

Market orientation literature in the context of higher education institutions

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to provide a review of the literature related to market orientation (MO) in the context of higher education institutions (HEIs).

Design/methodology/approach: A search of major research databases with multiple keywords was performed to identify relevant peer-reviewed articles. A total of forty-three articles were identified and reviewed.

Findings: The articles reviewed were predominantly in marketing/business and or education journals. A greater number which were published in the last ten years. The articles were predominantly empirical, quantitative and sampled HEI staff across two or more HEIs. Themes in the literature included; the MO and performance relationship, antecedents of MO, outlining MO frameworks, MO scales, export MO, market orientation for HEIs in developing countries, assessing MO in particular contexts, MO in public and private HEIs and literature reviews of MO in a higher education context.

Research implications: This study provides an outline of the literature on MO and HEIs. The analysis of the different types of articles and themes they address can build the foundation for future research.

Originality/value: This review of the literature can serve as a roadmap for academics and help stimulate further interest.

Keywords: Market orientation, market orientated, market oriented, higher education.

Introduction

Market Orientation (MO) is argued as having benefits for higher education institutions (HEIs) including superior performance (Niculescu et al., 2016; Ahmed Zebal and Goodwin, 2012). Furthermore, an increased market orientation is argued as an institutional response to the changing higher education landscape (Tran et al., 2015). However, the literature on marketing in HEIs is still described as meagre and emerging, with little research (Tran et al., 2015). Furthermore, the specific nature of MO in HEIs is less well detailed. In effect, an understanding of market orientation as it relates to HEIs is still limited.

The two most widely used explanations of market orientation were put forward by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990) (van Raaij and Stoelhorst, 2008). Kohli and Jaworski (1990) in explaining market orientation highlight three specific behaviours; organisation wide generation of market intelligence, dissemination of intelligence across departments and an organisation wide response to this intelligence. Narver and Slater (1990) argue that market orientation is a specific organisational culture that creates the behaviours for creating customer value. Narver and Slater (1990) outline these behaviours as: a customer orientation which is the sufficient understanding of the customer; a competitor orientation which refers to an organisation's understanding of the strengths and weakness of their current and future competitors; and an inter-functional coordination which is the coordinated utilisation of a company's resources in providing superior value for customers and creating value for the customer while working with other business functions systematically.

However, market orientation as it relates to higher education institutions is argued as different (Scullion et al., 2011). Thus the market orientation literature in a higher education context requires outlining. This paper aims to provide a review of the literature relating to HEIs and market orientation.

Research approach

A variety of relevant academic journals were consulted and reviewed allowing for a developed understanding of the themes addressed in the field of market orientation in a higher education context.

The literature review search was confined to five online research databases; Sage Journals, Emerald Insight, Taylor and Francis and Science Direct and Web of Science. These databases were selected as they contain publications relevant to the field. The search was limited to peer-reviewed journals ensuring that all articles had been subjected to approval from those knowledgeable in the subject investigated (Jesson et al., 2011). Furthermore, the search was limited to articles published in the English language. A keywords search approach was adopted ensuring the literature was identified in a rigorous, transparent and reproducible manner (Gomezelj, 2016).

The focus of the keyword search reflected the focus of this paper, market orientation as it relates to HEIs. Thus articles that looked at higher education policy and or a broader look at the marketisation of higher education and or programmes/courses with a market focus were excluded. Thus a search of databases was performed using the keywords ‘market orientation’, ‘market orientated’, ‘market oriented’ and ‘higher education’ and ‘universities’ in the title and or abstract. The search results uncovered a large number of articles, as presented in Table 1.

<i>Database</i>	<i>No. of articles</i>
Sage Journals	23
Emerald Insight	32
Taylor and Francis	17
Science Direct	50
Web of Science	223
<i>Total</i>	<i>345</i>

The results were further refined by reviewing the content of the abstracts to ensure their focus was within the boundaries of the proposed research. Thus ensuring that the topic of market orientation in higher education institutions was the focus of each article. Subsequently, two

further articles were added after a search of the specific journal 'Journal of Marketing for Higher Education' (to eliminate potential limitations with the key word search), duplicate articles were removed and three articles whose full text was not accessible were also removed resulting in a final count of forty-three articles for review. It is the review of these articles that forms the basis of the findings in this paper.

