



INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN BRAZIL: A FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH AGENDA

INTERNACIONALIZAÇÃO DO ENSINO SUPERIOR NO BRASIL: UM MODELO TEÓRICO E AGENDA DE PESQUISA

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Abstract: The internationalization of higher education is relevant due to globalization and to the relationship between different actors, such as universities, government, private companies and international students, with various points to be improved in the Brazilian context. Factors such as the lack of policies and personnel structures, strategic planning and monitoring activities, and international relations offices and institutions are recurrent. Two questions guide this study: (i) how do Brazilian higher education institutions internationalize? And (ii) how can future studies assist in deepening the theme in Brazilian studies? Thus, the present research has an explanatory character, using bibliographical research. Through the bibliographical review, a theoretical model is developed and divided into two major blocks: (i) sectoral and organizational aspects and (ii) decision aspects in the insertion environment. The research agenda indicates that studies can be directed at two central themes: (i) knowledge transfer in institutional processes and (ii) innovative marketing and communication strategies.

Keywords: Internationalization of higher education; University management; International academic mobility; Brazilian higher education.

Resumo: A internacionalização do ensino superior é relevante devido à globalização e ao relacionamento entre diferentes atores, como universidades, governo, empresas privadas e estudantes internacionais, com vários pontos a serem melhorados no contexto brasileiro. Fatores como a falta de políticas e estruturas de pessoal, de atividades de planejamento estratégico e monitoramento e de escritórios e instituições de relações internacionais são recorrentes. Duas questões norteiam este estudo: (i) como as instituições de ensino superior brasileiras se internacionalizam? E (ii) como estudos futuros podem auxiliar no aprofundamento do tema nos estudos brasileiros? Assim, a pesquisa tem caráter explicativo, utilizando-se de pesquisa bibliográfica. Por meio da revisão bibliográfica, um modelo teórico é desenvolvido e dividido em dois grandes blocos: (i) aspectos setoriais e organizacionais e (ii) aspectos de decisão no ambiente de inserção. A agenda de pesquisa indica que os estudos podem ser direcionados para dois temas centrais: (i) transferência de conhecimento em processos institucionais e (ii) estratégias inovadoras de marketing e comunicação.

Palavras-chave: Internacionalização do ensino superior; Gestão universitária; Mobilidade acadêmica internacional; Ensino superior brasileiro.

1 Introduction

Globalization is an economic process related to the values and mores of different cultures; this flow generates an interdependence of information for the production of knowledge (Miura, 2006; Tastemirova *et al.* 2020; Hung; Yen, 2022). In accordance, education is inherently linked to globalization through processes such as international

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academic mobility, cross-border collaborations, and the transformation of education into a global commodity. The internationalization of higher education is a process characterized by its complexity and has significant economic, political, social, and cultural implications for the State, with several institutions and individuals involved (Reppold Filho *et al.* 2010). It is an emerging topic with several discussions and debates not yet consolidated or initiated (Laus, 2012; Nogueira, 2018; Dal-Soto *et al.* 2016). Publications on the topic are sparse, indicating the need to advance empirical and qualitative studies in the area, which can define the development of the area and generate the expansion of theoretical propositions.

The activities are, in many cases, generated and driven through academic publications. Therefore, the process is associated with a need for communication that is established mostly in the English language, which is the most widespread language in the academic area (Ramos, 2018; Altbach, 1998; Miura, 2006). Internationalisation is considered necessary for those who want to compete with the best institutions in the world in the globalized environment (Stallivieri, 2009; Jones; De Wit, 2012). This process is based on academic cooperation and relationships. Relevance is associated with nations developing collaboratively. The importance of qualified labor must be highlighted, which comes from a national, regional, or global need, leading to the investigation of the internationalization of higher education in Brazil, due to the potential for expansion of the topic. Based on this, the purpose of the present article is to identify the knowledge available in academia and to propose a theoretical model that enables the application and dissemination of new concepts that will be directed through a research agenda in Brazil.

