Higher Education in the Context of Globalisation in Mauritius: An academic perspective

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ABSTRACT

Purpose

Higher education systems are undergoing constant changes under the effects of globalisation. Firstly, this paper explores the interconnection between globalisation and higher education in Mauritius. Secondly, the paper mainly examines the effects of globalisation on higher education in the Mauritian context from an academic perspective.

Method

For the purpose of this study, both primary and secondary data have been collected. A qualitative research was privileged, whereby interviews have been carried out mainly with the higher education policy makers and professionals such as the vice chancellor, deans, professors and academics who are responsible for enacting reforms and ensuring a high quality and efficient service at the University of Mauritius. The main objective of these interviews is to collect information regarding the higher education systems, policies and the opportunities and threats in the context of globalisation.

Findings

Mauritius cannot be isolated from the globalisation process, has no options but to take advantage of the process and adapt itself as an island state to its challenges. Findings have shown that according to most academics, the higher education systems, policies and institutions are being transformed by globalisation. They have agreed that globalisation is not simply an economic term but constitutes a changing and complex environment for higher education institutions and policy makers to operate in. In short, the globalisation process is reshaping the higher education institutions.

However, it can also be noted that some academics consider the new realities facing the higher education systems Mauritius and said that we should not allow markets and
globalisation to shape the higher education system. The call for a sustained approach, improving the educational infrastructure especially computer and internet access, scientific laboratories and equipment, quality improvement in teaching and research and stakeholder consultation are of key importance in turning Mauritius into a knowledge hub.

**Originality / Value**

Although there are literatures on globalisation and higher education, this paper will contribute to a better understanding of the higher education system in an island economy in an increasingly globalised context.

**Keywords:** Higher education, globalisation, challenges, academics and knowledge hub.

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

The higher education landscape worldwide is being influenced by the process of globalization. Higher education is critical to build the human capital that in turn builds the very institutions that are regarded as an indispensable factor of development. Mauritius, which cannot be isolated from the globalisation process, has no options but to take advantage of the process and adapt itself as an island state to its challenges. Globalisation has some opportunities and threats, and higher education institutions are likely to be affected by the changes. To survive and grow, institutions have to accommodate changes. Therefore, this paper analyses the impacts of globalization on higher education in the Mauritian context from an academic perspective.
The ability of a society to produce, select, adapt, commercialise and use knowledge is critical for sustained economic growth and improved living standards. Education is viewed as a fundamental right as it can significantly contribute to bettering the livelihood of people, communities and the nation in general. However, this fundamental right should not be understood or exercised along a one-sided approach but, on the contrary, citizens must be fully aware of their due involvement and responsibility in ensuring that the right to education (in the case of Mauritius, free education) does not become merely an acquired or taken for granted right! Universities and colleges in Mauritius fulfill the task of churning out the necessary human resources for different sectors of the economy and also producing enlightened citizens for the country. Therefore, the government is also paying tremendous importance to the development of higher education institutes in Mauritius. Apart from setting up its own institutes, the government is also encouraging the establishment of private colleges and universities in Mauritius for creating a healthy competition. Moreover, there are several regional and overseas higher educational institutes in Mauritius.

Tertiary education has and will continue to be an important component of the Mauritian developmental model. It is a known fact that the only bankable resource that our small island possesses is its human resources. The idea of turning Mauritius into a knowledge hub was first mooted in the early 1990s but until today with a gross tertiary enrolment rate currently hovering around 19 percent, it is clear that Mauritius is still far from generating the critical mass required of knowledge hubs.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 GLOBALISATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION
Globalisation is today’s phenomenon that deserves to be studied across various disciplines. It is used to describe a process of social change on the macro level of societies. Globalisation has been defined as the process of intensification of cross-area and cross-border social relations between actors from very distant locations, and of growing transnational interdependence of economic and social activities (Beck 2000; Giddens 1990). Globalisation is a multidimensional phenomenon. It has indeed created opportunities for some people and countries as well as introduced new risks, if not threats for many others.