It is acknowledged there may be limitations in the keywords utilised as well as in the content of the databases searched are acknowledged. However, these forty-three articles are argued as providing a reasonable insight to the relevant literature.

Findings

Outline of articles reviewed

The themes in the literature will be provided post an initial outline of the forty-three articles identified for review.

The articles were published across twenty-five different publications/journals, with more than one paper published in the following; Journal of Marketing for Higher Education (10), Higher Education (4), Market Intelligence and Planning (3), International Journal of Educational Management (2), International Journal of Public Sector Management (2), Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing (2) and The Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences (2). See table 2.

<i>Journal title</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Journal of Marketing for Higher Education	10	23.3
Higher Education	4	9.3
Market Intelligence and Planning	3	7
International Journal of Educational Management	2	4.7
International Journal of Public Sector Management	2	4.7
Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing	2	4.7
Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences	2	4.7
Journals that published one relevant paper	18	41.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>100</i>

The field of study of the journals publishing articles in this research area can be categorised as follows: Marketing in Higher Education (10), Education (including higher education) (10), Marketing (6), Business (including management, public sector management, services and economics) (10), social science (6) and surprisingly property management (1). Thus the main categories of articles can be summarised as in the fields of Education (20) and Business/Marketing (16) with seven articles published from journals outside of these fields of study.

The forty-three articles identified in the keyword search of the databases were published from 1998 up to 2018 – with thirty-one articles published in the last 10 years. No limitation was set on the range of years in the keyword search. See table 3.

Table 3 - Year of publication of relevant papers		
<i>Year</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
1998-2007	12	27.9
2008-2017	26	60.5
2018	5	11.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>100</i>

Five of the articles had authors who co-authored another of the forty-three articles. The articles were predominately empirical (n= 35 or 81%) with the remaining conceptual in nature (n= 8 or 19%). See table 4.

Table 4 - Paper type		
<i>Category</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Empirical	35	81
Conceptual	8	19
<i>Total</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>100</i>

Taking out the eight conceptual articles, three of the articles were qualitative in nature, thirty-one or over 70% were quantitative in nature with one article having a mixed methods approach. See table 5.

Table 5 – Methodology		
<i>Category</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Quantitative	31	72.1
Qualitative	3	7
Mixed methods	1	2.3
Conceptual	8	18.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>100</i>

The three qualitative articles utilised the following data collection methods; focus groups, documents and interviews and interviews. The mixed methods article used interviews as well a questionnaire. Of the thirty-one quantitative articles a survey with a questionnaire was the approach used. As a note three of the thirty-one quantitative papers used interviews to inform the development of questionnaire beyond what might be considered as typical for a pilot or pre-test.

Of the thirty-one quantitative article, twenty-five sampled respondents across two or more HEIs. Twenty-six when you include the mixed methods paper. Two of the three qualitative papers sampled more than one HEI. Thus leaving one qualitative paper and six quantitative papers sampling a single HEI. See table 6.

Table 6 – Sample methodology		
<i>> 1 HEI sampled</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Quantitative papers sampling more than one HEI	25	58.1
Qualitative paper sampling more than one HEI	2	4.7
Mixed methods paper sampling more than one HEI	1	2.3
<i>Subtotal</i>	28	65.1
<i>1 HEI sampled</i>		
Quantitative papers sampling one HEI	6	14
Qualitative paper sampling one HEI	1	2.3
<i>Subtotal</i>	7	16.3
Conceptual papers	8	18.6
<i>Total</i>	43	100

Taking into account both the qualitative and quantitative articles respondents or participants in twenty-seven of the studies were HEI staff. In twenty-one of these studies non-teaching HEI staff such as senior academic managers, junior academic managers, international officers/managers, administrators or commercial staff were sampled. Six of the studies sampled both teaching and non-teaching HEI staff whereas in fifteen of these studies academic faculty were the respondents.

In seven papers students were the respondents or participants and one paper, a qualitative paper, sampled both students and academic staff as well as employers. See table 7.

<i>Respondents</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
HEI staff	27	62.8
Students	7	16.3
Staff and students	1	2.3
<i>Subtotal</i>	35	81.4
Conceptual papers	8	18.6
<i>Total</i>	43	100

While a number of the papers had no specific geographical focus in their research of MO in HEIs, being conceptual in nature, the United States was the focus of six papers, the United Kingdom six papers, Spain four, Malaysian three, Australia four (with New Zealand included in two of those papers). Results perhaps reflecting the English language criteria in the search of the databases.

