

2018-10-08

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<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/11819>

10.1108/ET-09-2017-0141

Education and Training

Emerald

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Internationalisation strategy, faculty response and academic preparedness for transnational teaching: the significance of pre-departure training

Journal:	<i>Education + Training</i>
Manuscript ID	ET-09-2017-0141.R2
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	internationalisation strategy, TNE, academic preparedness, intercultural competencies, pre-departure training, Post-92 University

**Internationalisation strategy, faculty response and academic preparedness for
transnational teaching: the significance of pre-departure training**

Abstract

Transnational education (TNE), interpreted as the mobility of education programmes and providers between countries, has grown exponentially as a worldwide phenomenon in recent years. Higher education institutions (HEIs) have mainly used such opportunities to internationalise their degrees and programmes, and have paid scant attention on preparing academics to teach cross-culturally. As a result, academics being at the coalface of teaching and learning often feel under-informed, under-supported, underprepared, and under-confident when it comes to cross-cultural teaching, suggesting that universities have largely failed to prepare their academic faculty members to face the challenges of internationalisation. This is particularly important for new and young players such as the Post-92 Universities in the UK. However, such institutions have largely been ignored by the previous research in this area. Reverting the research focus on young HEIs, this paper highlights the importance of preparing faculty staff members to teach cross-culturally via the TNE route. In doing so, the paper adopts Deardorff's intercultural competency process model to develop a framework (focusing on three core elements of knowledge, skills and attitudes) that could help the academic faculty members to prepare for teaching internationally. The paper is based on a detailed analysis of university's internationalisation strategy, policy documents and related reports for the 1999 – 2016 period. The initial analysis is further supplemented by 11 interviews with the main stakeholders i.e. academics, educational developers and policy makers. Informed by the best practices, the paper also discusses the implication of intercultural competencies for cross-cultural teaching.

Keywords: internationalisation strategy, TNE, academic preparedness, intercultural competencies, pre-departure training, Post-92 University, UK.

1. Introduction

During the last decade, the higher education sector has transformed by various kinds of internationalisation processes that operate in a constant flux of globalisation (Nawaz, 2018a; Nawaz, 2017b). As a result, internationalisation activities of higher education institutions (HEIs) have expanded dramatically in terms of volume, scope and complexity (Altbach and Knight, 2007; Tierney and Lanford, 2015). The rapid growth in academic and research collaboration, transnational education and international franchising (Bedenlier et al., 2017; Lemke-Westcott and Johnson, 2013; Wilkins and Huisman, 2012) have resulted in an increase in cross border student and institution flow (Knight, 2016; Tierney and Lanford, 2015).

An evolving area in the internationalisation of higher education is transnational education (TNE), interpreted as “the mobility of education programs and providers between countries” (Knight, 2016, p. 34). Further studies have reported TNE as a major recruitment route to the UK education (O’Mahony, 2014). TNE has different delivery modes from international branch campus and articulation agreements to dual degree programmes and validation of programmes (*for further details, see Knight, 2016*). Simply stated TNE is a joint venture between two HEIs which involves transporting of programmes and degrees from home to host (foreign) country (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Within the TNE model exists transnational teaching (Smith, 2009) where academic staff members fly in from the home institution to teach in an international partner institution.

One of the most astonishing aspects surrounding the wave of internationalisation is that the HEIs have mainly used such opportunities to internationalise their degrees and programmes and have paid scant attention on preparing academics to teach cross-culturally (Hollins and Guzman, 2005; Gopal, 2011). As a result, academics being at the “coalface of teaching and learning often feel under-informed, under-supported, underprepared, and under-

confident when it comes to internationalisation” (Green and Whitsed, 2013, p. 2), suggesting that universities have largely failed to prepare their academic faculty members to face the challenges of internationalisation (Smith, 2009). Smith (2009) further note that majority of the academics who undertake transnational teaching do not receive sufficient training to meet the pedagogical challenges in the new environment. In this regard, Stohl (2007, p. 367) stresses that “[I]f we want to internationalise the university, we have to internationalise the faculty”.

This is particularly important for the young HEIs (i.e. Post-92 Universities in the UK) who are relatively new to the higher education sector because their internationalisation strategies may differ significantly than the mature and established HEIs (Wilkins and Huisman, 2012). However, this aspect have largely been ignored by the previous research in this area.

