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**International Program and Provider Mobility in Higher Education:
Research Trends, Challenges, and Issues**
**Mobilité des programmes internationaux et de leurs fournisseurs universitaires :
les tendances, les défis et les problèmes en matière de recherche**

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Abstract

International program and provider mobility (IPPM) in higher education has grown exponentially in the last decade but there is a dearth of research on this phenomenon. This article analyzes the trends and key issues identified in published academic research on IPPM from 2000 to 2018. The review uses a newly developed IPPM Classification Framework for analysis, focusing on four different modes of IPPM—branch campuses, joint universities, franchise programs, and partnership programs. All reviewed 364 publications were categorized according to IPPM mode, major theme, geographical orientation, type of research, publications source, and publication date. The findings illustrate the mass confusion which exists as to how international mobility activities are labelled and categorized. The findings also inform a call for more IPPM-focused research on outcomes and impact, teaching and learning issues, and national-level regulations. Higher education researchers, policy makers, IPPM managers and faculty members will find the analysis useful and somewhat surprising.

Résumé

La mobilité des programmes internationaux et de leurs fournisseurs (IPPM) universitaires a connu un essor exponentiel au cours des dix dernières années mais on note une pénurie de recherche à l'égard de ce phénomène. Cet article analyse les tendances et les problématiques clés qui ont été identifiées dans les publications issues de la recherche universitaire sur cette mobilité de 2000 à 2008. La revue utilise comme moyen d'analyse un cadre récemment mis en place pour classifier la mobilité des programmes internationaux et de leurs fournisseurs, en se concentrant sur quatre modes de mobilité différents — les campus délocalisés, les universités conjointes, les programmes de franchises et de partenariats. La totalité des 364 publications étudiées ont été catégorisées selon le mode de mobilité, le thème majeur, l'orientation géographique, le type de recherche, la source des publications et leur date de publication. Les résultats illustrent la confusion généralisée qui existe sur la façon dont les activités de mobilité internationale sont étiquetées et catégorisées. Ces résultats nous poussent à encourager davantage de recherches centrées sur cette mobilité des programmes internationaux et de leurs fournisseurs, quant aux résultats et aux impacts, aux problèmes d'enseignement et d'apprentissage et aux règlements au niveau national. Les chercheurs universitaires, les responsables des politiques, les gestionnaires de la mobilité des programmes internationaux et de leurs fournisseurs ainsi que les membres du corps enseignant trouveront cette analyse utile et quelque peu surprenante.

Keywords: International program and provider mobility; international branch campus; international joint university; franchise programs; partnership programs
Mots clés : mobilité des programmes internationaux et de leurs fournisseurs, campus délocalisé international, université conjointe internationale, programmes de franchise, programmes de partenariat

Introduction

Importance of International Program and Provider Mobility (IPPM)

International academic mobility has evolved from people mobility (students, faculty, and scholars) to program mobility (twinning, joint/double degree, franchise, massive open online courses or MOOCs) to provider mobility (branch campus, joint universities) and now to the development of education hubs (Knight, 2014). These types of international academic mobility are generally referred to as transnational education, cross-border higher education, offshore education, or borderless education. While there may be conceptual differences between these terms (Knight 2008; Kosmützky & Putty, 2015), reality shows that they are used interchangeably and there is little distinction made between them both within and across countries. This causes many misunderstandings.

It is important to distinguish international program and provider mobility (IPPM) from international student and scholar mobility (ISSM). IPPM generally involves programs and providers moving to where the students are located instead of international students or faculty and scholars moving to foreign countries for their academic program and qualification or for teaching and research. The mobility of higher education programs and institutions/providers across international borders is still a relatively young sector of higher education provision, but it is growing in scale, scope, and complexity (Knight, 2014).

Context: Terminology Chaos and Confusion

The question of terminology for IPPM is like opening Pandora's box. The confusion relates to firstly what constitutes IPPM in general, and secondly what labels are used to describe different IPPM modes or categories. There are a myriad of terms used around the world. A recent review of national policies on IPPM (Ilieva & Peak, 2016), along with the review of research completed for this study, shows that transnational education is a term used most often to study IPPM but its everyday use also includes study abroad and international student mobility. Another area of confusion is the inconsistent use of terms to describe the different IPPM modes. These terms include international branch campuses, joint venture universities, binational universities, twinning programs, franchise programs, joint degree programs, foreign campuses, double or multiple degree programs, among others. A rough estimate suggests that there are over 40 different terms to describe different types of IPPM. To add to the misunderstanding, many different terms are used to describe the same activity and conversely, one term applies to diverse types of higher education IPPM. The result is terminology chaos.

