

Management Education in the Era of Globalisation: Challenges, Prospects & the Way Forward for the South Pacific Region

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ABSTRACT

While internationally scholars have surveyed “management education in the era of globalisation” with reference to challenges and prospects within the context of HEIs, there is unquestionably a dearth of research investigation in the Pacific.

The purpose of this paper is to discover the interconnection between globalisation and management education and draw from the review of the literature and the theoretical underpinnings, present the way forward in the milieu of a developing island state.

Keywords: *management education, globalisation, Higher education.*

INTRODUCTION

The thematic subject of the paper relates to management education in the era of globalisation against the backdrop of Higher education (HE) and describes the challenges and diagnoses for the South Pacific region.

The interpretation of globalization is taken from the interaction process view (Armstrong, 2007; Morrow & Torres, 2000). In this viewpoint, globalization is conceptualised as the exercise of increasing the social collaboration between people globally, crafting economic, social, cultural, political, environmental, scientific and technological interdependence (Levin, 2001; Marginson, 2007). Management education on the other hand is conceptualized as being predominantly concerned with the purpose or goals of education (Bush, 2011).

Globalization of management education has emerged as a pre-requisite for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and according to The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business(AACSB's, 2011) report on "Globalization of Management Education", "the course of Globalization will continue as long as people are driven to look across borders for resources, ideas, efficiencies and services....." (AACSB International, 2011, p. 4). Further to this, Altbach et al. (2009:7) in their UNESCO report for World Conference on Higher Education, stress that "Universities have always been affected by international trends and to a certain degree operated within a broader international community of academic institutions, scholars, and research. Yet, 21st century realities have magnified the importance of the global context".

The conception of globalisation obligates a reciprocal effect in that it influences HE and correspondingly HE responds to the phenomenon (economic, cultural and social changes, etc) via policies and programmes. This has been supported in the work of various scholars that have investigated "globalization and internationalization in HE" (eg: Altbach, 2006; Knight, 2008; Maringe & Foskett, 2010; Scott, 2005; Teicher, 2004).

HEIs in developing countries have progressed through management education and many developing nations are presently looking forward to developed countries for improvements in their economic future (Snyder, 2006). It is prudent that students within the developing countries are delivered industrious skills and sensibilities. Subsequently for educators it is judicious to emulate successful post-industrial era curriculum content and instructional methods. Nonetheless given the various challenges and unremitting changes in the education system, this needs to be done with caution.

Since these, HEIs now encounter far more challenges, and are subjected to an unprecedented level of external scrutiny from the key stakeholders of the institution as well as via the Higher Education Commission (Currie & Newson, 1998). That is why systems of education in all emerging markets of the world are in a state of change with increasing interest in upholding the notions of accountability, value for money and greater access. This increased accountability has led to concerted efforts made by education practitioners and academics who are now, continuously engaged in devising, and searching for, different mechanisms and strategies in order to assure quality (Ball, 1998). Internal competition in the university sector is inevitably becoming keener and intensified and universities/institutions now inhabit a more competitive

world where resources are becoming scarcer, but at the same time they have to accommodate increasing public demand as well as changing expectations from parents and employers.

HEIs are now making concerted efforts to collaborate with world class institutions in order to make knowledge development an explicit enterprise-wide strategy; create world-class knowledge; implement collective knowledge in the marketplace. They are also moving forward by establishing and strengthening their relationships with other non-state actors, particularly working closely with the business and industrial sectors. In this context, management education is one area where we see growing demand that has remained unfulfilled". The inferences for HEIs in this regard are profuse. There are existing discrepancies between the conjectural & practical dimensions in both management research and management education (Thomas, 2010). HEIs therefore, mandate transformed emphasis and collaboration with industry practitioners to reinforce the curricula.

Management education is a tool for creating wealth, and it may be vital to a nation's economic development (Jonathan & Slengesol, 2000). Through management education we offer managerial skills to administrators of all cadres whether in the government sector, business sector or in the service-oriented sector. It is a unique field of activity that virtually all organizations and government bodies, profit or non-profit, gain from (Osuala & Okeke, 2006).