This process is often practiced by students and professors. However, there are many actors that are also involved in the internationalization process: national and private companies, non-governmental organizations, and higher education institutions that usually work at an individual or institutional level (Knight, 2004; Carvalho; Araújo, 2020). For that, it is argued that international and intercultural components should be included in the institutional curriculum as a way to increase the internationalization process (Stallivieri; Gonçalves, 2015; Popova; Bebenova-Nikolova, 2017; Stallivieri, 2009; Tastemirova *et al.* 2020; Avila, 2007). This highlights the process of homogenization caused by globalization and the commercialization of higher education institutions (HEIs), where standardization can be seen as a way to achieve quality in teaching and research.



This study presents a qualitative and descriptive approach, in which, based on a review, the creation of a theoretical model applied to the internationalization of HEIs in Brazil is proposed. The objective was to analyze articles listed in the Scopus Journals to obtain a basis of papers rooted in the Brazilian perspective. To address the adherence of national characteristics in international research, this study also included Google Scholar in the analysis. It was searched for articles with keywords such as “internacionalização do ensino superior” to characterize the evolution of the study at the national level, and “internationalization of higher education” to understand how studies on the topic are evolving at the international level.

Considering the context presented, the article proposes an analysis of the state of the art of the internationalization of HEIs in Brazil through a review of Brazilian and international papers, identifying factors such as: (1) institutional risks in internationalization, (2) ways to promote internationalization, (3) cooperation measures for internationalization expansion, and (4) institutional challenges to internationalize. The first three factors are proposed to serve as a manual so that institutions can seek internationalization by maintaining their operational processes, norms, and rules. The fourth factor is presented as a research agenda to develop research in the area at national and international levels. The objective of this article is to develop a theoretical model based on studies already done, associating it with a research agenda that is adequate to the Brazilian reality and that supports future research in the area of internationalization of higher education institutions. Based on this, the article is guided by two research questions:

- How do Brazilian high education institutions internationalize?
- How can future studies assist in deepening the theme in Brazilian studies?

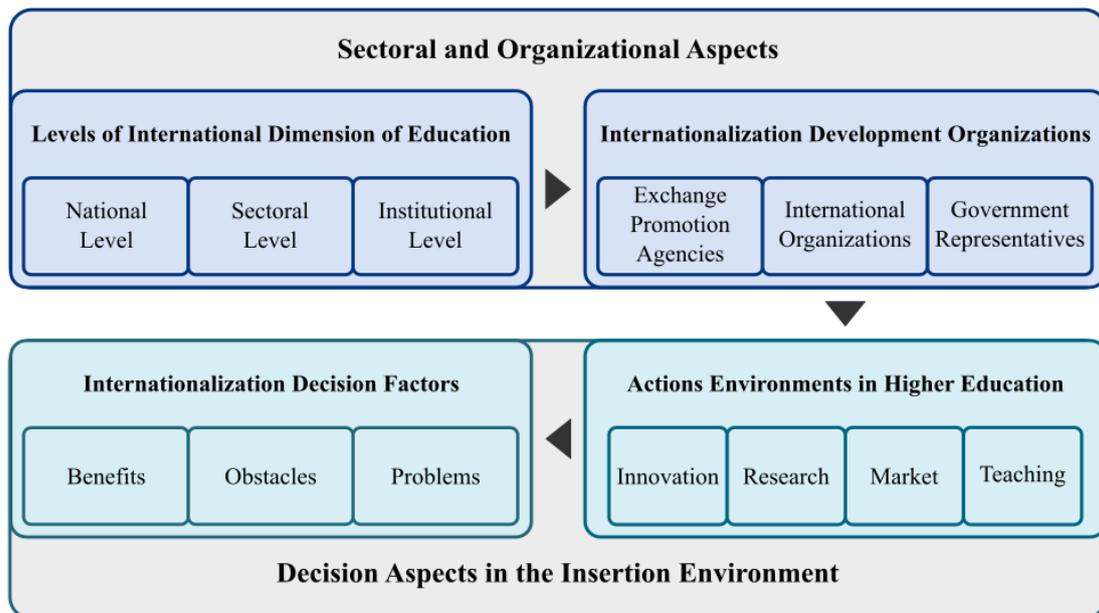
This article begins by presenting the framework for the internationalization of higher education institutions in Brazil, composing a reference that connects national studies to international perspectives, but basing the elaboration of the framework on national studies to capture the perspective of the national. With the intention of contextualizing reality, the historical context of the internationalization of higher education in Brazil and the world is briefly highlighted. Next, the research agenda is presented, followed by the conclusion of the study.