During the past two decades, the spread of markets and the globalisation process have transformed the world of higher education. According to Nayyar (2008), “market forces,
driven by the threat of competition or the lure of profit have led to the emergence of higher education as business. The technological revolution has transformed higher education in terms of distance education as a mode of delivery. Moreover, markets and globalisation have started to influence universities. For example, in the field of teaching, Nayyar (2008) puts it as “discernible departure from the liberal intellectual tradition in which education was about learning across the entire spectrum of disciplines. Students’ choices were shaped by their interests. There was never perfect symmetry.” Universities endeavoured to strike a balance across disciplines, whether literature, philosophy, languages, mathematics, physics or life sciences. But this is changing since parents and students display a strong preference for higher education that makes young people employable. Therefore the availability and popularity of courses are being shaped by markets. Universities are introducing new courses for which there is a demand in the market. It can also be added that markets are beginning to influence the research agenda of universities.

According to Nayyar (2008) and OECD (2004), the world of professional education is being influenced by globalisation and market, for example, engineering, management, medicine and law. Since professions are becoming increasingly internationalised, globalisation is also encouraging the harmonisation of academic programmes. Market forces and technical progress have opened up a new world of opportunities for those enrolled in distance education. However, distance education may not affordable for some people, especially in developing countries.

From the above, it can be observed that globalisation is changing the form and shaping the content of higher education and markets are also starting to influence the nature and culture of universities. The commercialisation of universities has become quite widespread. “At one end, the commercialisation of universities means business in education. At the other end, the entry of private players into higher education means education as business” (Nayyar, 2008). In this proves of change, both dangers and opportunities are closely intertwined. Markets and the commercialisation of universities could lead to the erosion of values as well as morality.

The globalisation of higher education has some implications for people and countries as well as for higher education and development. In developing countries, the globalisation of higher education is influencing the quality of education, for example, sub-standard institutions are charging high fees, providing poor education and also they are becoming less accountable to
students since there are no consumer protection laws or regulators for this market. It can be noted that there are three important implications. Firstly, globalisation of education has enabled more foreign students to study for professional degrees or doctorates in universities in industrialised countries. At the same time, centres of excellence in higher education in labour-exporting developing countries are increasingly adopting curricula that conform to international standards. Such people become also employable anywhere. Secondly, globalisation has also led to an increase in the mobility of professionals. It all started with the brain drain. For example, immigration laws in USA, Canada and Australia have facilitated the entry of high-skilled or qualified people. People are almost mobile across borders and they are considered as globalised since they are employable almost anywhere in the world. Thirdly, transnational corporations are spreading their tentacles everywhere and they have also become transnational employers of people. They place expatriate managers in industrialised and developing host countries. Professionals are recruited both in industrialised and developing countries for placement in corporate headquarters.

2.2 HIGHER EDUCATION IN MAURITIUS

The Republic of Mauritius is located in the Indian Ocean and is made up of approximately 1.3 million people. The peopling of Mauritius is a ‘deterritorialisation’ of people across the globe. The heterogeneity of the island is reflected by its ethnic groups, languages and religious differences (Bunwaree & Kasenally, 2007). Mauritius moved across different stages in its development following economic crusade experienced during in the 1980’s and mid 1990’s: from a monocrop economy relying mainly on sugar exports to a broader based multi-pronged oriented economy with an emerging textile industry and thereafter the tourism sector which gained significant economic impetus. Following the expansion in the financial sector, the information, communication and technology (ICT) sector is the most recent development strategy since Mauritius is aiming to position itself as the ‘cyber island’ or ‘knowledge hub’ in the African region.

The education system in Mauritius is largely based on the British system since Mauritius was a former British colony. When Mauritius became independent in 1968, education became one of the main preoccupations of the Mauritian Government to meet the new challenges awaiting the country. Considerable investment of resources, both human and material, has been put into the education sector and impressive progress has been achieved in terms of free,
universal, compulsory primary education, free textbooks, free secondary education and a fairly wide range of higher education courses at the University of Mauritius\(^1\).