<i>Country</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
United States of America	6	14
United Kingdom	6	14
Spain	4	9.3
Australia	4	9.3
Malaysia	3	7
Other	15	34.9
n/a	5	11.6
<i>Total</i>	43	100

Six of the papers had a reference to the study being focused on a public and or private HEI in the title of the paper. A further four papers referenced the public/private dimension in the methodology sections of the papers. The remaining papers were focused on public HEIs and or did not specify.

Having outlined the forty-three articles reviewed the themes they address are now presented.

Themes in the articles

The MO and performance relationship

Twenty-one articles reviewed were found to examine the relationship between MO and performance. In essence MO is argued as having a positive impact on the performance of HEIs. These papers can be further understood as looking at the impact of MO on the HEI performance in relation to staff, students and the HEIs.

MO was found to have positive impact on the performance of the academic staff of a HEI in two papers reviewed. Firstly, Flavian and Lozano (2007) in an empirical study examined the relationship between MO as put into practise by Spanish university teachers and its impact on their subsequent teaching and research duties as well as their role in the cultural enrichment of society with positive results found. Secondly, Kúster and Avilés-Valenzuela (2010) found that the MO of a HEI campus impacts on the MO of the schools in the HEI which was in turn found to impact the job satisfaction of teaching staff, although not their MO.

The relationship between MO and performance as measured from a student perspective was investigated in six papers. Voon (2006) using the Service-driven market orientation scale (SERVMO) examined the relationship between the students' perceptions of MO and the perceived quality of service provided in two HEI institutions in Malaysia with a positive relationship found. Furthermore, in an extension of the previous research Voon (2008) again using the SERVMO scale, confirmed that the MO of a HEI correlated with students' perceptions of service quality, their satisfaction and loyalty. In an Australian context, Casidy (2014) similarly found a relationship between MO and student satisfaction, student loyalty as well as positive word-of-mouth. Likewise, Tran et al. (2015) in a US study found a relationship between MO and the satisfaction felt by students' with the HEI; and Tanrikulu and Gelibolu (2015) found a relationship between the same variables in a Turkish context. Sampling academic staff Alnawas (2014) found that student orientation, an adaptation of the MO concept for the higher education context, was also positively linked to student satisfaction as well as HEI reputation.

The relationship between MO and HEI performance was examined in thirteen of the twenty-one papers. Caruna et al. (1998) found a positive relationship between MO and performance in Australian universities as assessed by academic management. Performance was measured via subjective assessments including relative to other organisations. Drawing on the same research Caruna et al. (1998) again investigated the MO performance relationship again via

subjective assessments of performance by academic management finding a positive association. Hammond et al. (2006) found empirical support for a correlation between academic management's emphasis on MO and MO as well as the relationship between MO and academic management's subjective assessment of the HEI's performance versus expectations. Also, Ahmed Zebal and Goodwin (2012) found a positive relationship between MO in private universities and performance as measured by faculty's subjective assessment of growth in student registrations, market share, teaching and service quality. Hammond and Webster (2013) found that there was a positive MO performance relationship in serving three markets (students, parents and employers) again assessed by HEI academic managers via a subjective assessment of performance against organisational expectations. Khuwaja et al. (2018) also examined the MO performance relationship via subjective measures of retention and recruitment of students and fund raising in Pakistan with positive findings. Thus the MO performance relationship, using subjectively assessed measures, appears quite strong.

A number of the thirteen studies investigating the MO performance relationship examined its impact on different measures of HEI performance. Zakaria et al. (2011) found that there was a relationship between a HEI's MO and its trust, commitment and relationships with partner HEIs. Abou-Warda (2014) found evidence for a link between sustainable market orientation and academic accreditation, a measure of academic effectiveness. Vaikunthavasan et al. (2018) found a positive relationship between MO and the innovativeness of a HEI in a Sri Lankan context. Yu et al. (2018) found that internal market orientation was linked to HEI brand commitment and brand supportive behaviour by staff. Three of the papers found a relationship between MO and the export/international performance of HEIs. Nagy and Berács (2012) found that the export market orientation in Hungarian HEIs was positively related to export performance, subjectively assessed via satisfaction with tuition fee revenue and the HEI's export activities. Ross et al. (2013) examined the relationship between the MO of international student recruitment (ISR) strategies and ISR performance measured via perceptual measures of student satisfaction, student value, student retention, student attraction, growth and market share vis-à-vis competitors by ISR practitioners. Likewise, Asaad et al. (2015) confirmed a relationship between export market orientation and export performance as well as HEI reputation. Export performance was measured via international staffs' subjective (student satisfaction, market share) and objective assessment (enrolment volume, revenues) of the HEIs' performance. HEI reputation was measured again via

subjective measures and via independent HEI ranking tables. Thus to summarise, MO was found to have positively impacted a range of staff, student and HEI measures. See table 9.