2 Framework of Internationalization of Higher Education in Brazil

The framework development was structured by two macro dimensions detailed in Figure 1. The first one, “sectoral and organizational aspects”, aims to establish which structural aspects need to be supplied so that the HEIs act properly at national, sectorial, and institutional levels with organizations that can help them to achieve success in this process. It is relevant to become aware of these aspects considering that these organizations exploit reality within strictly academic principles and seek, through the exchange of people, experiences, and information, to extract institutional potentialities for the development of research patterns and problem-solving (Marrara, 2007).

The second macro dimension, which includes “decision aspects in the insertion environment”, is characterized by emphasizing the development of one of the education environments. The understanding of decision aspects implies the mobilization of the State, national, and international educational institutions, educational managers, and the academic community based on the creation of international mobility policies, financing programs, goals for internationalization, and metrics to evaluate exchanges (Maranhão, Dutra; Maranhão, 2017). The following figure covers the theoretical model based on the review. The proposed model covers the levels of the internationalization dimension, the necessary approaches to such agencies, the benefits, the obstacles and the problems, and aspects to be considered under analysis.

Figure 1: Internationalization of Higher Education in Brazil



Source: Developed by the author.



Despite its importance, there is a lack of knowledge regarding internationalization programs and possibilities in the academic community and even among some institutions (Thalgi, 2020; Fleckenstein, Lee; Himmelweit, 2023; Maranhão, Dutra; Maranhão, 2017). Therefore, it is emphasized that the dissemination of such practices is necessary for the growth of interest and, consequently, the improvement of the area (Kuloğlu; Öcel, 2022; Kahveci; Taskin, 2013; Nogueira, 2018). The following topics are organized to provide a historical overview of macro dimensions and a description of their respective micro dimensions.

2.1 Sectoral and Organizational Aspects

Globalization can be considered as a cause for the internationalization of higher education institutions, as it generates a demand for professionals better prepared for international work (Miura, 2006; Lima, 2012; Finardi; Porcino, 2014; Hung; Yen, 2022). Institutions demonstrate a need to update social demands; in this case, this adopted international role promotes greater diversity of cultures and knowledge; it also makes it possible to renew personnel boards through the mobility of institutional agents (Altbach, 1998; Fleckenstein *et al.* 2023; Tastemirova *et al.* 2020). Thus, international mobility is associated with interaction and understanding of different cultures from different countries, a fundamental aspect in a globalized environment (Spears, 2014; Nascimento, 2017; Trevisol; Fávero, 2019).

European countries stood out in the post-war reconstruction process, as they sought to integrate economically and politically, embracing the concept of a knowledge society in a supranational interpretation (Dal-Soto *et al.* 2016). Thus, Europe contributes to the dynamics of internationalization by seeking to value knowledge and to disseminate it, which results in the construction of its modern economy. Due to political fragmentation, Europe was only able to achieve this through the internationalization of the scientific and university systems; the same occurring with the economic and financial systems (Santos *et al.* 2013).

The internationalization of HEIs is going through a process of worldwide intensification, as emphasized by Santos and de Almeida Filho (2012), due to three aspects: 1) the social relevance, democratization, and massification of access to HEIs achieved in the 20th century; 2) economic and societal globalization; and 3) through



European integration, with internationalization experiences in the mid-70s and academic mobility programs in the 80s.

