

# Chapter 5

## Internationalization of Higher Education: The Methodological Critiques on the Research Related to Study Overseas and International Experience

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter aims to present the methodological critiques on research related to study overseas and international experience under the umbrella of the internationalization of higher education. It will critique seven research articles from three approaches: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method. The critiques will be addressed to the research steps that have been taken by the researchers from their philosophical stands to their findings. The first part of this chapter will present the critiques on qualitative research articles. Then, the second part will discuss the critiques on quantitative research articles. The last part will deliver the critiques on mixed-method research articles. Overall, this chapter attempts to discuss any methodological weaknesses of those research projects and present feedback on their steps using various references on research methodology. The chapter will provide an in-depth reflection for the researchers on conducting their inquiries.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, the term internationalization has been undoubtedly very common in the context of higher education institutions (HEI). It has been recognized as their response toward globalization's ever-changing era (Bennet & Kane, 2011). In the era of transformations that happen in various aspects of

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human life (Bondarenko & Aleshkovski, 2019), HEIs are demanded to generate certain goals to face the era's challenges (Waller *et al.*, 2019). They also need to propose various changes in their routines, such as teaching, research, and community services (Kayıkçı & Ercan, 2013). One way to realize them is by creating initiatives of transforming themselves into institutions that work in their national and international contexts (Altbach *et al.*, 2009). These initiatives have globally come to be known as Internationalization. As elaborated by Knight (1994), it is "the process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching/learning, research and service functions of a university or college" (p. 3). Many HEIs across the globe have been integrating this phrase into their university programs by equipping their institutions with the international standard of teaching, world-class research, and global reputations. They carry out all their daily academic activities by reflecting on the international level's dimension (De Wit, 2013). They believe that doing those activities in such ways can increase their university's quality, leading to their success in coping with the potential competitions in the globalized world such as international students' recruitment, league tables, and the demands of producing high-quality graduates.

There are many ways universities implement their strategies to cope with their internationalization plan (Soliman, Anchor, & Taylor, 2018). One of them is by sending their academic members to study overseas under the programs of further study, conference, join research, and student and staff exchange (Kaowiwattanakul, 2016; Kouijzer, 1994; Paige, 2005). Internationalization is nowadays closely affiliated with student mobility (Alpenidze, 2015) and personnel mobility and education policy sharing and practices (Henard, Diamond, & Reseveare, 2012). This statement is supported by Teichler (2017), arguing that there are significant increases in students' mobility, intensified academic and administrative staff exchange, and ongoing changes in educational programs under the programs labeled as Internationalization. These activities can potentially improve the quality of universities' human resources, which potentially improves the quality of university programs such as teaching, research, administration, and public services. In turn, this increasing quality will be able to support the success of the university's internationalization project.

Without disregarding other internationalization strategies potentially giving many benefits to universities, study overseas programs for the academic members, including lecturers, can provide opportunities to develop their international qualities such as global and intercultural awareness, expanded views on the world, and compatible competence with the demands of the global workplace (see, e.g., Altbach and Teichler, 2001; Deardorff, 2008; Dolby, 2007). From this development, universities can get many benefits by having international quality members execute their daily routine, bringing success to their internationalization agenda (Brandenburg, 2016). Despite the importance of this strategy, the abundance of studies in this field (see, e.g., Kaowiwattanakul, 2016; Tarrant, 2010; Trilokekar & Rasmi, 2011; Paige *et al.*, 2009), and their crucial contributions to the contemporary literature, there can be found some weaknesses of their research methodologies which potentially reduce the quality of their projects. This chapter aims to find and discuss those weaknesses to see how these research projects could have been done better, from their philosophical stand to their findings. This chapter will also offer valuable feedback on conducting these projects of research using prominent references such as those from Creswell (2009), Tracy (2010), Mertens (2010), Patton (1990), and other scholars to produce better quality research. Overall, this chapter will be beneficial information on how to critique research projects and articles. The critiques can be valuable reflections for researchers across the globe, including in Asia, GCC, and the Middle East, on how to properly conduct their inquiries, according to some well-known writers on research projects.

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