Moreover, higher education or post secondary education in Mauritius is also referred as tertiary education in Mauritius. Since 1988, Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) is known to be an important agency in issues of higher education in Mauritius. It is primarily responsible for fostering the development of postsecondary education and training facilities, providing guidelines for tertiary educational institutes in Mauritius, making recommendations to the Minister on development of higher education in Mauritius, promoting co-ordination among the tertiary education institutes and advising the minister on award of scholarships.

The formal higher education system in Mauritius had started in 1924 with the establishment of College of Agriculture. Since then the tertiary education sector in Mauritius has witnessed and has developed into a diversified system, composed of public, private, regional and overseas institutions catering for a wide range of courses and programmes and also courses are available through the distance education mode. Within the public sector, tertiary education revolves around the University of Mauritius (UOM), the University of Technology (UTM), the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) and the Mauritius College of the Air (MCA). In addition to the above publicly-funded institutions, an estimated 35 private institutions and 50 overseas institutions/bodies are presently delivering tertiary-level programmes, mostly in niche areas like information technology, law, management, accountancy and finance. According to the TEC, the gross enrollment rate at the higher education institutes of Mauritius has gone up to 19.7% and efforts are on to further expand the higher education sector of Mauritius by the setting up an Open University, which will be launched soon.

Since long, tertiary education has been set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. For the first time in 2010, the new ministry, known as Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research & Technology was set up by the present government with the view of transforming Mauritius into a centre of excellence in higher education, and the development of a research culture in our tertiary education institutions so that they become more responsive to the needs of the country. One of the aims of the government is to increase access to tertiary education, especially at the University of Mauritius. According to the present Minister of Tertiary Education, every Mauritian family should be able to boast at

\(^1\) Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Mauritius
least one graduate by 2015. He also proposes to increase the tertiary enrolment rate for Mauritian as well as foreign students. However, Dr Kasenally\(^2\) in a local press article (2010) said that “We do not all need to be graduates unless it will serve a purpose.” According to her, the minister’s proposals “need to be profoundly analysed before being set in motion.” For Roukaya Kasenally, “We have to be extremely cautious about privileging quantity as the end goal. Once these graduates are churned out from universities, will they find a job that matches their graduate ambitions? Is the job market sufficiently elastic to absorb all these new graduates? Simple questions that require answers before we embark on opening up tertiary education to a greater number of students.” Another pressing concern is the lowering of university entrance requirements to accommodate students who do not have the grades. Vocational or polytechnic institutions could be developed as not all school leavers wish or are cut for academic training. Quality also is a very important issue to be taken into account if we want to attract foreign students.

Democratization of education is important, but so is quality, not quantity will determine whether Mauritius becomes a viable knowledge hub or not. According to Mr Bissoondoyal\(^3\) in a local press article (2010), in order to develop Mauritius into a knowledge hub, top institutions should be encouraged either to set up campuses here or make local institutions in entering into strategic partnerships with them. He also pointed out that Mauritian should also stop expecting everything to be provided free to them. A fraction of the costs could be paid by the Mauritian students.

3 METHODOLOGY
This section outlines the methodology used to carry out the study. Although there are literatures on globalisation and higher education, this paper aims at contributing to a better understanding of higher education in an island economy in the context of globalisation. The main purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between globalisation and higher education.

As mentioned in the abstract, both primary and secondary data have been collected for the purpose of this study. A qualitative research was privileged. Interviews were conducted mainly with the academics from the University of Mauritius, the Dean of the Faculty of

\(^2\) Dr Kasenally is currently a Senior Lecturer, teaches media, communication and political communication at UOM.

\(^3\) Mr Bissoondoyal was the former Director of Mauritius Examination Syndicate, (MES)
Social Studies & Humanities, the Vice Chancellor, the President of UMASU⁴ (University of Mauritius Academic Staff Union).