Table 9 - MO HEI performance relationship		
<i>HEI measures MO impacts</i>	<i>Student measures MO impacts</i>	<i>Academic staff measures MO impacts</i>
Growth in student registrations	Quality of service	Teaching
Market share	Satisfaction	Research
Teaching and service	Loyalty	Cultural enrichment
Serving students, parents and employers	Positive word-of-mouth	Job satisfaction
Retention and recruitment of students and fund raising	HEI reputation	
Fund raising		
Academic accreditation		
Relationships with partner HEIs		
Innovativeness		
Brand commitment/brand supportive behaviour		
Export/international performance		

Antecedents of market orientation

Four of the papers forty-three articles looked at factors that were theorised as antecedents of MO in HEIs. Falvián and Lozano (2006) investigated the organisational antecedents of MO among academic staff in Spanish HEIs. The research indicates that a management emphasis on MO, cohesion among members of staff and the rewarding of research and teaching activities were all found to be antecedents of MO. The research found that centralisation in the departments in a HEI did not impact on its MO. In a US context, Wasmer and Bruner (2000) similarly investigated the antecedents of MO. The research indicated that the larger the size of the HEI and if the HEI was private were found to be antecedents of a MO. However, these factors were overshadowed by the strength of the relationship between the

innovativeness of the culture of the HEI and its MO. Thus the culture of the HEI was concluded as key.

Two of the four articles investigated the antecedents of MO in HEIs in an export context. Nagy and Berács (2012) in a Hungarian context found that export experience had a positive relationship with export MO while export coordination between functions in the HEI had only a positive impact on the export MO of HEIs with a limited degree of internationalisation. Secondly, Asaad et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between export coordination, a limited belief in receiving government funding, the national ranking of the HEI and the perceived national image of higher education as antecedents of an export MO. Support was provided for the first two variables as antecedents however no support for the third variable and only partial support for the fourth was found.

Market orientation frameworks

Five papers, four of them conceptual in nature have offered frameworks to aid the implementation of MO in HEIs. Lindsay and Rogers (1998) in a now somewhat dated paper concluded that UK HEIs had at the time a selling orientation and thus offered guidance on how a HEI could move to be more market oriented by use of performance indicators or developing closer links between the student and the subsidy a HEI receives. Cann and George (2004) in a US context identified the elements of marketing strategy making in HEIs via a conceptual framework. An organisation's readiness to learn and market orientation were suggested as key. These require development in organisational functions in areas such as communication and decision-making. This conceptual framework can be utilised as diagnostic tool to assess where a HEI is now as a marketing strategy making institution. Kaklauskas et al. (2012) provide a life cycle model or framework for the development of a market oriented and student centred higher education from a Lithuanian perspective taking into account a range of micro-, meso- and macro factors in a somewhat incomprehensible paper. A recent paper by Lafuente-Ruiz-De-Sabando et al. (2018) offer a quite comprehensive framework to guide the application of market orientation as a management philosophy in HEIs. A 13Ps framework is suggested for HEI management in moving HEIs from a product orientation to implementing a marketing orientation. The central core of this framework is a philosophy of holistic marketing, where the need to target the different publics/stakeholders – students, employers, research personnel and society - is emphasised. Finally, Rosi et al. (2018) outline a theoretical framework for business schools in HEIs in

transition countries to move viewing MO as a development opportunity to viewing it as an opportunity to build a sustainable competitive position among other global HEI business schools. This framework was validated via 35 respondents from senior academic management of business schools in Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland and Lithuania. While the framework has relevance it appears its relevance may be more linked to the aforementioned transition context.

Market orientation scales

An aspect of the methodology sections in all the quantitative papers involved scale development. However, scale development was main focus in a number of the papers.