Based on the possibilities of improving scientific, technological, social, and cultural developments, universities become protagonists and promoters of the international integration process to reduce the distance between different countries and their experiences (Spears, 2014; Stallivieri, 2009; Luce, Fagundes; Mediel, 2016). Therefore, important components in certain sectors are used to improve the balance of the components that determine the effectiveness of the integration (Stallivieri, 2004; Morosini *et al.* 2023). They are: cooperation, training in certain sectors, and integration between nations and peoples.

2.1.1 Levels of the International Dimension of Education

The globalization of the economy in the 21st century presents major impacts and consequences for academia at the international level. Academia has been adapting to these changes and positive elements, and driving higher education to internationalize (Hung; Yen, 2022; Neves; Barbosa, 2020). For Laus (2012), the concept of university internationalization highlights a dialogue with universities and organizations, that is, partnership work, cooperation, exchange, adaptation of institutional structures, conflict management, and other problems that may arise, beyond the national border level to develop or implement teaching, research, and extension.

Internationalization is characterized by terms that highlight the international aspect, in which education must be seen prominently by society through international, intercultural, and global dimensions (Knight, 2004; De Wit; Deca, 2020). Thus, the economic impacts and redefinitions of the ways of working in universities, derived from mobility, are visualized (Franklin *et al.* 2018). This can be translated into structures that compose strategic alliances aiming to level the institutional profile and status (De Wit, 2011; Oude Vrielink, 2019). Knight (2008) details two levels of that structure: the national level, such as the development of human resources, strategic alliances, generation of revenue through trade, nation-building, social and cultural development, and mutual understanding; and the institutional level, such as international branding and profile-building, increasing quality and meeting international standards, income generation, staff and student development, strategic alliances, and producing knowledge.



Dal-Soto *et al.* (2016) add one more dimension to this analysis with a more specific view at the institutional level.

- National level: refers to the areas of foreign relations, immigration, education, science and technology, culture and history, social development, industry, and commerce.
- Sector level: refers to the purpose, accreditation, licensing, fundraising, curriculum, teaching, research, and regulation of post-secondary education.
- Institutional level: Divided into two sublevels: the restricted one, which covers studying abroad, student recruitment, international connections and partnerships, cross-border course offerings, international study licenses – sabbaticals; and the broad one, which covers quality maintenance, planning, staff, finances, professor development, and student support.

Higher education internationalization is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses different dimensions of educational institutions. International higher education is undergoing rapid transformation, and its scope and complexity have only grown (Ilon, 2010). It is important to consider internationalization in light of how higher education is evolving globally. Only from a larger perspective can internationalization be understood. The massification of higher education, the global knowledge economy, and the focus on rankings and reputation are three significant global shifts in this field (De Wit, 2019; Mok, 2015).

2.1.2 Internationalization Development Organizations

The complexity of the education scenario and its challenges have made organizations seek to integrate and train administrators. Based on this, the Brazilian Association of International Education - FAUBAI was created in 1988 (Oviedo; Krimphove, 2022; Franklin *et al.* 2018). FAUBAI is an institution responsible for dealing with international issues for HEIs that seek to improve the international exchange and cooperation to refine teaching, research, extension, and the administration of these institutions (Alves *et al.* 2023; Fossatti *et al.*, 2020; Reinert *et al.* 2023). According to Franklin *et al.* (2018), internationalization occurs through various institutions, such as development agencies, associated organizations, and government representatives. These institutions are mentioned below:



- Funding agencies responsible for exchanges are: The Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes), the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), Edufrance, the British Council, and the Fulbright Commission.
- International organizations associated with the subject: United Nations (UN), Organization of American States (OAS), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- Representatives of national and foreign governments: Ministry of Education (MEC), Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE), and Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT).