The inconsistent use of program and provider terms has major implications. It makes comparisons of IPPM provision and research within and across countries challenging and often inconclusive. It means that generalization of research findings is difficult and the analysis of internationally comparable program and provider mobility data questionable. This causes serious consequences for the development of policies to enable and regulate IPPM and ultimately the reliability and credibility of IPPM research. To address the confusion, a new IPPM classification framework has been developed (Knight & McNamara, 2017).

Problem and Goal of Study

IPPM is a phenomenon that is significantly understudied. The majority of research and policy making in international education is still focused on ISSM. But accelerated growth in enrollments, modes, and countries engaged in higher education program and provider mobility has resulted in

a growing recognition that IPPM is an important phenomenon that requires closer monitoring and the development of new policies and regulations

In terms of IPPM enrollments in host countries, there are some examples which illustrate the opportunity IPPM provides to increase access to higher education. In 2016 for example, approximately 43% of local tertiary students in Mauritius were enrolled in some type of IPPM program. This means that without IPPM provision a large number of local students would not have access to higher education. In Botswana, IPPM students represent about 30 % of all higher education enrollments. In jurisdictions with a long history of IPPM such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong between 10–20% of HE provision is through IPPM. In Dubai, higher education enrollments through IPPM is around 50%, primarily in international branch campuses (Knight and McNamara, 2017). It is a challenge to get reliable data on IPPM enrollments in host countries as many of the smaller and more developing countries do not have national higher education information management systems.

For sending countries, the number of IPPM enrollments is equally convincing. For instance, according to the new report *International Facts and Figures, 2019* by Universities UK International, there were 693,695 international students from 225 countries who were pursuing a U.K. program and qualification outside of the U.K. in 2017/2018. This is 1.5 times the number of foreign students physically studying in universities in the U.K. This development is unprecedented and an indicator of the future growth of IPPM. Unfortunately, very few countries have collected reliable data on IPPM activities. Canada (although IPPM activity is only moderate) does not have national enrollment data for either the universities or the collages. Neither does the United States nor India who are both actively engaged in IPPM. Australia and the U.K. are the leaders in collecting IPPM data at both the institutional and national levels.

With the unprecedented growth in IPPM comes the potential for numerous academic benefits including increased access, diversity in program offer, development of intercultural skills, joint research, curriculum and pedagogy innovation, capacity building as well as economic, sociocultural, and political benefits. At the same time, there are risks and unintended consequences involved. These can include homogenization or standardization of academic programs, low quality and rogue providers, lack of qualification recognition, unequal partnerships, overuse of English, sustainability, and the profit imperative. With significant new developments, challenges and opportunities with IPPM, it is time to be better informed about the research and analysis being done on IPPM and support the next generation of researchers to focus on international program and provider mobility—not only international student mobility.

The goal of this study was to review the evolution and current state of published scholarly research on higher education IPPM since 2000. Specifically, the following four objectives shaped the design of the study: (1) to determine which IPPM modes are the most researched or under-researched; (2) to identify the key themes that have been the focus of IPPM research and analysis; (3) to examine which types of research have been used and in what kind of publications has the research been reported; and (4) to raise awareness of the trends, challenges, and issues related to research on IPPM. The study is a review of the literature rather than an analysis of IPPM provision in different countries around the world.

Research Design

Analytical Framework for IPPM Modes

It is important to reiterate that the scope of the study was higher education program and provider mobility across international borders; it did not address student and scholar mobility or internationalization of higher education in general. The review is based on four of the six IPPM modes from a classification framework proposed in a recent report by Knight and McNamara (2017). Table 1 provides brief descriptions of the six IPPM modes in the classification framework. The following four modes are the focus of this study: partnership programs and the international joint university—two modes of collaborative IPPM provision; and the franchise programs and the international branch campus—two modes of independent IPPM provision.

In the development of the framework, there was great debate as to whether distance education should be classified as a separate mode of IPPM given the high probability that all six modes are using distance education as part of a blended approach to teaching/learning. However, as a major portion of international programs are being offered through distance education providers such as open universities, distance education was included as a separate mode of provision while being recognized as a form of pedagogy that can be used by all other four modes. However, for the purposes of this article, distance education, which is a distinct mode of IPPM delivery and involves different issues than other IPPM mode, was not included in the analysis while further study is warranted.