Voon (2006, 2008) detail the scale development of SERVMO, a service-driven market orientation scale. The scale consists of six components; customer orientation, competitor orientation, interfunctional orientation, performance orientation, long-term orientation and employee orientation. Arguing MO needs to include a service orientation in a higher education context the scale drew on the work of Narver and Slater (1990) and Despondé and Farley (1998).

Abou-Warda (2014) outline the development of a sustainable market orientation scale – SMO. The scale had four components; market orientation, stakeholder orientation, innovation orientation and value co-creating. The scale is aimed at measuring the cultural and behavioural aspects of market orientation, a stakeholder or social assessment of marketing activities and an environmental/sustainable assessment.

Bristow and Schneider (2003) developed and tested a multi-item scale called the Collegiate Student Orientation Scale – drawing on the marketing concept the scale aimed to assess the degree to which HEIs take actions and make decisions based upon the needs of students as well as the goals and objectives of the HEI.

Llonch et al. (2016) aimed to develop a multidimensional stakeholder scale that aimed to adapt and extend the assessment of market orientation for a HEI context. The questionnaire developed included multi-item questions on assessing the degree of inter-functional coordination, focus on the HEI environment, peer collaboration, acquisition of resources activities and meeting stakeholder needs in the HEI.

Felgueira and Rodrigues (2015) developed a scale to measure the individual market orientation of teachers and researchers in HEIs which draws on the work of Schlosser and

McNaughton (2009) who in turn drew on Kohli et al. (1993). Thus the degree of generation, dissemination and response to market information is assessed.

Rivera-Camino and Molero Ayala (2010) developed a scale assessing MO as it relates to the context of education, specifically Spanish universities. The scale expands on the MKTOR (Narver and Slater 1990) and MARKOR (Kohli et al., 1993) scales and has the following components; student orientation, worker/employee orientation, donor orientation, competitor orientation, environment orientation, inter-functional coordination.

In summary, while drawing on relevant literature the scales detailed above have all been adapted to context of HEI.

Export market orientation

Four papers examined the export market orientation (EMO) of HEIs. Asaad et al. (2013) explored how UK universities perceive and manage MO in their export of educational services to international students. EMO was found to involve information based activities thus knowledge of the market was found to be key with activities involving market generation, dissemination and responsiveness central. In 2015 again Assad et al. investigated EMO identifying four drivers of it in a higher education context finding. Thus, the greater the degree of coordination in export activities was found to be linked to EMO, similarly the less favourable a HEIs attitude to government funding was the greater the EMO. Whereas the more favourable the higher education country image as perceived by managers and the HEIs national ranking were not linked to EMO.

Nagy and Berács (2012) also looked at EMO with three key findings. Firstly, the greater the export experience of a HEI the greater the EMO. Secondly, the greater the export coordination of a HEI the greater the link to an enhanced EMO but only for HEIs with lower levels of performance in the areas of internationalisation and research. Finally, EMO did link with export market performance, with higher levels of EMO in a HEI having a greater impact on performance.

Ross et al. (2013) investigated the degree to which the three components of MO impacted on international student recruitment (ISR) practises. The results indicate that ISR departments in HEIs predominantly are customer orientated rather than competitor oriented or having a focus on inter-functional coordination. While the research deemed having a customer focus and a

competitor orientation were important having an inter-functional focus had a greater impact on ISR performance.

The relevance of market orientation to HEIs in developing countries

A particular theme evident in the literature reviewed was criticality of MO in transition or developing economies in the context of increased competition and or seeking improvements in HEIs in a more internationally competitive HEI environment. Thus Nagy and Berács (2012) cited above argue that MO can enhance the export performance for ‘transitional countries’ such as Hungary. Kumar (2016) in a conceptual paper identified a marketed oriented approach as a way to revitalising agricultural higher education in India. Similarly, Mokoena and Dhurup (2016) investigated the factors that would inhibit the development of a MO in universities of technology in what they describe as the ‘developing country’ of South Africa. Rosi et al. (2018) in a paper proposed a comprehensive theoretical framework for business schools in HEIs in ‘transition countries’ in Central and Eastern Europe in the context of the changing global education environment. Khuwaja et al. (2018) identified a dearth of research in developing countries on the relationship between MO and performance. Furthermore, the authors argue for, on the basis of a quantitative study in Pakistan, that certain dimensions of MO require greater attention in developing countries to enhance HEI performance.