In Pacific Region the demand for institutions offering management education remains very high, while the financial and administrative capacity to respond to this growing demand is often inadequate. Various institutions established by the governments and other agencies in the Pacific assume a greater importance in advancing every aspect of human endeavour. For instance, the case of Papua New Guinea shows that the capacity and quality of the graduates cascades at a lower level given the resource and governance constraints (Garnaut & Namaliu, 2010). A new report prepared by the Office of Higher Education indicated that only 4,500 of the 17,000 students who sat national exams in 2013 were selected for tertiary institutions¹. Contradictorily, a case example of Fiji indicates that the Government had setup the Fiji Higher Education Commission in 2010 to respond to the desire to deliver quality education and training. The purpose was to ensure that the training and programme requirements met national as well as international standards and that government funding was well utilised².

Past scholarships have investigated management education internationally. However, with due consideration to the Pacific region which is comprised of remote islands, geographically dispersed and are in the "developing state", coupled with the differences in infrastructure, technology, Human Resource (HR), culture amongst the varying dynamics, it is central to propose some reflections on the challenges and prospects of globalisation for management education and the way forward. Lack of research stresses the need for further examination into this vital issue of management education in the South Pacific region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the present modern era, the global business environment and internationalization of education has positioned management education as a global phenomenon (Hardy & Tolhurst, 2013). Relatively limited scholarships acknowledge this phenomenon in the Pacific. This scholarship aims to enhance and extend the stream of knowledge on management education by enlightening the prospects and contests offered by globalization

This review traces the challenges and prospects in that regard. Management education has considerable concrete business applicability in transforming students' knowledge to fit the business world (Noorein & Roldan, 2013). According to Noorein and Roldan (2013), there are four rudimentary skills- theoretical, practical, applied and reflection, which prepare students to meet business job demands. Management education pedagogy predominantly emphasises on enhancing communication at the workplace and in business (Brink & Costigan, 2014); promotes leadership efficacy development (Quigley, 2013); creates awareness on cross-cultural management (Eisenberg et. al, 2013; Erez at. al, 2013; Rosenblatt et al., 2013 and Zhu et al., 2013) and owing to the manager's agility globally; comprises social enterprise education (Howorth et al., 2012) and contemplates ethical issues and social responsibilities (Kwong et al., 2012; Grey, 2004; Ghoshal, 2005; Baden, 2014). Student agility is exceedingly widespread among the educational effects directed at developing global competencies in management education (Varela & Gatlin-Watts, 2013). Tarrago and Wilson (2010) highlight that as the world progresses towards the 21st century, there is apparently prevalent discernments that management education at least in many developing countries faces compounded challenges and prospects. .

Globally researchers have inferred that managers' practice "intuition" in decision-making and problem solving, however, management education and development has predominantly shifted away from including intuition in its curriculum and prospectus (Saddler-Smith & Shefy, 2007). There are several challenges of management education globally which require the following: change in character and structure of management education, integration of management education with corporate structure, up-gradation of curriculum and course content, design of diverse programmes for executives, maintenance of an effective system and emphasis on research, shifting mentality of students, lack of qualified facilities, issues of autonomy and accountability of institutions, relevance to the need of organizations other than mainstream, along with that growth, balancing global aspiration with local needs, quality assurance, and alignment with future needs of organizations (Dixit et al., 2005).

The overwhelming proliferation in student numbers owing to globalisation and internationalisation of HEIs is also posing enormous challenges as students demand greater academic flexibility, which institutions of higher education are trying to address (Trank & Rynes, 2003; Scott, 2005).

Additional challenges include becoming overly captivated by superficial parallels between "reforms" in numerous countries and overlooking the deep variances at the level of implementation and practice (Glatter, 2002, p. 225). Studies carried out in the US and Europe argued that one major obstacle to the consideration of management education is that it has customarily risen and was most widely discussed and practiced in Europe, conceivably where a large number of

new business schools have been founded in recent decades (Grey, 2004). This poses serious challenges in terms of understanding the contextual implications of adopting models of management education which may not necessarily work in another context. Therefore, the need to modify and contextualize models becomes pertinent in lieu of the Pacific.