Table 1: Description of Major IPPM Modes

<p>Independent IPPM provision The foreign sending higher education institution (HEI)/provider is primarily responsible for the design, delivery, and external quality assurance of their academic programs and qualifications being offered in another country.</p>	<p>Collaborative IPPM provision A foreign sending HEI/provider and host country HEI/provider work together on the design, delivery, and/or external quality assurance of the academic programs.</p>
<p>Franchise Programs Description: The foreign sending HEI/provider has primary responsibility for the design, delivery, and academic oversight of academic programs offered in host country. Qualification is normally awarded by sending HEI. <i>Commonly used terms: import/export, validation, foreign, non-local, international private programs</i></p>	<p>Partnership Programs Description: Academic programs in host country are jointly designed, delivered, or monitored through collaboration between host and sending country HEIs/providers. Qualifications can be awarded by either or both host and sending country HEIs/providers. <i>Commonly used terms: joint/double/multiple degree programs, twinning programs</i></p>
<p>International Branch Campus Description: A satellite campus established by a foreign sending HEI in host country. The sending parent institution provides curriculum, oversees monitoring, and awards the qualifications.</p>	<p>International Joint University Description: A HEI co-founded and established in host country involving both local and foreign sending HEI/ providers collaborating on academic programs. Qualifications can be awarded by either or both host and sending country HEIs/providers.</p>

<i>Commonly used terms: satellite, private international, offshore HEIs or campuses</i>	<i>Commonly used terms: co-developed, binational, co-founded, multinational, joint ventures universities</i>
<p>Self-study distance education Description: Foreign sending distance education provider offers academic programs directly to host country students. No local academic support available. Qualification, curriculum and external quality assurance offered by foreign sending HEI.</p> <p><i>Commonly used terms: fully online education, open university, MOOCs, pure distance education</i></p>	<p>Distance education with local academic partner Description: A foreign distance education HEI/provider offers programs to host country students in collaboration with a local academic partner. Curriculum can be jointly developed and the qualification awarded by foreign HEI or by both partners. External quality assurance provided by foreign sending HEI/provider or both partners.</p> <p><i>Commonly used terms: online or distance education with reference to local academic partner</i></p>

Source: adapted from Knight and McNamara (2017, p. 16).

Literature Search and Analysis

The main sources for this study were the ERIC database, the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER) International Database of Research on International Education, and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. The search for scholarly publications on IPPM included book chapters, journal articles, dissertations (published in ProQuest), and descriptive or analytical reports. Grey literature, in the form of newsletter or newspaper articles, blogs, and conference presentations, was not included. All publications were in English and this was a limitation of the study. The research criteria and key words included the commonly used terms for each IPPM mode as outlined in Table 1. In addition to the four IPPM modes, those publications that addressed more than one mode or discussed IPPM in general were categorized as the multiple/general category.

Given the small numbers of publication on IPPM prior to 2000, the time frame for the review was set from 2000 to March 2018. A total of 364 academic publications met the research criteria and were included for the systematic review. Only a limited number of these publications are cited in this paper for illustration purposes.

The pilot study was conducted in 2017. It analyzed the texts of approximately 120 publications, and through a careful review of the content and research findings reported in these publications, 10 major themes emerged and guided the coding of all identified publications in the full study. The 10 general research themes are listed in Table 2 along with the specific topics addressed under each theme.

Table 2: Ten General Themes with Examples of Research Topics

General themes	Examples of research topics
Definitions and Typologies	Developing definitions and typologies for transnational education
Faculty Issues and Perspectives	Faculty preparation and training, particularly in intercultural competence development; staffing issues
Management and Development	Stakeholder relationship; strategies used in finance and marketing; factors for success; challenges in management
Outcomes and Impact	Impact of IPPM on sending and host/partner countries
Pedagogy and Curriculum	Adaption to local culture in pedagogy and curriculum; challenges in teaching and learning
Policies and Regulations	Government policies; roles of trade liberalization
Quality Assurance	Qualification issues; approaches to quality assurance; quality assurance guidelines
Rationales and Motivations	Decision-making for IPPM provision and for developing education hubs
Student Issues and Perspectives	Student choice; student experiences and perceptions; student outcomes
Trends and Challenges	System-wide issues; changes over time

Each of the 364 publications was coded for one of the 10 major themes, along with IPPM mode, type of research, and geographical orientation of the host and sending countries. In addition, the source of the publication and the date of publication were also included in the analysis. The six factors used for coding each of the publications are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of the Six Factors Used for Coding

Factors	Description
IPPM Modes	Partnership Programs, Franchise Programs, International Joint Universities, International Branch Campuses, Multiple/General Mode
General Themes	Definitions and Typologies, Faculty Issues and Perspectives, Impact and Outcomes, Management and Development, Pedagogy and Curriculum, Policies and Regulations, Quality Assurance, Rationales and Motivations, Student Issues and Perspectives, Trends and Challenges

Types of Research	Empirical, Conceptual, Descriptive
Geographical Orientation	Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America, Global (noted for both the host and sending countries)
Publication Sources	Journal Articles, Book Chapters, Dissertations, Reports
Publication Date	Between 2000 and March 2018 (inclusive)

This study differentiates between a sending IPPM country or institution/provider and the host country which is the recipient of the foreign higher education programs or providers. It is important to recognize that perspectives and priorities differ between IPPM sending countries and host countries.