Against this background, the main objective of this paper is to highlight the importance of preparing faculty staff members to teach cross-culturally at partner institutions via the TNE route. In doing so, the paper adopts the intercultural competency process model devised by Deardorff (2006) to develop a framework (focusing on three core elements of knowledge, skills and attitudes) that could help the academic staff members to prepare for teaching internationally. Informed by the best practices, the paper also discusses the implication of intercultural competencies for cross-cultural teaching in the context of a Post-92 University in the UK (hereafter, Post-92).

The research offers interesting insights from the perspective of three diversified stakeholders –academic faculty members, educational developers and professional staff members, which are considered as the three out of four (students being the fourth pillar) main pillars of higher education (Nawaz, 2018b). The research findings have broader implications at individual-, organisational- and industry-level. At individual level, pedagogically well-

equip academic faculty members will be able to promote an HEI's internationalisation strategy as well as grow their own personal profile hence, career progression. At organisational level, the insights observed in this research may assist the educational developers to design better pedagogical training programmes to prepare academic faculty members as well as help professional staff members to take into consideration the readiness of the academics on campus while developing new internationalisation strategies. At the industry level, the findings may assist the other HEIs in the higher education sector to adjust their strategies towards internationalisation.

The concept of and trends in internationalisation of higher education are provided in section 2. Research methodology and research sample is described in section 3. The process model of intercultural competence is described and linked to the current research in section 4. Lastly, the final section concludes the study by presenting the research findings and their implications as well as suggestions for further research in the same area.

2. Background

2.1 Internationalisation of higher education

The term 'internationalisation' covers different things, and includes different dimensions, with varied stresses at different levels of higher education (Zolfaghari et al., 2009, p. 2). In this paper, internationalization of higher education refers to "the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution" (Knight, 1999, p. 16).

Internationalisation of higher education is a reality not a myth –a global phenomenon that has engulfed HEIs worldwide (Nawaz, 2018a). The scope and scale of internationalisation has changed dramatically over the past two decades (Bedenlier et al.,

2017). New actors, modes of delivery and new form of partnerships have emerged as a result, increasing competition in the market (Nawaz, 2018b). Many universities, guided by different ideologies, have responded to the wave of internationalisation by engaging in ‘an ambiguous and unclear journey of internationalisation’, mainly driven by the economic imperatives (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Furthermore, such internationalisation strategies have primarily focused on increasing student recruitment (Robson, 2015) and have paid scant attention on how these strategies effect on the academic faculty members, “albeit assuming a central position in an institution’s internationalisation process” (Kim and Locke, 2010, p. 28). There is no exception for the Post-92 University in focus.

3. Research approach

The paper is based on two data sources. Primary data was collected through 11 interviews with senior academic staff members, involved in cross-cultural teaching; new academic staff members, considering transnational teaching; educational developers, responsible for staff training and development; and professional services staff members, responsible for global engagement, policy and strategical developments. The research approach is informed by the previous research in this area (e.g., Gopal, 2011; Gribble and Ziguras, 2003; Richardson and Zikic, 2007).

Participation in this research project was voluntary. However, given the significance of the study and relevance of various stakeholders/players involved in the process of internationalisation, specific individuals were targeted from different divisions within the university. Nineteen individual staff members, actively involved in internationalisation were invited for the interviews, however, fourteen agreed for interviews but three pulled out later due to personal and work related commitments. Thus, the final sample consist of eleven