Business schools are walking a tightrope between the academic side of the business and the practitioner side (Clinebell & Clinebell, 2008). There is frequently a gap amid the alumna skills and the industry anticipations. In this regard, the challenge for HEIs is to move towards incorporating work-integrated learning in all its programmes, to ensure that graduates develop a portfolio of evidence which permits them to showcase their skill sets and it also serves as an effective mechanism of structuring students' learning experiences as they have evidence of work-readiness which could be quite useful for employers. Developing nations are slow in making the indispensable changes pertaining to management education due to organisational inertia and the limited academic and other resources (Hussain, 2004). Consequently, the foremost content of and the approach for management education in most developing countries lag behind time and fail to meet the requirements of globalisation and new technologies (Hussain, 2004). Further, research in new emerging economic powers like India reveals that even though higher education including management education has expanded over a period of time, the issues of quality, equity, commercialisation, quality of education, evaluation process, cost of education and globalisation are still areas of concern (Goel & Walia, 2015).

Research carried out in India depicted that liberalisation of Indian economy not only opened the doors for business activities but also encouraged the growth of management education offering both-graduate and post graduate programmes in the field of business/management education (Pant, 2013). The findings demonstrate the following challenges to management education in India: problems related with faculty quality, lack of faculty development programmes, problems related with study materials, poor interaction between the Institutions and Industry, and poor system of accreditation and rating (Pant, 2013).

Business schools across the world are also facing increased criticism for failing in the teaching of management studies to nurture their students' values (Moosmayer, 2010). Overcoming these challenges can be considered as future prospects of management, as there is an extreme need for managers who can apply their knowledge and can break the complexity of problems (Sunny, 2012). Many researchers find that business schools in advanced countries (USA, Europe and Japan) are continuously changing the content and style of management education and this greatly (if not fully) reflect the needs of the changing globalised world. In order to respond to the global challenges more strongly than ever before, these institutions now need a knowledge-oriented paradigm of development to give a country competitive advantage in all fields of knowledge. However, there are enormous challenges that confront HEIs in terms of the cultural and sustainability issues. The social milieu of the country, the cultural attitudes associated with the sustainability challenges and the cultural attitudes and beliefs related with higher education all impact the functionality of management education (Filho, 2000). Cultural elucidations of sustainability, therefore require recognition (Thaman, 2002; Wals & Jickling, 2002; Power, 2006; Maclean & Ordonez, 2007).

Moreover, international research shows that management education has grown considerably over a period of time, yet there are challenges, which need to be addressed through appropriate policy formulation and effective implementation (Goel & Walia, 2011). Thus, an immediate requirement for the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) is to shape the management education in accordance with global changes to improve competitiveness and relevance. Management education must have the confidence in its own academic status to embrace its inescapable relationship with actual management and use that to its best advantage (McGrath, 2007).

Management education and development programmes for developing countries raise difficult questions concerning the role of the local culture in the content of the programmes (Lee & Schwaller, 1990). Management has broader applications and is a very demanding field of study. Insignificant contributions are evident, on the work of management education in the SPICs, upon reviewing literature. A study done in Fiji reveals that, in the Health Sector there is a substantial demand for leadership and management capacity building (Asante et.al, 2011). This research also reveals that no sub-divisional medical officer has acquired a management qualification, although a few have been exposed to short management trainings.

Management education is one of the latest disciplines to be added on the academic map worldwide (Pant, 2013) and now this covers a much wider range of prospects and capabilities to address modern-day challenges such as globalization, open innovation, and the need for corporate renewal and venturing. There are indications that the field is thriving.

Research shows that significant growth has taken place in various programmes and the total number of management institutions have grown at a considerable multifarious growth rate. Management educators may need to compete in markets in addition to doing research and teaching about management within competitive markets (Seers, 2007). Present day prospect for institutions is that they need to introduce best management programmes through pedagogic efforts, and create learning environments that are approachable to multiple cultures. Today's managers are often pressured to work in multinational environments and move from country to country; and in this process management education should focus on cultural values for intercultural education widely (Early & Peterson, 2004).

Grey (2004) proposes a solution to problems facing management education in USA and Europe. This solution is called the Critical Management System (CMS). He postulates that we may not need to agree with CMS, and implies that management education always needs to be taught in ways that explicitly acknowledge the political, ethical and philosophical nature of its practice. In the modern economic scenario all over the world, management as a stream of education and training has acquired new dimensions (John & Panchanathan, 2011). A variety of recently raised concerns about management education may have arisen because universities traditionally operated as if they had a monopoly in the enterprise of knowledge but now must compete in knowledge markets (Seers, 2007).