Findings and Discussion

The first part of this section highlights the findings about each of the four IPPM modes and the multiple/general mode in terms of identified themes, types of research, and the geographical orientation of sending/partner and host countries. The analysis focuses on the findings according to the six key factors of the study—not the research findings reported in the publication. The second part of this section presents the overall results from analysis of all the selected publications by theme, type of research, geographic orientation, publication source, and publication date.

Analysis by IPPM Modes

Research on the four modes represents 60% of all IPPM publications since 2000 and the multiple/general mode constitutes 40%. The most researched mode is international branch campuses (IBCs) (35%) and the second most researched mode is partnership programs (15%) while franchise programs and international joint universities represent 5% of all the publications respectively. The findings about each of the IPPM modes are discussed in the context of the realities of their actual development. The detailed findings about the IPPM modes by the 10 themes are summarized in Table 4 at the end of this section.

International Branch Campuses

International branch campuses (IBCs) are established by a parent higher education institution in a foreign country. They are satellite campuses of the foreign parent institution which maintains major responsibility for the curriculum, academic oversight, and awarding the qualification. Of the four major IPPM categories, IBCs represent approximately one third (35%) of the total identified publications. The prominence of IBCs in IPPM research appears to be reasonable, considering the steady growth in the number of IBCs around the world since 2000.

As of 2015, there were 249 IBCs in the world according to Garrett, Kinser, Lane, and Merola (2016). They reported that the top five *sending* countries were the United States (U.S.), the United Kingdom (U.K.), Russia, France, and Australia; and of the top *host* countries of IBCs, China ranked first followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Singapore, Malaysia, and Qatar. Of the 128 reviewed publications on IBCs, the major sending countries studied were U.S., U.K., Australia, and Canada. None of the publications focused on either Russia or France as the sending countries. This might reflect the limitations of using English as the language for literature search in the review. Two articles from 2016 reported on case studies where a Belgium university established an IBC in South Korea (Beecher, 2016) and a Chinese university developed an IBC in Florence, Italy (Bellini, Pasquinelli, Rovai, & Tani, 2016), demonstrating the emergence of other

sending countries of IBCs than the dominant English and French speaking countries. The findings showed that research on host countries focused primarily on Malaysia, UAE, Qatar, and Singapore. Given that the largest number of IBCs are located in the Middle East and Asia, it is not surprising that the geographical focus of the research is on these two regions of the world.

It is important to note that although China is often cited as hosting a significant number of IBCs, in reality it is a misnomer to call them a branch campus of a foreign institution. This is because the Chinese law (the Chinese Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools law) from the Ministry of Education, which regulates Sino-foreign cooperation in higher education, requires that every sending country collaborates with a local Chinese university. Thus no foreign higher education entity operates completely independently as in international branch campuses. Therefore, in this study, all publications on Chinese joint venture institutions were categorized as the international joint university mode of IPPM instead of an IBC.

The most researched theme about IBCs is “management and development,” which constituted 36% of all publications on IBCs. The common issues that emerged from these publications include approaches to establishing an IBC, development strategies (finance, branding, and student recruitment), relationship between the sending and host higher education institutions, legitimacy building, and contributing factors to sustainability. The second most researched theme (19% of all IBC-focused publications) is “student issues and perspectives.” The common issues examined in these publications include student choice and motivations for studying at an IBC, perceptions (including satisfaction) and experiences of students studying at an IBC, factors that explained certain student behaviours (such as attendance, leadership, citizenship behaviours), and student identity. “Faculty issues and perspectives” ranked the third (14% of IBC-focused publications) and typically addressed motivations and experiences of expatriate staff, cross-cultural training, faculty development (particularly in enhancing intercultural competency), and staffing issues at IBCs.

When geographic focus is factored in for IBCs, it shows that research from the viewpoint of the sending countries was most prevalent. Conversely, research from the host country perspective was significantly underrepresented. With IPPM representing a growing percentage of higher education provision in many host countries, it is worrisome that there is less research from the host country point of view. There is limited knowledge of their perspectives on benefits, risks, or academic challenges.

Partnership Programs

Although partnership programs are the second most researched IPPM mode (15%), considering that there are thousands of active IPPM partnership programs across the world, there appears to be a wide gap between research on these programs and the rapid pace of their development.