The main aim of these interviews is to collect information regarding the concept of globalisation, the opportunities and threats of higher education in the context of globalisation from an academic perspective. In qualitative interviewing, there is much greater interest in the interviewee’s point of view and the interview reflects the researcher’s concerns (Bryman, 2004) Interviews in the study were seen as the appropriate research technique in order to explore and capture mainly the voices of the academics.

Firstly, it was important to identify and approach participants to be included in the study. A representative sample of 20 academics mainly from the five faculties such as the Faculty of Science, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Law & Management, Faculty of Agriculture and Faculty of Social Studies & Humanities was selected and only 15 responded positively to participate in the study. The other 5 academics turned down the interview due unavailability and their busy schedule. In addition, it was important to include the Vice Chancellor (VC), the Dean of the Faculty of Social Studies & Humanities since they are involved in the restructuring of the implementation plans at UOM and the President of UMASU in the study since they act as the sole authority for negotiation with university management regarding the conditions of work of the academics at UOM. Most of the academics interviewed were also members of UMASU and they also were composed of different positions and grades such as Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Associate Professors and Professors.

The table below shows the 18 participants for the study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculties</th>
<th>Number of Participants Interviewed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Science (FOS)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty of Engineering (FOE)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Agriculture (FOA)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Law &amp; Management (FLM)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Social Studies &amp; Humanities (FSSH)</td>
<td>4</td>
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⁴ UMASU is run by an executive committee, lead by a President, consisting of at least one academic representative from each faculty of the University. It is a platform for academics to draw common cause in ensuring a conducive work environment at UOM.
Firstly, interviews with the participants were carried all out through personal meetings and they were performed at the workplace of the interviewees. The atmosphere during the interviews was open and genuine, where the interviewees shared their understanding of the globalisation and its relationship with higher education on a global level as well as in the Mauritian context.

Secondly, the interviews had a semi-structured character, whereby an interview guide was prepared with mostly open-ended questions and specific topics were covered. The advantage of this technique includes the fact that it opens up for a more free conversation where the interviewee can provide additional information. Topics revolved the concept of globalization, the link between globalization and higher education, the impacts of globalization on higher education in Mauritius (in terms of opportunities & threats), role of higher education in the development, challenges facing higher education institutions and the future of higher education in the context of globalization in the Mauritian context. Other issues were also addressed such as: funding, research culture, technology, distance education, quality assurance, teaching improvement, space, infrastructure, academic freedom and innovation. Probing was also used and interviewees were expected to illustrate examples, elaborate, explain and describe certain issues pertaining to the higher education systems.

Apart from the primary data collection through the interviews, secondary data were also collected in the form of TEC annual reports, press cuttings and UOM and TEC and survey reports from other countries were also consulted.

4 FINDINGS & ANALYSIS
After the collection of primary and secondary data, interview data were transcribed and analysed. Key findings were grouped under the following themes namely:

- The link between globalisation and higher education
- Impact of globalisation on higher education
Higher education and development

Challenges facing higher education institutions

General views on various issues

Future of higher education in the context of globalisation in Mauritius

The link between globalisation and higher education

Some academics have defined the concept of globalisation in an economic term and while others was more in a technological nature. Regarding the concept as an economic term, academics claimed that globalisation calls for free trade, movement of goods and free movement of labour across borders. However, one academic from FSSH said that the term globalisation is recognised as being driven by a combination of economic, technological, socio-cultural and political factors.

All the academics in the study have agreed that globalisation has a strong link with higher education. Some academics gave the example that, through internet, people from various locations can access online courses and earn their degrees. Others also said that globalisation process has facilitated the exchange programs among universities, virtual classrooms and distance education. Findings also indicated that globalisation has facilitated the implanting of some foreign institutions in the developing countries. It can also be pointed out that the VC also mentioned that globalisation allows students to study anywhere and obtain a generic level of education and or skill acquisition. Moreover, academics across faculties underlined that globalisation helps many countries in terms capacity building, networking, sharing of knowledge and ideas. Globalisation influences the marketability of courses and programmes, the course content and the quality of higher education. From the main findings, it was found that with the internationalisation of education, Mauritius can overcome the limitations imposed by geographical insularity, thus broadening the academic and research horizons of staff and students alike. On the other hand, foreign institutions can outsource their expertise.