Assessing MO in particular contexts

A strong theme in the literature, in ten papers, was the assessment of MO in particular HEI contexts. Thus Dubas et al. (1998) examined the MO of an executive MBA programme in a US HEI. In the UK context Lindsay and Rodgers (1998) examined the degree of market orientation of the higher education sector in the period of 1979-1993. Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2010) surveyed 68 academics in England and Israel on the perceptions of MO in their respective institutions. Furthermore, Melewar et al. (2013) examined the perceptions and management of EMO of selected UK universities and Yu et al. (2018) examined the internal market orientation in UK universities. Rosi et al. (2018) as part of their paper, which proposed a framework for business schools for HEIs to increase their MO in ‘transition countries’ in Central and Eastern Europe, assessed the extent to which the HEIs in these countries implemented MO principles. Also as mentioned previously, Mokoena and Dhurup (2016) investigated via a quantitative survey the factors that would inhibit the development of a MO in universities of technology in what they describe as the ‘developing country’ of

South Africa. In addition, Häyrynen-Alestalo and Peltola (2006) analysed the market orientation in three Finnish HEIs; Pavičić et al. (2009) assessed the market orientation of the Croatian higher education sector; and Ross et al. (2013) assessed the MO of international student recruitment departments in Australian HEIs.

Market orientation in public and private HEIs

A number of the papers examined the MO in the context of private or versus public HEIs. Wasmer and Bruner (2000) examining the antecedents of MO found that private colleges had a somewhat greater degree of MO than public HEIs in a US context. Similarly, Ferreira and Hill (2008) found in a study of organisational culture in Portuguese that private HEIs were perceived by academic managers to have a stronger MO. Zakaria et al. (2011) found that there is a correlation between the degree of MO in private colleges and the degree of trust, commitment and relationship behaviours with partner public HEIs in a Malaysian context. Ahmed Zebal and Goodwin (2012) explored the MO of private HEIs in Bangladesh and argued that MO is critical for these private sector HEIs. While, Hammond and Webster (2014) examined the impact of MO on the performance of business schools and reported no difference between public and private institutions. Finally, Voon (2007) developed the service-driven market orientation scale (SERVMO) as a means of assessing the MO of HEIs in both the private and public sector.

Literature reviews of MO in a higher education context

While all the papers contained some form of review of the relevant literature two of the papers can be described as having it as their specific purpose. Thus Akonkwa (2009) provides an extensive review of the literature arguing that MO is a relevant strategy for HEIs while acknowledging the consequential problems in its implementation in this context as well as identifying a research agenda to aid its success. Guilbault (2016) similarly identifies issues with importing the concept of MO into a HEI context as well as outlining how this can be accomplished.

Conclusions

This paper provides an understanding of the literature relating to MO in HEI context identified as part of a keyword search of academic databases. The paper outlines the nature of these papers and the themes addressed as a foundation for further research in this area.

Concluding on the outline of the articles reviewed, the literature reviewed was not surprisingly predominantly in marketing/business and or education journals. A greater number of articles were published in the last ten years than in the ten years prior to that indicating perhaps a growing interest in the topic. The articles were predominantly empirical (81%), quantitative (72%) and sampled HEI staff (62.8%) across two or more HEIs (65.1%). Papers were less likely to have been conceptual (19%); qualitative (7%) or mixed methods (2.3%), longitudinal, focused on one HEI (16.3%), sampled students (16.3%) or students and HEI staff (2.3%). The US and the UK were the most frequent geographical locations for research studies, 14% in of the studies in each.

Concluding on the outline of themes in the articles reviewed, almost half of the articles reviewed examined the relationship between MO and performance. Measures of academic staff performance, subjective assessments of HEI performance and student measures of performance all appear to have been impacted positively by MO. The second strongest/most frequent theme in the literature was articles that undertook an assessment of the MO in particular contexts whether of a specific programme, in a specific country/countries or a specific aspect of MO such as export MO or internal MO in a specific country. Antecedents to MO in HEIs including export MO were also identified in the literature. Scales for the assessment or measurement of MO were also the particular focus of a number of articles as well as typically in conceptual papers the outline of frameworks for the implementation of MO in HEIs. Other themes include a number of papers which looked at MO in private HEIs indicating they may have an increased level of MO. MO was also argued as critical to transition and developing countries.

This paper outlines literature relating to MO in a HEI context subject to limitations in the keyword search strategy.

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