Partnership programs are the fastest growing mode of IPPM and have undergone significant transformations. They existed as twinning programs more than two decades ago and many still exist today. Twinning programs usually involved the foreign sending institution being responsible for the curriculum, qualification, and academic oversight, and the host institution being responsible for recruiting and supporting the students, providing facilities, and co-teaching. Their original design meant that students spent the first one or two years in the host country institution and then travelled to the foreign partner institution for the last two or three years. As travel costs were challenging, twinning programs gradually morphed from two plus two programs (two years in the host country and two years in the foreign parent institution) to three plus one and finally to four plus zero, meaning that all study could happen in the host country while students still receive a

qualification from the foreign university. Since 2010, these twinning arrangements have been eclipsed by the growing popularity of joint and double degrees. Students, originally enrolled in a twinning program, are now receiving two degrees—one from the host local institution and one from the foreign sending institution while only completing the required course load for one degree. In other words, double counting of credits becomes increasingly common and raises critical questions as to the integrity of two credentials being offered for essentially one set of earned credits.

There are so many different forms of joint and double degree programs emerging that it is impossible to talk about a general model for partnership programs. However, it is true to say that a partnership program involves academic collaboration between sending country and host country institutions or providers. The collaboration can take the form of jointly designing and delivering the curriculum, joint supervision of research at the graduate level, awarding a joint qualification (one certificate with badges from both institutions) or a double qualification (one from each partner). Internal quality assurance is usually a shared responsibility but often there is an external quality assurance or accreditation done by both the host and sending quality assurance national agencies. There is growing interest in a joint external quality assurance by both the sending and host country quality assurance agencies but this is new and relatively undeveloped phenomenon as of yet.

Similar to research on IBCs, publications focusing on partnership programs also had “management and development” as the top issue examined in research, which constituted 46% of the total publications on partnership programs. Unlike the organizational-level management issues on which research on IBCs typically focused, the common management issues were typically program-based challenges in creating and managing partnerships. For example, Yefanova (2011) investigated areas of congruence and disagreement among stakeholders during the implementation of four graduate double degree programs in Japan, Australia, and the U.S.

The second and third top researched areas were “student issues and perspectives” (20% of all publications on partnership programs) and “trends and challenges” (13%). Student issues included intercultural learning, employability, and learning outcomes. For example, Culver, Puri, Spinelli, DePauw, and Dooley (2012) found that the benefits for engineering students in a graduate partnership program were in personal aspects (such as self-reliance) rather than in professional dimensions and that the partnership program did not provide obvious advantage for better employability from the employers’ viewpoint.

Given the new reality and landscape of evolving forms and increasing numbers of partnership programs, it is not surprising to see a surge in research on this mode since 2013. An example is a publication by Kuder, Lemmens, and Obst (2013), which provides a wide selection of joint and double degree program case studies from around the world. Amongst the diverse challenges involved in co-designing and delivering academic programs, issues which require further research include the double counting of credits to award double degrees and the quality assurance approaches used (Knight 2011).

Franchise Programs

IPPM, in the form of franchise programs, is often described as an export/import arrangement. The sending country institution exports the full curriculum, hires foreign and local teachers to deliver the program, ensures the quality, arranges for accreditation, and awards the qualification, with little or no involvement of a local host country institution. The number of franchise programs actually in place is often higher than reported because many host countries are not always aware of these programs being offered in their country as no local institution is involved and no

regulations are in place. This puts the host country in a vulnerable situation as no quality assurance monitoring can be done and international franchise programs are not accredited. Franchise type programs need to be registered and licensed with host country agencies which, in the long term, will provide more reliable data on numbers of programs and students enrolled. Given the popularity of double degrees being offered in partnership programs, franchise programs are increasingly looking for local partners or establishing local private universities in a host country so that double degrees can be offered even though it remains an export/import model with little or no academic collaboration with host country institutions. The changing scenario of franchise arrangements needs monitoring and further research.

As of March 2018, the number of publications on franchise programs only represented 5% of all relevant publications. The top research themes about franchise programs were “management and development,” “quality assurance,” and “student issues and perspectives,” which together constituted 66% of the research on franchise programs. These publications discussed quality challenges involved in franchise programs and factors such as market entry strategies and legitimacy building. As franchise programs are often criticized for not adapting the curriculum and teaching styles to the local host country context, it is important to note a publication which argued that program developers need to consider the learning styles among students in the host country when structuring course offerings (Hefferman, Morrison, Basu, & Sweeney, 2010). Also worth noting is the weaker focus on management issues for franchise programs than for any other IPPM modes. This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that an export/import model does not involve the complexities and challenges of working with local partners.

International Joint Universities

International joint universities (IJUs) include institutions that have been co-founded or co-developed by both host country and international partner country institutions. They represent a collaborative effort between host and partner countries and their institutions, thus differing significantly from IBCs.