Alternatively, due to globalization, universities are recognizing their obligation to deliver relevant educational experience and are responding to external pressures by changing the way they function (Clark, 2004, p.1).

Management study has enlightened learning and working processes. No management education can be complete if it is not grounded in thoughtful themes of Western philosophy (Joullie, 2012). These western philosophical prospects are: heroism, rationalism, positivism, romanticism, existentialism and postmodernism. He strongly feels that management studies have recognizable philosophical origins such as power in human relationships. Management goes beyond this and has wider implications on ethics, moralization and social responsibility (Baden, 2014, Ghoshal, 2005 & Grey, 2004).

According to Burke and Rau (2010), business schools should develop management education that goes beyond influencing what managers know and do, and support individuals in understanding and shaping who they are.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND MODEL

This study draws its conceptual underpinnings from a number of theories. It advances by first discussing the social process transformation perspective.

The social transformation perspective as elucidated by Marginson and Considine (2000) and Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) states that globalisation has the potential to socially transform the core functions of HEIs, whereby HEIs would be more entrepreneurial, envisioning education as a “product transferrable in an open market” (Marginson & Considine, 2000; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). According to this perspective, the entrepreneurial periphery would stimulate “research and development with a commercial focus” (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997, p.208). This commercial purpose then permits HEIs to contest for financial and HR talent internationally to the benefit of their institutions (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). This envisages that entrepreneurialism is flowing into academia.

The second perspective of globalization views HEI as a “hub”. According to this conceptual framework, students can earn degrees from any institution via global partnerships, satellite campuses etc.(Armstrong, 2007).

The third perspective relates to the influx of technology which poses unique challenges which HEIs are trying to grapple with (Herbst, 2008). These technological and economic changes affect the social and cultural structures. The cohort of students that are inflowing into HEIs presently and the profound interest that this cohort has in consuming technological resources, is currently mandating for tech diffusion and usage for teaching and learning (T&L), both in and out of the classroom (De George-Walker & Keeffe, 2010). These students exhibit an extraordinary level of tech savviness (Oblinger, 2003), and are becoming more demanding, progressively looking for more flexible means of accessing education and training, thereby expecting more learner-centered approaches than the traditional teacher-driven approaches and classroom-based models. Consequently, HEIs are endeavoring in this regard to deliver effective, flexible, useful and accessible learning experiences to address the needs of the new cohort of students (Thomas, 2008). This has implications for HEIs like the University of the South Pacific (USP) as the management education models will be dependent on the premise whether learners prefer autonomy or collaboration which may have implications for e-learning. This means that in

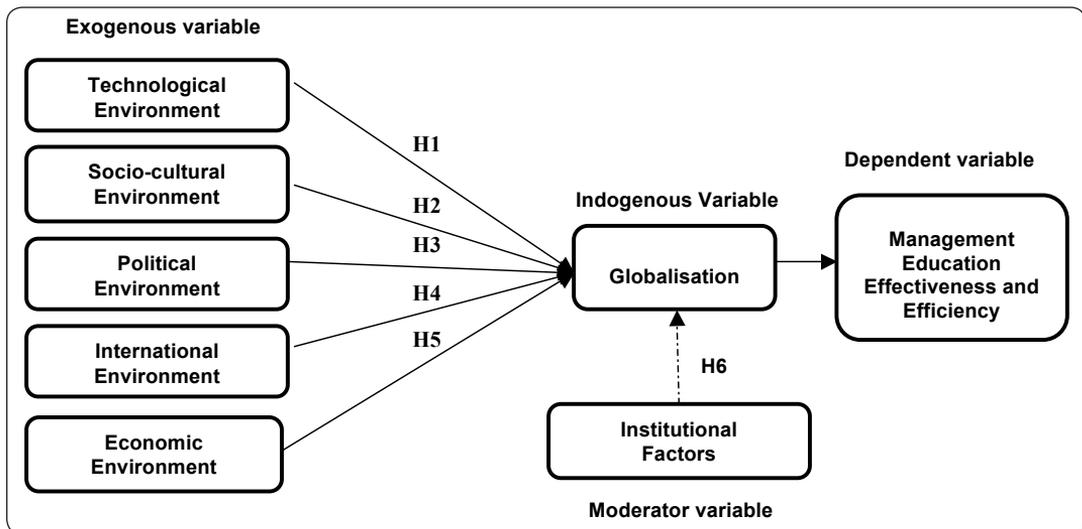
terms of transforming the social environment, it is about how information can be exchanged, transferred etc to speed, accessibility and being able to connect (Kellner, 2002; Held et al., 1999).