However, the President of UMASU highlighted the recognition of degrees across borders is vital. Mauritius does have a framework for such recognition but how far our degrees are recognised internationally is yet to be known. In Canada, for instance, the Mauritian graduates have to retake certain exams for them to secure jobs. According to him, “if we wish
to make Mauritius a knowledge hub, we must ensure that the quality of education is at par with foreign countries. In engineering, for instance, this can be achieved through accreditation of our programmes.”

This argument is also in line with another member of the UMASU, stating that UOM should be more visible on the global arena and that further collaborations with overseas universities need to be strengthened.

➢ **Impact of globalisation on higher education**

This question targeted more about the opportunities and threats of globalisation on higher education in the Mauritian context. From the data collected, it was found that globalisation provided more opportunities than threats. Some of the *opportunities* mentioned by the most academics across are as follows:

- Expansion of higher education in Mauritius. Globalisation has provided more Mauritian students to pursue their studies in international universities or institutions.

- Emergence of new programmes of studies that would fit the needs of the globalised world. The course content has become more standardised and thus this requires universities to compete with other similar institutions.

- Internationalisation of higher education an increasing number of foreign students in our institutions. This will allow more visibility of the institutions, sharing of values and culture, transfer of know-how, more exchange and scholarship opportunities for both students and academics and bringing a new source of income for the island economy.

- Improved and new methods of teaching and learning, with the ever growing use of technologies and virtual tools. This has provided more people to get access to higher education through distance learning.

- Delocalisation of many research organisations and educational institutions from their home-based location to several other countries where they are lots of opportunities to market their courses and research projects.

- Enabled academics to undertake research and share ideas, thus leading to increasing networking among academics worldwide. Thus globalisation has allowed research to
be transglobal, thus ensuring the creation of a level playing field in the production and diffusion of knowledge. If necessary quality benchmarks are introduced, this would allow for world class education.

Regarding the threats, the following points were addressed by the most academics:

- Cost cutting. Higher education institutions are being more market driven in the neo-liberal era. This can act as a threat to the quality of education.

- Standard educational programmes through internet may not take into account cross-country differences as far as institutions, culture and economy amongst others are concerned.

- Increased competition at the institution, therefore the institution needs to be competitive in order to provide higher quality of education.

- International standard fee paying tertiary education requires considerable upfront investment but is highly vulnerable to rapid changes in demand due to national and international changes in economic prosperity. The VC gave the example of Australia, which has made a considerable investment in becoming an international location of education but in 2010 it suffered an 11% drop in demand from international students due to the global recession.

- Imposition of knowledge production from outside and this might threaten the local knowledge systems.

- With the opening up of the higher education platform, we will have increasing number of professionals coming to work in Mauritius, therefore this may imply fewer opportunities for the local people especially for those high profile posts.

➢ Higher education and development

Academics across faculties have agreed that human capital and higher level skills are important in achieving sustainable development, which will eventually contribute to the advancement of the country in various fields. Degree programmes are tailored to suit the evolving needs of the job market, thus ensuring the diffusion of up-to-date knowledge in the
workplace. From the findings, it can be analysed that higher education empowers a country and secures its social, political, economic and cultural success in a fast changing world. Since higher education creates a critical mass of high skilled / high value resources, it allows countries that invest intelligently and strategically in higher education to develop new disciplines and areas of specialisation, thus creating new poles of development. Therefore, it creates a reservoir of trained labour force, contributes to innovation and creativity (case of Singapore, India, etc) enables knowledge transfer and sharing and leads to higher productivity. A learned population attracts significant foreign direct investment (FDI), especially with capital mobility. Most interviewees claimed that there are economies with no natural resources but have invested massively in education and today they are among the leading economies (Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, China). According to some academics in FSSH and FOE, higher education helps in reducing income inequality, leads to poverty alleviation and reduce gender disparity. However, the president of UMASU mentioned that the visibility of research work of academics at UOM should be encouraged.