Diverse activities, including curriculum creation, academic exchange programs, technology support, intercultural training, recruiting international students, and collaborative research initiatives, are all part of HEIs' internationalization process (Moreira *et al.* 2019). For that, institutions remain as a fundamental part of the educational system. De Sousa Santos (2018) details that the triple crisis considers that, faced with the expansion of teaching and the change in the level of knowledge, the university is going through some contradictions, among them: the crisis of hegemony, highlighted by the dichotomy between the masses and the elite; the crisis of legitimacy, which arises as HEIs are no longer considered fundamental for a part of society; and the institutional crisis, caused by the belief that other models are more pertinent to those adopted in the institution.

The complexity and interconnections between local and global facets of education can be found by examining the institutions involved in the HEI internationalization process. In line with that, the goal of internationalizing teaching and learning at higher education institutions is to make the institution more competitive, provide better services, and incorporate intercultural and international aspects into the institution's mission (Aggelos; Theodora, 2022). To make sure that internationalization enhances the quality of instruction and learning as well as the institution's overall goals and objectives, higher education institutions must take a thoughtful and deliberate approach to it.



2.2 Decision Aspects in the Insertion Environment

Higher education internationalization has drawn a lot of attention, especially in light of the connection between Brazil and the United States and its implications (Khomyakov, Dwyer; Weller, 2020; De Carvalho; Moraes, 2022). Between the end of World War II and the 1980s, the United States was the main focus of international mobility (Chiswick; Hatton, 2003). Factors such as the quality of educational fields, academic programs that included postgraduate studies, scholarships, the possibility of immigration and an academic career, commercial promotion, support services for foreign students, the English language as academic communication, and the global influence of the United States (US) were decisive for this (Miura, 2006).

The two countries have had a complex and dynamic connection throughout history, which has had a significant impact on both countries' higher education institutions (Bernasconi, 2008; De Carvalho; Moraes, 2022). This relationship has been significantly shaped by the decision-making components of the insertion environment, where political, economic, and cultural considerations have an impact on the practices and policies of international education. From a historical perspective, the Cold War worked as a catalyst, while Brazilian economic development, focused on a capitalist market economy with ample space for subsidiaries of North American multinationals, served the interests of the United States (Alcadipani; Bertero, 2012). A university mission was sent to Brazil, with professors who had academic authority to establish a study program and implement it in a way that met the US objectives of spreading knowledge and technology, on its own.

Brazil attempted to emulate the American higher education system and looked to the US as a model for development (Centeno; López-Alves, 2001). As a result, American-style universities and research institutions were established in Brazil, encouraging a climate of cooperation and scholarly exchange (Morosini *et al.* 2017). However, the partnership has not been without difficulties, considering that both nations' political and economic divides have frequently impacted the type and scope of their educational cooperation (Alcadipani; Bertero, 2012; Khomyakov *et al.* 2020; Miura, 2006). Despite these obstacles, internationalizing higher education continues to be a crucial component of the relationship between the US and Brazil, influencing both countries' educational systems (Khomyakov *et al.* 2020).



2.2.1 Action Environments in Higher Education

Regarding the production of knowledge in the area, there is a need to explore aspects related to the topic in more depth. Some authors highlight in their studies the impact of privatization on internationalization (Bechi, 2011), emphasizing the postgraduate level (Finardi; Guimarães, 2017; Reinert *et al.* 2023; Ramos, 2018), in policy analysis at different levels (Maúes; Bastos, 2017; Morosini *et al.* 2023; Fleckenstein *et al.* 2023; Ilon, 2010; Mok, 2015), identifying characteristics at the micro, meso, and macro levels (Amorim; Finardi, 2017; Dal-Soto *et al.* 2016), in psychic distance in *stricto sensu* courses (Da Rosa Borges; Amal, 2016) and the identification of pedagogical proposals from the perspective of multiculturalism (Stallivieri; Gonçalves, 2015).