Five percent of the selected publications focused on IJUs. This is no surprise given that emergence of IJUs is a relatively new phenomenon. As of 2018, there are 22 IJUs around the world. Examples include the seven German “binational” universities located in Egypt, Oman, Jordan, Turkey, Mongolia, Vietnam, and Kazakhstan; the nine Chinese “joint venture institutions” partnered with HEIs from the U.K., U.S., Israel, Russia, and Hong Kong; plus eight others such as the new University of Technology and Design in Singapore co-founded by three institutions: MIT from the U.S., Zhejiang University from China, and Singapore University of Management (Knight 2015). In contrast to this list, 15 of the 18 publications reviewed for this study examined issues in the settings of joint universities hosted in China and partnered with universities from U.S., U.K., and Germany. As such, the experiences of IJUs in other jurisdictions merit further research.

The most researched themes were “management and development” (50%) and “student issues and perspectives” (17%). These publications revealed various challenges encountered by IJUs in China, including understanding regulations, establishing personal connections, navigation through local culture, adjustment in teaching styles, and logistic issues in finding an appropriate campus and classroom equipment. Worth mentioning is that to date, there has been no research in identified publications that focused on “quality assurance,” “pedagogy and curriculum” or “outcomes and impact” issues related to IJUs. Research on IJUs is expected to increase in the next few years as more scholars and professionals realize that IJUs work from a different set of assumptions and regulations than IBCs.

Multiple/General Mode

Two-fifths of all publications included in this study were categorized as multiple mode/general. These publications discussed IPPM issues in general or addressed more than two IPPM modes. A large volume of publications under this category can be interpreted in at least two ways. One is that many issues are common concerns for management and academic activities for all IPPM modes. The other is that IPPM is such a recent phenomenon that much of its research still tends to address broad issues. This is evidenced by the fact that approximately two-thirds of all publications under multiple/general mode were descriptive type of research whereas one-fourth were empirical research. This pattern is different from that for the four IPPM modes: empirical research constituted the majority of the publications about each mode.

The research themes for this multiple/general mode are more evenly distributed than for the individual modes. Three themes collectively comprised about 56% of all the research and analysis done in this category. The first theme was “trends and challenges” (20%). This theme covered broad issues ranging from legal issues to risks and benefits (for example, Burgess and Berquist 2012). “Policies and regulations” (19%) was the second most popular theme and it usually involved national-level policies and regulations, licensing, accreditation, financing, and the impact of international trade law such as GATS on IPPM. The theme “quality assurance” (17%) ranked third and discussed international quality assurance guidelines for IPPM and national quality assurance framework.

In summary, Table 4 provides an overview of the detailed findings about the IPPM modes by the 10 themes and the three types of research.

Table 4: Summary of Results from Analysis of IPPM Modes by Theme and Type of Research

	IBCs	Partnership programs	Franchise programs	IJUs	Multiple/general
Total publications	128	56	18	18	144
Percentage of total publications	35%	15%	5%	5%	40%
Themes					
Management and Development	36%	46%	22%	50%	15%
Trends and Challenges	5%	13%	0%	11%	20%
Student Issues and Perspectives	19%	20%	22%	17%	1%
Quality Assurance	5%	9%	22%	0%	17%
Policies and Regulations	2%	0%	6%	6%	19%
Faculty Issues and Perspectives	14%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Outcomes and Impact	6%	4%	6%	0%	8%
Rationales and Motivations	8%	0%	11%	11%	3%
Pedagogy and Curriculum	4%	4%	11%	0%	6%
Definitions and Typologies	1%	5%	0%	6%	6%
Types of Research					
Empirical	59%	57%	83%	67%	25%
Descriptive	34%	38%	11%	28%	67%
Conceptual	6%	5%	6%	6%	8%

Overall Analysis

This section presents the results from analyzing all the publications by theme, type of research, geographic orientation, publication source, and publication date.

Major themes/issues

As shown in Table 5, among the 10 themes, “management and development” issues ranked the top, constituting 29% of all identified publications whereas publications on “pedagogy and curriculum” related issues were only 5%. It is no surprise that issues in relation to management and development were most often researched as there continue to be new programs developed and new host countries getting involved. However, it is troubling to see that the academic side of IPPM, under the theme of “pedagogy and curriculum,” received such little attention in research.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of all Publications Across Ten identified Themes

Themes	n	%
Management and Development	107	29%
Trends and Challenges	45	12%
Student Issues and Perspectives	44	12%
Quality Assurance	39	11%
Policies and Regulations	32	9%
Faculty Issues and Perspectives	24	7%
Outcomes and Impact	22	6%
Rationales and Motivations	19	5%
Pedagogy and Curriculum	18	5%
Definitions and Typologies	14	4%
Total	364	100%

The research on quality assurance is generally not oriented to specific modes but focuses on IPPM in general. This raises the vexing question as to how quality assurance practices differ among the modes. Who is responsible for external quality assurance—the sending country or the host country? For example, with IBCs and franchise programs, the curriculum, qualification offered, and external quality assurance are the primary responsibility of the sending countries. Yet, the host country also has a responsibility for quality assurance as a form of consumer protection and most importantly to ensure that relevant and high-quality programs are being provided (Vincent-Lancrin & Pfothenauer, 2012). The situation is different for partnership programs, as the responsibility for quality assurance and accreditation involves both the sending and host countries. The report by the U.K. Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2014) provides perspectives on quality assurance from a sending country and proposes broad principles and action appropriate for many sending countries.