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3 stakeholders representing three divisions including; seven academic staff members, two
4 educational developers and two professional services staff members. The demographic
5 characteristics of the interviewees are summarised in Table 1.
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10 **[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]**
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12 Accordingly, the data was collected through 11 semi-structured interviews. The interview
13 lasted twenty-five minutes on average with the longest interview of 35 and the shortest
14 interview of 20 minutes, respectively. Detailed notes were taken during the interviews.
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16 Thematic analysis was performed as the data analysis progressed through. The data was
17 revisited more than once to insure the accuracy. Emerging themes were benchmarked with
18 the objectives as well as with the existing literature to reach the conclusions presented in the
19 study.
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28 Secondary data was derived from a detailed analysis of Post-92's internationalisation
29 strategy documents, annual reports, quarterly reports, staff training and development
30 programmes etc. covering the 1999-2016 period, to supplement the primary data. The data
31 collection process is illustrated in Figure 1.
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37 **[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]**
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40 The research is focused on one of the Post-92 universities in the UK. The research process
41 started at Stage 1 where policy documents related to the sampled university in general i.e.
42 vision, mission and strategic goals for the short- (annual), medium- (five years) and long-
43 term (ten to twenty years) were analysed to understand the business model. Sampled
44 university's internationalisation strategy documents were analysed concurrently and key
45 developments in the area were benchmarked against the targets and objectives, outlined in the
46 strategy.
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At stage 2, faculty level documents were thoroughly analysed to understand how the internationalisation strategy is communicated from the centre (i.e. the Rector/VC office and department of strategy and extern engagement) to various faculties and departments within the university. Faculty’s annual action plans for the past eighteen years were analysed to determine faculty’s readiness and reaction towards the internationalisation strategy. Similarly, a thorough review of training and development programmes available for faculty staff members was performed to determine support (if any) available for academics to prepare for internationalisation, including training programmes on transnational teaching. Various themes emerged through this process. The analysis equally provided a clearer understand of university’s strategic objectives, achievements and ambitions in internationalisation.

At the third and final stage, a through discussion in the form of interviews was conducted with the main stakeholders focusing on transnational teaching. Seven interviews were conducted with the senior academics who had vibrant experience in cross-cultural teaching as well as with academics who had no previous experience in teaching off-campus but who were considering cross-cultural teaching. Two interviews each were conducted with the educational developers who are mainly responsible to cater the teaching and development needs of academic and professional faculty members and who are engaged in developing and implementing university’s internationalisation strategy. The demographic profiles of the interviewees are provided in Table 1.

3.1 Internationalisation at Post-92

The following part is based on secondary data. The Post-92 like many higher education institutions around the world has embraced internationalisation in a variety of ways. Post-92

is profoundly involved in a range of internationalisation activities to increase and sustain long-term academic partnerships with HEIs globally. Currently, the Post-92 maintains a diversified portfolio of education programmes, across a wide range of subject areas and levels of study that have been co designed and are co-delivered with partner institutions. The current internationalisation strategy of Post-92 is mainly focused on transnational education (TNE) whereby programmes developed and accredited in the Post-92 are delivered in international partner institutions in various locations worldwide (TNE trends are summarised in Figure 2).

[INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Figure 2 illustrates the TNE trends of the Post-92 University in focus. There are three main TNE routes as outlined above namely validation, articulation and outreach (transnational teaching). As can be observed, the university initially focused on validation and articulation routes to establish its presence in the market. Although no traces of transnational teaching agreements are witnessed in the first five years, however, the last six years data suggest university's current strategic focus of internationalisation in which transnational teaching or outreach is the most popular TNE route.

Most of these programmes are co-delivered by the Post-92 academic staff members at the partner institutions. Although such an approach has helped Post-92 to attract good quality international students –economic and intellectual capital accumulation and an opportunity to deliver its intellectual resources across borders (Altbach and Knight, 2007), it has exposed Post-92 to some unanticipated challenges.

3.2 Challenges of Internationalisation

One of the most astonishing aspects surrounding the wave of internationalisation is that the academic faculty members at Post-92 lack the knowledge and skills related to good pedagogical methodologies to engage students in a range of cultural environments. Previous research suggests that teaching in a distinct sociocultural context requires “a great degree of transferability of pedagogical knowledge and skills” (Pherali, 2012, p. 316) and academics who are unaware of culturally competent pedagogical strategies often fail to work with learners from other cultures (Paige and Goode, 2009). Academic faculty members play a crucial role in the successful execution of an institution’s internationalisation strategy (Stohl, 2007). Thus, it is imperative for the sending institutions (i.e. Post-92), to effectively prepare their academic staff members to teach in a cross-cultural environment (Gribble and Ziguras, 2003). Many universities in the UK and abroad have made pedagogical training contractual for the university teachers (Nawaz, 2016a) yet there is resistance from the academics to undertake such training programmes (Deaker, 2016). Although Post-92 has, a centralised professional development unit and academic developers are positioned to meet the ongoing learning and developing needs of academics. Yet the review of Post-92’s policy and strategy documents suggests that there are no mandatory formally structured training programmes for the academic faculty members on ‘*internationalisation*’ or ‘*intercultural competency*’ to facilitate the needs of academics who are confronted with the challenge to teach in cross-cultural environments.