- **Challenges facing higher education institutions**

In this globalising era, as mentioned earlier since higher education has become market-driven, institutions have to be constantly in line with and meeting the demands of the market, thus working in collaboration with the industry. Therefore interviewees from FOA and FOE claimed that sometimes it might be difficult to cope with the exigencies of the labour market and need to adapt to the global changes and societal needs. Most participants in the FOS and FLM believed that higher quality education should be provided and also focus more on research. Since every year the number of students on campus, are increasing, therefore enough space should be provided to accommodate them. Academics also stated that more and more people are migrating or pursuing their studies abroad, there is a need for institutions in Mauritius to seek accreditation.

According to the VC and most academics, the main challenge for UOM is capital funding. Without it, our equipment and resources will not support international standards for tertiary education and research. Most of them highlighted that funding is not problem for UOM only but worldwide. Academics believed that money for research is constantly being reduced, requiring universities to develop new financial systems. Universities are also having drastic cuts from the state as the main source of funding.
General views on various issues

(a) Funding / Research Culture

Most academics interviewed stated that funding is of major concern. Since government has already exposed its plans for reduced funding, in this context, UOM will have to explore other strategies to secure the required funding to maintain the quality and develop the so much envied research culture. According to the VC, UOM needs to develop a culture of looking for international funding to support research projects in collaboration with established researchers in other parts of the world. Academics also claimed that there should be more transparency in the allocation of funds and teamwork should be encouraged. From the above findings, it can be pointed out research and funding goes hand in hand. There cannot be research without funding. Research is the life blood of all higher education institutions as it is the source of innovation and new thinking.

(b) Technology / Distance Education

On one hand, technology has enabled individuals to pursue their higher studies and this has also facilitated the lives of many working people especially the working women. On the other hand, some academics also stated that distance education can only be effective if the mass population can have access to IT tools. However, the number of institutions providing distance education has increased over the years in the Mauritian context. But some laboratories still have some obsolete equipment and software is not up-to-date. Some academics have concluded that we have a long way to address all these issues. It can found that in this globalising era, access to electronic platforms is essential in disseminating knowledge and information. Therefore, technology acts as a means of democratising higher education. Investment is required in both human and capital resources to develop distance education and the Open University will definitely lead to this investment.

(c) Quality Assurance

The VC claimed that quality assurance is important but needs to focus on aspects of education provision that really impacts core business results. Most academics stated that quality assurance acts as benchmark of differentiating the good from the rest. The quality of our programmes is mainly ensured through the commitment of the academic staff. The
quality assurance system has been developed to support the management of processes and procedures. Other academics argued that how and by whom the quality assurance is being done are essential issues to be taken into account. It can be seen that quality assurance is of key importance to maintain the necessary standard delivery and dissemination of knowledge. Poor quality assurance mechanism might jeopardise the role of higher education and production in the long run.

(d) Teaching Improvement

According to some academics across faculties, there is some reluctance from academic staff to explore and use new methods of teaching in their lectures, this is changing slowly and must lead to more constructivist ways of learning. Through innovative learning, research and development, teaching becomes more dynamic and adaptable to societal needs. Academics also believed that the use of technology will certainly help to improve teaching. Moreover, the VC argued that the teaching improvement needs to be driven by the educators themselves so as it is a natural part of their own pride in their work.

From the findings, it can be seen that there is a need to change the teaching methods that would also develop the critical minds of the students. Therefore, it is fundamental to develop new pedagogical tools and new epistemologies of learning.

(e) Space / Infrastructure

As mentioned earlier, space and infrastructure need to be addressed and essential for quality of education. One academic argued that not only physical but intellectual space is vital in the globalised era. Some academics from FOA, FOE and FOS complained about the obsolete equipments in laboratories and computers. In addition, academics mentioned that it is important good sporting facilities should be provided to the students as well as the staff. Findings indicate that without the proper infrastructure, quality cannot be maintained.