Types of research

All selected publications were categorized into three types of research. The Empirical category involved research that was based on observation and measurement of phenomena in IPPM and the findings relied on the primary data collected by the researcher(s). The Descriptive entailed publications that described and analyzed phenomena about IPPM but did not use primary data collected by the researcher(s). These publications can be general overviews based on literature and

secondary data to demonstrate the state of IPPM development, case studies without using primary data, or scholarly analysis using a theoretical framework. The Conceptual involved publications that attempted to develop definitions and typologies for IPPM or to propose conceptual frameworks for analyzing IPPM issues.

Overall, these three types of research—the Empirical, the Descriptive, and the Conceptual—constituted 47%, 46%, and 7% of all publications, as shown in Table 6. Empirical studies were mostly qualitative and often involved case studies. Of the studies that used surveys to collect data, which constituted 13% of all publications, most focused on “student issues and perspectives” (for example, Wilkins & Huisman, 2013; Wallace, 2016).

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of all Publications Across Three Types of Research

Types of research	n	%
Empirical	171	47%
Descriptive	168	46%
Conceptual	25	7%
Total	364	100%

In the past 18 years, there has been a trend of a rising proportion of empirical studies and a falling proportion of research under the Descriptive category. As an illustration, from 2000 to 2005, 57% and 43% of the total publications on IPPM were under the Empirical and the Descriptive categories respectively; in contrast, from 2016 to 2018, these percentages were 19% versus 74% respectively. This trend suggests that research on IPPM shifted from descriptive overviews to in-depth data-supported analyses. Within the Descriptive category, some of the publications in the past five years used theoretical frameworks to inform the analysis. For example, Borgos (2013) used the principal-agent theory to examine information asymmetry regarding quality standards and conflicting goals between the branch campus and accrediting agencies. Important to note is the small percentage of research studies which focused on defining and categorizing IPPM phenomena. This may shed light on why there is inconsistency in the interpretation and use of IPPM terminology.

Geographical orientation

From a geographical perspective, the landscape of IPPM presented in publications was dominated by China, Malaysia, and UAE (as host countries), and by Australia, U.S., and U.K. (as sending countries). Of major concern is the fact that very few references dealt with IPPM in Africa and Latin America. This may reflect the lack of significant IPPM activity in these regions and the limitation of only using English references. Important to note is that more research was done from the sending country perspective which primarily offers a Western perspective, than from the host country perspective; and this imbalance needs to be corrected. Rationales, regulations, curriculum needs, teaching and learning processes, and most importantly impact for a host country can differ from the sending country, and thus there is much to learn from a host country perspective. Researchers, policy analysts and new scholars from IPPM host countries are strongly encouraged to engage in IPPM research to correct the imbalance between host and sending country perspectives.

Publication sources

Regarding the publication sources, 42% of the selected publications were journal articles, 30% were book chapters, 15% reports usually from commissioned research, and 13% dissertations (see Table 7). Only a few books are dedicated to IPPM, including those by Dunn and Wallace (2008), McBurnie and Ziguras (2007), and Stella and Bhushan (2011). Individual chapters in these books were counted for this study, along with a few others that included one or two chapters on IPPM, thus giving the impression that there may be more books available on IPPM than there really are. The first two dissertations focusing on IPPM were completed in 2005 and there are a total of 47 dissertations published in the ProQuest database by March 2018. The majority (64%) of these dissertations focused on IBCs. Lack of attention to other IPPM modes is of concern as the in-depth research conducted by doctoral students is critical to future analysis and understanding of IPPM.

Table 7. Frequency Distribution of all Publications Across Four Publication Sources

Publication sources	n	%
Journal article	153	42%
Book chapter	109	30%
Report	55	15%
Dissertation	47	13%
Total	364	100%

Publication dates

Of all the publications reviewed, 6% were from 2000 and 2005, but this increased substantially to 33% between 2006 and 2010, and 46% from 2011 to 2015. The considerable increase in IPPM publications during the last 18 years indicates a growing interest in IPPM and perhaps a promising future of increased research. However, the overall dearth of research on IPPM, as compared to student mobility or international students, is striking and of concern because the research is not keeping pace with the accelerated growth in the number and scope of programs and providers crossing borders.

IPPM Research Issues and Priorities for the Future

The analysis on the trends and status of IPPM research suggests that there is a gap between the exponential growth of program and provider mobility and the scope of IPPM research. The findings in this paper inform a call for more IPPM-focused research in the following areas.