As can be observed in Figure 2, the TNE agreements have increased over the past five years, suggesting the current focus of Post-92’s internationalisation strategy. With the expansion of TNE agreements, Post-92 staff members are expected to teach in a range of newly developed overseas partner institutions via the TNE route. Hence, there is an imminent need to equip the academic faculty members with certain intercultural competencies to teach in cross-cultural environments.

One plausible solution is to offer pre-departure cross-cultural training to ensure that academics are adequately prepared for transnational teaching (Gribble and Ziguras, 2003). The process model of intercultural competence devised by Deardorff (2006) offers a better opportunity to address the needs of academic faculty members for professional development in this area.

4. Process Model of Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence in Deardorff (2009, p. 247) is defined as a person's "ability to interact effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes". Deardorff (2009) reasons that the intercultural competence process model, which consists of three elements namely; knowledge, skills and attitudes, can be employed as a framework for best practices "in order to cultivate intercultural proficiency as well as to provide a starting point at which to mentor and train international teaching professionals" (Gopal, 2011, p. 374).

4.1 Knowledge

The first core element in the dynamic process of developing intercultural competence is knowledge and comprehension. When preparing academics to teach in a transnational context, it is important to analyse their cultural self-awareness (Greenholtz, 2000) and equip them with culture-specific knowledge such as culture-specific teaching materials, gender roles and function of local language (Dunn and Wallace, 2006; Gopal, 2011).

Greenholtz (2000) regards cultural self-awareness as the prerequisite for advancing through the stages of intercultural competence. Similarly, Paige and Goode (2009) believe that a person's ability to comprehend other cultural practices and recognition of cultural

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3 differences, offers him or her a strong foundation for transnational teaching. However, the
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5 contention here is that, the sending institutions do not offer training opportunities on this type
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7 of knowledge to those who teach in transnational contexts (Dunn and Wallace, 2006). There
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9 is no exception for Post-92. As noted during the interviews in which an inexperienced young
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11 academic have opined that:

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14 *[....] initially, I was thrilled to teach in an exotic location, hundreds of miles away but*
15 *then I started realising that I'll be living and working in a culture way different than*
16 *mine and (honestly) I know nothing about that culture [....] I asked around for any*
17 *available training or support because without that I am not sure if I'll be able to take*
18 *up teaching abroad.*
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20 Another academic added:

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23 *[....] I do not need a formal training on how to teach! I have enough teaching*
24 *experience to teach a diversified classroom [....] all I need is, if someone could talk*
25 *me through the process and expectations of the host institution and that of the*
26 *audience (students).*
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28 While no formal training is available at university level in the Post-92, a great deal of
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30 informal mentoring and briefing through workshops or seminars can be organised at faculty
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32 level. For example, experienced faculty staff members who regularly fly overseas to teach in
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34 partner institutions could be approached to lead such workshops and share their personal
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36 experiences to help prepare those inexperienced academics who are committed to teach on
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38 newly developed TNE programmes.
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41 Such an informal interaction could potentially encourage the faculty members to get
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43 involved in a dialog with their peers where they could explore the challenges of transnational
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45 teaching and receive some form of advice. This proposal is informed by the earlier research
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47 in this area, which submits that such pre-departure interactions enable the academics to gain
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49 the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with obstacles in a new teaching environment (see
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51 Dunn and Wallace, 2006).
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Other senior academic faculty members who possess a vibrant experience in cross-cultural teaching suggested pairing approach as an alternative plausible solution. They went on sharing their first teaching abroad trip to China where a senior academic faculty member who taught extensively in that partner institution accompanied them. They found their presence and advice very useful in dealing with the new teaching environment.

[....] if you ask me, I am a big proponent of pairing approach [....] it saved me during my first teaching abroad where on my first day of teaching I was confounded by regular interruption of my class for mandatory breaks (every 50 minutes a bell use to go off, indicating a mandatory 10 minutes break) [....] my teaching experience would have been very different (even negative) if I did not have that senior academic staff from my home university with me who helped me alter my teaching approach on the same eve to meet the cultural norms.