(f) Academic Freedom

The President of UMASU argued that they have managed to fight for this and it is maintained. Freedom of expression of any academic is the very core of a pure and sacred education system. Academics believed that academic freedom is essential if used properly. It is crucial to attract and retain high calibre academic staff and for the flow of ideas and
knowledge creation. It can be concluded that academic freedom must be the hallmark of all academics.

(g) Innovation in higher education institutions

Academics believed that innovation offers universities to remain relevant and an essential element in advancement in this changing and globalised world. They also suggested a number of ways in which innovation can take place by encouraging web based learning, distance learning in more disciplines, use less papers, faster internet introduce table tools Ipad and Epad. It can analysed that innovation is the lifeblood of progress and digitising the learning experience is a must. Without innovation, educational institutions would simply collapse.

Future of higher education in the context of globalisation in Mauritius

Mauritius has become in recent years a very important location in attracting suppliers of higher education. Its relative economic, political and social stability has attracted these institutions to penetrate the African as well as South East Asian markets. Most of the suppliers come from Europe and India to use Mauritius as a platform for such venture.

Some interviewees believed that there is a future for fee paying private institutions who can invest on the state of art facilities and compete against the public institutions who are struggling for funds. The private institutions are in any way supported by their home institutions and can easily market their facilities to attract potential students, be it from Mauritius or from abroad.

Programme of studies need to constantly be upgraded and go in line with the changing globalised world. Most academics viewed Mauritius as positioning itself in becoming a knowledge hub, it is therefore high time for Mauritius to change its academic structure and greater investment in tertiary institutions needs to be promoted. Findings also indicated that innovation can take place only if people are empowered academically and able to access global resources. Most academics believed that academic institutions should work closely with the government and additionally adopt a proactive approach. More collaboration with other universities should be encouraged. However, one academic argued that increasing access to higher education is being emphasised and in the process, quality has been sacrificed. There is also very little mechanism of quality control from TEC, thus causing an
outright invasion from commercially motivated institutions. It can be found from the above findings that the Mauritian higher education will benefit from the globalisation process since government’s plan is to attract more foreign students.

5 CONCLUSION
This paper has provided some reflections on how globalization as an inevitable phenomenon, has some impacts on higher education in Mauritius. Held et al (1999, p.2) argued that the ‘higher education systems, policies and institutions are being transformed by globalization, which is the widening, deepening and speeding up the world wide interconnected.’ In the global knowledge economies, it can be seen that higher education institutions are more important than ever as mediums for a wide range of cross-border relationships and continuous global flows of people. However, not all universities are international, but all are subject to the same processes of globalization – partly as objects, victims even of these processes, but partly as subjects or as key agents of globalization. Based on the literature review and findings, it can be seen that globalization is not a single or universal phenomenon. It is nuanced according to locality, languages of use and academic cultures and it plays out differently according to the type of institution. When considering the future of higher education, the international and global aspects must be taken into account.

It can be observed that globalization provides opportunities as well as threats to the higher education systems, policies and institutions. All the academics in the study agreed that higher education supports development of a country but institutions are faced with some challenges, particularly regarding the financial resources. Academic freedom is under pressure in many parts of the world. Although threatening in some places by political authorities, in other by commercial influences and occasionally by the intolerance of the academic community itself, the norm of academic freedom remains central to the idea of the university. According to most interviewees, major issues like funding, promoting a good research culture, improving technologies and teaching methods, ensuring quality assurance, improving physical and intellectual space and innovations need to be addressed in this globalizing world.

Since developing countries and small island economies are highly vulnerable in this era of globalisation and in times of financial turmoil, government is therefore calling for the private sector as a development partner in shaping and sustaining the higher education landscape of these countries. Government’s efforts to raise the tertiary enrollment ratio and promote Mauritius as the knowledge hub remain on the priority agenda of economic diplomacy to
attract foreign students. To achieve the long term goal on tertiary education and on social integration and justice, we must first of all give all the Mauritian children a fair start in the education system!
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