As IPPM matures and becomes an increasingly important part of higher education provision, more research on outcomes and impact is critical. Currently, this is an under-researched theme perhaps explained by the struggle to develop meaningful strategies to assess different types of impact on both host and sending countries. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that jurisdictions such as Malaysia, Mauritius, Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates, India, and Singapore are long-time hosts of IPPM programs and sending countries like the U.K., Australia, U.S. have vast experiences in IPPM delivery. It is incumbent on IPPM scholars, managers, and policy makers to make “outcome and impact” studies more of a priority in their research agenda.

This study has clearly demonstrated that more attention needs to be directed to teaching and learning issues related to the cultural backgrounds, ways of learning/knowing, and identities of students. As the world becomes more interconnected, teachers, staff, and students in IPPM programs are bringing different values, customs, expectations, and experiences to their academic

programs and research endeavors. To date these new multicultural dynamics in all modes of IPPM is a relatively neglected area in IPPM research. The need for curriculum and applied research to be more relevant to the host IPPM country context is recognized but further understanding and knowledge of cultural and identity issues merit further investigation.

Important to note is that the majority of research seems to be on institutional-level issues and not on national-level issues such as developing policies and regulations. This is an example where research is not keeping up with the realities and needs of policy making and, as Ilevia and Peake (2016) and Fegan and Field (2009) point out, regulations at the national level are important for both sending and host countries. Therefore, more research on national-level regulations is required.

As shown in the findings of this study, research on IBCs dominates, especially from the sending country's point of view. More research from the host country's point of view is important to get a more balanced view of IBCs. Furthermore, collaborative programs in the form of new joint universities and joint/double degree programs are the fastest growing mode of IPPM which requires further systematic research on issues such as quality assurance, pedagogy, and national-level policies and regulations.

Currently there are more than 100 IPPM-active countries in the world with Asian countries being most active. More attention to the emergence of IPPM in Africa and Latin America is needed. As the number of IPPM-related countries, programs and providers continue to grow, further research on management, quality assurance, policies and regulations, and teaching and learning will continue to be critical as new IPPM modes, opportunities, and challenges appear.

At the macro level there are two major challenges facing IPPM. The first is the lack of conceptual and theoretical research, and the second is the lack of robust data on the scope and scale of IPPM at the national and institutional levels. Without solid IPPM program information and enrollment data, countries may be hindered in developing the appropriate policies and regulations to monitor and support IPPM, and researchers do not have reliable data to support their investigations. To date, only a handful of host countries have developed systematic IPPM data collection and management systems (McNamara & Knight, 2015). This also applies to some major IPPM sending countries, such as the U.S. If there is no solid data at the institutional and national levels, it is impossible to develop good regional or international databases.

Twenty years ago, this lack of reliable data was the case for international students and student mobility. However, much work has been done by international agencies such as UNESCO and OECD to develop a common classification system and procedures for collecting and analyzing data for all forms of student mobility. While the data sets are not perfect, they are an important source of information for researchers on student mobility as well as policy analysts and higher education planners.

The same type of national and international data sets is now needed for program and provider mobility. There is no internationally comparative or reliable data sets on IPPM. One of the biggest barriers to collecting and using internationally comparative data is the fundamental issue of IPPM terminology. Without clarity and a common understanding of different modes or types of program and provider mobility, there will never be reliable trend or enrollment data available on IPPM activities. As IPPM enrollments continue to grow and the diversity of IPPM modes expands through both face-to-face and distance education, more attention and efforts need to be directed to implementing an IPPM classification system and IPPM data collection and management systems.

While this may not be the responsibility of IPPM researchers per se, it would behoove and benefit IPPM research and scholars to acknowledge and promote the need for these databases. The current state of “IPPM terminology chaos,” as confirmed by this study, does not lead to robust research given the confusion in the understanding of terms. A common IPPM classification framework (Knight & McNamara, 2017) is one step towards developing more reliable and useful applied research. Further monitoring and refinement of the IPPM classification framework is an important area of continuing research.

Finally, it is important to consider issues such as the role of IPPM in a world which faces global issues such as increasing terrorism, climate change, insecurity, poverty, and immigration including unprecedented numbers of refugees. Will IPPM become a means to help develop capacity and increase access to higher education in war ravaged countries? Will student mobility decrease because of environmental and security threats and lead to increased higher education program and provider mobility? Can IPPM partnerships have a role in knowledge diplomacy and addressing global challenges? These are but a few of the larger questions which merit further thought and reflection by higher education thinkers, scholars, policy makers, professionals, and practitioners. All of these actors can help to ensure that more research is focused on the IPPM issues in their areas of responsibility.

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