko-czeskich relacji wraz z francusko niemieckim case study*, pod red. A Kasperka, Polish Academy of Sciences, branch in Katowice. Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju i Współpracy Regionalnej „Olza”, 2012 Katowice

The students accurately analysed the reasons and they blame the media and the internet for creating stereotypes. In their conclusions there were opinions that more international content should be included in educational programs.

Conclusion. The aim of the article was to verify the hypothesis that it is not only big universities and higher education institutions which implement activities leading to internationalization of the institution. On the example of a small University of Economics and Humanities the author confirmed the assumed hypothesis. In the time of global challenges such as fast developing knowledge, dynamic innovations and inventions in technology as well as the spread of English language as a “lingua franca” of our times, it is critical to adjust the approach to managerial skills to the fast changing demands of the educational services market. The most important factor is not the size of the higher education institution, but the way it is managed. Such institutions cannot be managed like production or services business. Yet, many ideas coming from the recent research on the contemporary concepts of management can be applied to the educational institutions. The system approach theory which defines an organization as a system consisting of four subsystems, such as task, structure, people and environment, can be easily adopted by institutions such as universities, whose task is to provide education to make the undergraduates and graduates competitive on the job market, which in turn is the environment, the institution operates on. Each university has the structure which is appropriate to its service and function. Finally the people who know their mission both in teaching areas and in administration. Higher education institutions are more than just the combination of various parts acting separately, all four subsystems have to operate in synergy [Davidson 1983]⁹. That is why the institution functions as a “wholeness” and develops vertically through the entire structure, in-line with the mission and vision created by the management. Similarly, the TQM (Total Quality Management) theory can be applied to higher education institution management, as quality is the main and most important variable depending on many factors.”... by adopting appropriate principles of management, organizations can increase qualityThe key is to practice continual improvement and think of manufacturing as a system, not as bits and pieces.” [Deming ; Edwards 1993]¹⁰

Globalization whether beneficial or detrimental is irreversible, therefore the key to success is the flexibility of managerial approach. Huge universities very often refrain from drastic decisions concerning the change of approach to the system, moreover, their autonomy

9 Mark Davidson (1983). *Uncommon Sense: The Life and Thought of Ludwig Von Bertalanffy*. Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher. p.49

10 Deming, W. Edwards (1993). *The New Economics for Industry, Government, and Education*. Boston, Ma: MIT Press.

is often limited by complicated procedures of decision making. Therefore the small, independent higher education institutions are more ready to implement changes and manage them in the most successful way. This recently developed term “ new managerialism” [Deem 2017]¹¹ describes the trend of public organizations and institutions adopting management practices, technology, approach and values from private businesses to their methods. Such an approach has been successfully applied in the case of the University of Economics and Humanities in Bielsko-Biala, Poland.

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11 Rosemary Deem, 'New managerialism' and higher education: The management of performances and cultures in universities in the United Kingdom, Pages 47-70

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***Abstract.** Summing up, it should be emphasized that in the age of globalization it is impossible to omit the learning process internationalization, and there is no other way than to promote learning of foreign languages, especially English. Globalization does not give a choice, nor does it absolve anyone from the need to deepen knowledge and skills. Regardless of whether a given organization is a large university or a small non-public institution, each one must submit to this process in order to maintain the activities on the educational services market. Otherwise, such an institution will educate graduates doomed to unemployment which, in turn, will make it unpopular and sometimes worthless. Hence, university authorities should be open to inevitable changes and introduce innovative actions in this area.*

***Keywords:** internationalization, management, higher education institutions, authorities, mobility, exchange, foreign languages, English language*