The forging account suggests that pairing approach could equally be useful. If an inexperienced academic faculty member is paired with a senior academic with experience in teaching in a particular culture or institution, could help the inexperienced academic overcome some of the cultural issues that could potentially affect their teaching abroad. Although the issue highlighted above is a routine occurrence in Chinese academic culture but the new academic faculty member was not aware of such sensitive hidden cultural factor that potentially influenced their teaching (Gribble and Ziguras, 2003; Hiller and Wozniak, 2009).

Previous research submits that if cultural expectations are not considered, learning may be inhibited (Lemke-Westcott and Johnson, 2013). To avoid any discrepancies that may result in a mismatch between an academics' teaching approach and students' learning styles in a cross-cultural environment, academics should be pedagogically equipped to respond to the students' cultural needs (Prowse and Goddard, 2010); deal with cultural diversity (Gribble and Ziguras, 2003); and match student expectations (Hiller and Wozniak, 2009). In the example above, the academic faculty member was able to modify their teaching and assessment methods (Dunn and Wallace, 2006) with the help of a fellow senior academic to meet the hidden yet sensitive cultural needs of their clientele i.e. international partner

institutions (Greenholtz, 2000). Hence, it is imperative for Post-92 to offer formal or informal training and support in the form of pairing approach for instance, which could help the outgoing academic faculty member to prepare better and be successful in cross-cultural teaching.

4.2 Skills

The second core element in the process of developing intercultural competence are skills. According to O’Mahony (2014) and Teekens (2003), teaching in transnational context requires practice and learning special skills such as communication abilities, reflexivity and self-reflection, among others.

Greenholz (2000) notes that an academic’s ability to reflect constantly on the significance of their experience could move them towards a more positive transcultural experience and encourage them to undertake transnational teaching (Hiller and Wozniak, 2009). Gopal (2011), however, warns that academics who are not offered training to learn about and practice reflexivity may experience difficulties in understanding various cultural norms, which may lead to negative teaching experience. Addressing the needs of academic faculty members for professional development in this area is however challenging (Green and Whitsed, 2013) as observed in the quotes below.

Reflexivity is one of the key challenges facing the faculty staff members at Post-92 as observed by one of the educational developer:

[....] reflexivity is an art in my opinion and sadly, most the of the academics we deal with (although some are really good!) here on campus lack such skills [....] we try hard to encourage and engage academic faculty members by offering free workshops but the turnout is very low.

They went on saying that:

[....] it is up to the university, faculty or department to make such training mandatory for those involved in cross-cultural teaching but as long as we (the educational developers) are concerned, we have the expertise and we are here to help but we do not have the authority to implement.

A plausible way to deal with this issue is to adopt a holistic approach at faculty level to actively engage with the educational developers in designing and developing formally structured workshops for those involved in transnational teaching. This is in line with the suggestion of Teekens (2003) who encourages the sending institutions to make reflexivity a mandatory part of pre-departure training for academic faculty members who teach internationally. Similarly, Smith (2009, p. 11) report that transnational teaching and working in a culture very different to one's own forces reflection in those involved (i.e. academics), "which can lead to '*perspective transformation*'; as such it could be a powerful professional development opportunity which should be nurtured and supported".

Effective communication is yet another skill that one must acquire when considering cross-cultural teaching. Previous research suggests that a person's ability to effectively engage in a cross-cultural environment fosters their problem-solving skills and improves their critical thinking. The authors further found that pre-departure training workshops provide a platform for newly assigned academic faculty members to developed their communication skills and build confidence. Hence, this aspect can be covered in the proposed formal or informal workshops.

4.3 Attitudes

Attitudes is the third and final element in the process of acquiring intercultural competence. According to Deardorff (2009), it is important for academics to learn to respect and value other cultures prior to their departure for transnational teaching.

Hollins and Guzman (2005) contend that lack of cultural preparedness may eventually lead the academics to devalue other cultures to hide their own lack of cultural awareness. Such individual behaviour may influence quality of education (Prowse and Goddard, 2010), which could lead up to jeopardy of academic collaboration at institution level (Gribble and Ziguras, 2003).