In the PICs, emergent technologies do have the potential of reducing the cost of management education. One way to theorise this is to monitor the on-going changes that USP, the premier regional university in the South Pacific region is going through, from knowledge creation – transfer. Thus, the implication is that universities are becoming ‘pedagogical contrives’, whose role is to acclimatise knowledge creation per local context. Also with the recent pedagogical model of “flipping the class room”, Bergman & Sams (2012), in their recent book, pronounce the doctrines of how having students actively participate in classroom activities and exercises, as an alternative of passively listening to a lecture, builds more student interest, engagement and learning.

The final theory which this paper draws on from, is the systems perspective. Systems’ thinking is an approach whereby an organisation is studied from a holistic perspective (Jackson, 2003). In the framework of management education, The World Bank (2011) explains system thinking as an education system that includes all education opportunities whether within or outside of institutions, and where learning outcomes and delivery is shaped and impacted by stakeholders.

Thus, the proposed research model to be tested in future research is envisioned as follows:

Figure 1: *Research Model*



RELEVANCE FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC: USP REGION

The effects of globalisation are vast on any education system. As per Khazaei et al. (2013), effects of globalization on the education system can be economical, political as well as cultural in nature. Khazaei et al. (2013) explains as follows. The economic consequences include: more attention to technical and vocational education and more use of information technology. The political consequences involve domination of governments on an education system. The cultural consequences include promoting western culture in the face of fading the indigenous features and endangering the national identity and religious values in curriculums of schools. However, establishment of cultural communication and recognition of other cultures can be seen as opportunities facing education. Khazaei et al. (2013) suggest that subjects related to deep recognition of the local culture and the local historical and social context should be included in all degrees of education system. Educators should become culturally responsive and competent for knowledge, dispositions, skills, and behaviors with an extensive or substantive cultural grounding (Ford et al., 2011). This is especially important in PICs, since such countries differ a lot in terms of language, culture and colonial legacy - and these are well reflected in the structure of each PIC's "inherited" education system (Levine, 2013).

Like any higher educational institute, USP is also affected by globalization, especially so, being a regional university. USP is one of the two regional universities in the world representing twelve Island countries of the South Pacific region. The USP region covers thousands of islands, spread over 33 million square kilometers of the Pacific Ocean with 1.9 million people, hundreds of distinct cultures and many different languages. The USP is a dual mode teaching institution and has 3 campuses and 14 centers, one in each of the member island nations. While USP contributes strongly to the economic and social welfare of the region, additional graduates are always needed in the fields of financial management, hotel management, agri- business, governance, environment and sustainable development (The Fiji Times, 2006). There are areas that require attention such as there is a strong need to be a center of expertise in a number of areas and to build the professional capacity of the civil service and private industry in member countries (The Fiji Times, 2006). Further to this, USP has continuously endeavoured towards becoming a popular model of regionalism. As per the USP Strategic Plan 2013-2018, it is stipulated that in the region where leaders have committed themselves towards cooperation and integration, USP is well positioned to facilitate the delivery of excellence in teaching, research, and development projects³.

Levine (2013) informs that now it is useful to take stock of the present education, including management education, given that more than fifteen years have elapsed since the 1996 Pacific Islands Literacy Levels (PILL) results, that documented the alarming low levels of student performance in the region. Levine (2013) reveals the following on education in PICs. The 1990s showed much progress however, more recently in some countries, momentum seems to be lost. Students are not prepared to take up the curriculum in the next level of the system and graduates of higher levels do not have the skills required to compete in a global economy. In many PICs, the quality of education has either stagnated or declined. In many PICs, student examination performance also shows low levels of literacy and numeracy. One education secretary observed

that “management inefficiencies and lack of good governance contribute to the problems confronting education in provinces” (National 2004 cited in Levine, 2013).