By the way of example, one of the professional staff members responsible for international/external engagement and development shared a recent incident, which highlights the significance of this matter:

[...] we requested a senior academic colleague to deliver a guest lecture on banking and investments at a potential partner institution in the Middle-Eastern region [...] the academic faculty member used sensitive teaching materials in the lecture, which included photos of 'guinea pig' to illustrate the concept of savings and investments [...] as you may have guessed it already, their student audience predominantly consisted of Muslim students and they objected to the teaching materials [...] the academic panic and their frustration led to ignite an argument on social issues within the country, in which the academic ended up by criticising the human (especially, rights for women) in their country [...] the issue was raised up to the institutional level, which eventually led to the termination of academic partnership between the two universities.

Certain cultural norms are perceived and practised very rigorously in the Middle Eastern region (Lemke-Westcott and Johnson, 2013; Prowse and Goddard, 2010). The occurrence of such an incident could have been avoided, had the outgoing faculty member have the opportunity to assess and enhance their knowledge of the Middle Eastern culture prior to their departure. Pre-departure training could help an academic to develop their ability to be receptive to other cultures, which in turn could help them to overcome anxiety, confusion and frustration when teaching in transnational contexts (Gopal, 2011). It is equally important for academics to respond positively, appropriately and respectfully to their learners from diverse cultural backgrounds. This also requires the academics to suspend their judgments and be open to other cultures (Dunn and Wallace, 2006).

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3 Post-92's current internationalisation strategy indicates that the university aims to
4 expend its portfolio of academic partnerships via the TNE (outreach) route further in certain
5 regions including the Middle East. The demand for higher education in the Middle East is not
6 only coming from the nationals but also from the expatriates living and working in the region.
7 Therefore, it would be very useful to organise workshops to facilitate critical discussions on
8 cultural beliefs and cross-cultural teaching prior to academic mobility.
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16 The seasoned academics (i.e. academic staff members who possess rich experience in
17 the HE, including the working experience in on- and off-campus teaching) shall be
18 encouraged to share their experiences, highlighting the significance of navigating ambiguity
19 and the unease of being in cross-cultural situations with the potential transnational teaching
20 staff members (Hiller and Wozniak, 2009). These workshops should also focus on
21 encouraging inexperienced academics to perceive transnational teaching as an opportunity to
22 learn about themselves and other cultural perspectives. Paige and Goode (2009) report that
23 academic faculty members who receive intercultural competency mentoring tend to have
24 more confidence and expertise when dealing with cultural issues. Hence, it is crucial for Post-
25 92 to introduce formal/informal training for those preparing to teach internationally as a
26 viable solution. Such an approach will help the university to retain the brain in the age of
27 austerity and economic malaise (Nawaz, 2017b; Nawaz, 2016b) facing the European Union
28 and the UK, given the socio-political unrest in the region.
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45 The research offers interesting insights from the perspective of three diversified
46 stakeholders –academic staff members, educational developers and professional staff, which
47 are considered as the three out of four (students being the fourth pillar) pillars in the field of
48 higher education. The research findings have broader implications at individual-,
49 organisational- and industry-level.
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At individual level, the proposed pre-departure training will help the academic staff members prepare well, not only to teach internationally but support international students on campus as well. Pedagogically well-equip academic faculty members will possess knowledge of different cultures, skills to understand the needs of the increasingly highly diversified international students and attributes to meet the student needs (Nawaz, 2018b) and promote the internationalisation strategy of the HEIs (Nawaz, 2018a). The research is an attempt to encourage the academic faculty members to get actively involved in the process of internationalisation, as there is no escape route left. Active engagement will potentially open new avenues for academic faculty members to enrich their teaching capabilities, further their research collaborations with international academic researchers and institutions and enhance their career progression in the higher education. Given the increasing demand for pedagogical qualification (Nawaz, 2016a), the academic faculty members shall grasp the opportunities internationalisation offers and take this route to strengthen their profile and become a globally employable academic. Pedagogical training triggers the self-exploration in individual academics and enhances their knowledge of the external environment while offering opportunities to foster progress and career development (Richardson and Zikic, 2007).

At organisational level, the insights observed in this research may help the HEIs (not only the one in focus but also others competing within the higher education sector). Educational developers, for instance, who are responsible to meet the pedagogical needs of academic faculty members may benefit from these insights to develop and revise (if need be) the design, contents and delivery of pedagogical training programmes to help the academic faculty members prepare better to face the challenges of internationalisation. Likewise, the findings may assist the professional staff members to develop such an internationalisation strategy that is aligned with the knowledge and skills of the in-house stock of human capital

as well as to meet the needs of the fast changing higher education environment across the globe.

Finally, at the industrial level, the findings may well assist the other HEIs operating in the UK and abroad, to adjust their internationalisation strategy to cater the needs of all stakeholders and not merely focusing on increasing student numbers on campus. The research aims to encourage the HEIs to adopt a strategy that will enrich the experiences of all stakeholders –mainly staff and students and adopt a global perspective that will broaden the reputation and will enhance the impact of any HEI around that will bring sustainability in higher education sector as a consequence, echoing Nawaz (2017b).

5. Conclusion

As the Post-92 University in focus, like any other higher education providers, continues to proliferate its degrees and programmes through the transnational education route, academics tasked with transnational teaching have an increased responsibility to develop the competencies required to work with learners from diversified cultural backgrounds (Greenholtz, 2000). However, the study finds that there has been less interest at university or faculty level in ensuring that academic faculty members, who teach in transnational context are prepared for the specific rigours of transnational teaching (Gribble and Ziguras, 2003). In the absence of any formally structured training, the paper proposes pre-departure informal training workshops/seminars conducted by seasoned academics at faculty, school or department level to help new academic faculty members transform their knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to facilitate positive interactions with students in a cross-cultural teaching environment, echoing Gopal (2011).

It is important to note that such endeavours, however, cannot succeed without institutional support (Hiller and Wozniak, 2009; Paige and Goode, 2009). Firm commitment by the university at different strategic levels is essential for such initiatives to move forward. The proposed informal training workshops could initially begin at department or faculty level and eventually be formalised at university level.

If Post-92 in focus or any HEI in the sector is to stay in the league of the highest bidders for transnational education and to be able to demonstrate their ability to ensure the quality of their overseas degree programmes, HEIs have to heighten their level of attention to the preparation of academic faculty members for transnational teaching.

While HEIs in the UK are under increasing pressure to demonstrate the ways in which they ensure the quality of teaching and learning and introduction of teaching excellence framework (TEF), HEIs in the UK must develop ways of supporting and encouraging the professional development of faculty staff members who teach cross-culturally. Despite the fact that this study remained focused on a young HEI in the UK, the findings can be generalised to the higher education providers within the industry. The proposed training framework could equally be useful for any other regional or international HEI involved in the TNE and cross-cultural teaching, in particular. The research attempts to draw the attention of the management at departmental, faculty, university, and industry level to the significance of preparing academic faculty members to meet the challenges of internationalisation. Academic development is vital not only for the success of an internationalisation strategy at institutional level *per se* but also for the sustainability of the whole higher education sector.

Although the study covered most of the stakeholders, future research may replicate the same approach and include students as an integral part of internationalisation. The study have addressed a curtail issue facing HEIs and argues that HEIs need to heighten their level

of attention to the preparedness of academic faculty members involved in cross-culturally to
ensure the high quality of overseas teaching.