Educators must thus acknowledge that many past and current practices have been ineffective (Ford et al., 2011) and must give way to the new which explains why universities have engaged in both bilateral and multilateral cooperation across borders (Woldegiorgis, 2013). For instance, for USP, the FJ\$3.1 million support from the European Union enables student, academic and university staff exchanges within the Caribbean and Pacific countries (MENA Report, 2013). As per the academic mobility plan of EU-funded Intra-ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific), universities can organise inter-institutional partnerships, to cope up with the sustainable development and poverty alleviation by raising the approach to quality education (MENA Report, 2013).

Also, the challenges of higher education are no longer confined to a particular nation (Woldegiorgis, 2013). In fact, globalisation has pushed various socio-economic and political structures of the world to be more alike than ever (Woldegiorgis, 2013). With globalization, the world is more interconnected than ever before given liberalisation of economy, free movement of labour and capital, and the advancement of communication technologies which make distance more or less irrelevant (Woldegiorgis, 2013). According to Woldegiorgis (2013), the trend is - regions moving towards creating common space in higher education to address critical issues of access, quality, equity, relevance, employability and mobility. In order to improve the quality of higher education by way of relevance and accessibility, transferability and comparability of degrees among nations, mobility and employability of students, regions have to engage in various cooperation schemes to face common challenges and attain greater excellence (Woldegiorgis, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly globalisation of management education has emerged as a pre-requisite for HEIs. HEIs in developing countries have progressed through management education. However, while past scholarships have investigated management education internationally, what is clear is that research in the Pacific in this area is seriously lacking and very much needed given that management education is an area of growing yet unfulfilled demand. It is the content and style of management education that reflects the needs of the changing globalized world.

The point that Ford et al. (2011) makes is very relevant here - educators must acknowledge that many past and current practices have been ineffective and must give way to the new. What is also noteworthy is that the challenges of HE are no longer confined to a particular nation (Woldegiorgis, 2013). In this regard, the Pacific should also be mindful of the current trend which is - regions are moving towards creating a common space in higher education to address critical issues of access, quality, equity, relevance, employability and mobility.

The reviews have indicated numerous prospects of management education, from cherishing it as an instrument for the nation’s economic development to equipping students with key managerial skills. The findings of the study conversely articulate that the Pacific region is highly impacted

by the economic, political, tech and socio-cultural problems (globalization) and thus, HEIs are now reforming their education agenda. Notwithstanding these reforms, management education is significant and necessitates rigorous analysis to position the HEIs strategically. This calls for a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to management education.

In a nutshell in order to facilitate this transformation, policy dialogue with all strategic stakeholders of the member countries necessitates reflection. In particular the multi-disciplinary approach suggested stipulates that whatever the results of economic, political, tech analyses are, should also integrate the wider values of the institution and the wider educational goals. For without global integration, progress in management education will remain a challenge in the Pacific, and without such progress, quality in management education will remain an issue.

Management education entails leadership and governance to expedite the development of a shared vision that articulates the aspirations of staff, students and key stakeholders with regard to the outcomes envisaged (where the organization wants to be in the future). To implement new policies and programmes for management education, human, technical, material, and financial resources are likewise needed. This has significance for the institution, in terms of the ability to reserve resources and marshal it as per the outcomes. Participation/consultation is additionally a striking task. There is a requisite for intermittent consultation between the implementers and the beneficiaries trailed by monitoring and evaluation.

Moreover, given the regional and international position of USP as an institution of HE, local best practices also need to be shared, transferred and experimented with, while the best global practices should be studied for its relevance and further contextualised to scrutinize the potential of the models/frameworks in educational management.

As management education is presenting prospects and challenges, the key for HEIs in the South Pacific is to build capacity. The response that HEIs make to globalisation entails strategic and operational plans, and implementation of the changes calls for reforms whether small or large in magnitude. Thus, strategic leadership, consultation, and overall management are key institutional factors that can positively stimulate change efforts on that note.

This study has proposed a research model which the researchers seek to test via stakeholder analyses at a later stage.

NOTES

¹ <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/programmes/datelinepacific/audio/20153253/png-higher-education-looks-to-improve-tertiary-intake>

² <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002314/231487e.pdf>

³ <http://www.usp.ac.fj/strategicplan2013-2018>

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