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Figure 1

Data collection process and research sample

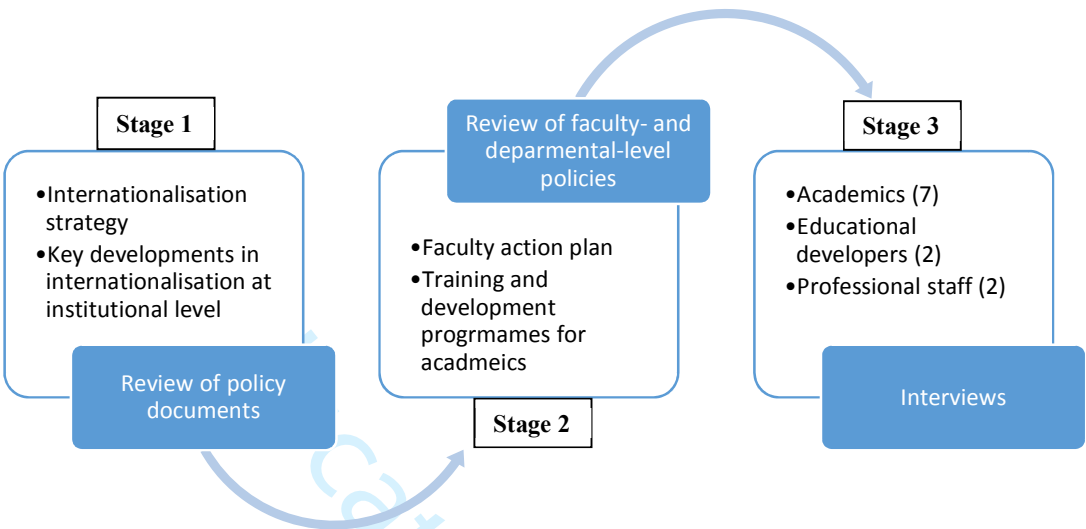


Figure 2

Transnational Education Trends

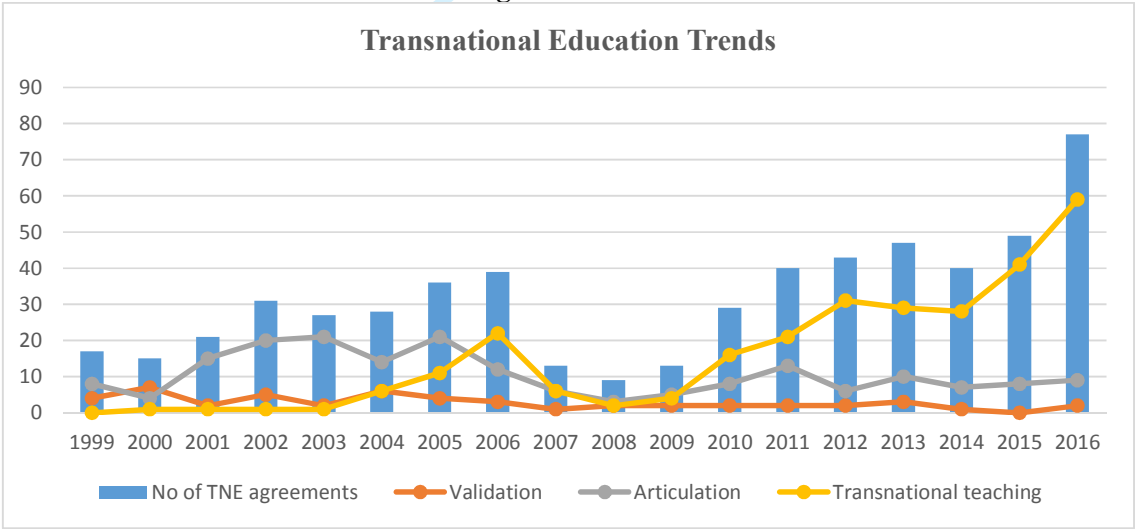


Table 1*Demographic profile of participants*

<i>No</i>	<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Current position</i>	<i>Employment type</i>	<i>Tenure in current job</i>	<i>Experience in the HE</i>
1	Academic Staff Member 1	56	M	PhD	Professor	Full-time	13	39
2	Academic Staff Member 2	43	M	PhD	Professor	Full-time	8	21
3	Academic Staff Member 3	34	F	PhD	Associate Professor	Full-time	13	13
4	Academic Staff Member 4	37	M	PhD	Senior Lecturer	Full-time	8	14
5	Academic Staff Member 5	36	M	DBA	Lecturer	Part-time	3	9
6	Academic Staff Member 6	29	M	MPhil	Lecturer	Full-time	6	8
7	Academic Staff Member 7	24	F	Master's	Lecturer	Part-time	2	3
8	Educational Developer 1	41	F	Bachelor's	Educational Developer	Full-time	6	17
9	Educational Developer 2	36	F	Master's	Educational Developer	Part-time	9	15
10	Professional Services Staff 1	31	F	Bachelor's	Business Development Manager	Full-time	7	10
11	Professional Services Staff 2	34	M	MBA	Regional Manager	Full-time	11	12
Averages		36	55% M, 45% F			73% FT, 27% PT	7.82 years	14.64 years

Notes: HE = Higher Education, PhD = Doctor of Philosophy, DBA = Doctor of Business Administration, MBA = Master of Business Administration.