Higher education became important in the last century due to the ability to understand everyday facts, and its growth is characterized as the century of knowledge (Altbach, 1998; Kuloğlu; Öcel, 2022). To evaluate the level of internationalization at HEIs, many indicators are highlighted, each emphasising a distinct strategic element (Delgado-Márquez *et al.* 2011). Regarding the analysis of metrics at a national level, the relevance of the Folha University Ranking (RUF) is observed given the amount of data used in its bases (Morandin *et al.*, 2020; Righetti, 2015; Vanz *et al.* 2018; Altavini; Silva, 2023). Table 1 demonstrates the components of the RUF, as well as its analysis structure and bases used.

Table 1: RUF Components

Components	Analysis structure	Databases
Research (42% of the total)	Total publications: 7%; Total citations: 7%; Citations per publication: 4%; Publications per professor: 7%; Citations per teacher: 7%; Publications in national journals: 3%; Resources received by institution: 3%; CNPq scholarship holders: 2%; Thesis: 2%.	Web of Science (for citations), Capes, CNPq and Federal Funding Agencies, and SciELO.
Teaching (32% of the total)	Opinion of Higher Education professors: 20%; Professors with Doctorates and Masters: 4%; Full-time and part-time professors: 4%; Enade score: 4%.	Datafolha Research, Enade, Censuses.
Market (18% of the total)	Considers employers' views on hiring preferences.	Datafolha Survey.
Innovation (4% of the total)	Patents: 2%; Partnership with companies: 2%.	Web of Science and INPI.



Internationalization (4% of the total)	International citations per professor: 2%; International co-authored publications: 2%.	Web of Science (for publications and citations).
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Source: Ranking Universitário Folha (2023b)

Crucial elements of higher education policy and management include the performance and ranking of Brazilian universities by international standards and how society views these rankings (Altavini; Silva, 2023; Vanz *et al.* 2018). The Enade Concept, used in Folha's analysis, is an indicator that evaluates the quality of courses based on student performance annually in the Enade assessment (Inep, 2024). The components and structures are interrelated and outlined in the indicators: market assessment, teaching quality, master's and doctorate degrees, graduates' grades, full-time and part-time teachers, and teacher evaluation (Ranking Universitário Folha, 2023c).

These components seek to understand the role of the HEIs as a precursor of knowledge, as they have societal implications. Therefore, to increase Brazilian institutions' profile abroad and foster their capacity for innovation, strategic planning and policy implementation are required (Morandin *et al.*, 2020; Righetti, 2015). Thereby we emphasize that innovation and internationalization receive much less attention than other components such as research, teaching, and market. Other than that, the internationalization component was not considered in the framework as it is based on that component.

2.2.2 Internationalization Decision Factors

Currently, the objectives of higher education are the training of multidisciplinary professionals, based on the teaching of technical skills, the training of researchers, through the provision of content and guidance on methods, and the training of citizens to utilize their knowledge to benefit society (Fleckenstein *et al.* 2023). There is a need to emphasize that the individual is not only inserting himself or herself into society, but also that his or her actions have implications for humanity. Therefore, the objective of the university is to help improve human life in society (Morandin *et al.* 2020; Vanz *et al.* 2018; Mok, 2015).

From the point of view of the current studies in the area, discussions cover cases in countries and the relationship with internationalization. Some authors characterize their studies in relation to the North American and European context (Altin, 2019; Morosini *et al.* 2017), some also in the context of emerging countries and other regions (Alduais,



2019; Kaktiņš, 2019), analyzing the cultural relationship between both (Popova; Bebebnova–Nikolova, 2017; Belousova, 2019; Pavarina, 2016; Stallivieri, 2009), considering ISOs in the analyses (Ab Wahid, 2019; Freitas, 2012), exploring institutional relations that encompass processes and patterns (Cruz; Paula, 2018; Oude Vrielink *et al.*, 2019), or the context of globalization (Hung; Yen, 2022; De Wit, 2011). Miura (2006) details aspects related to the internationalization of HEIs, such as benefits that enabled increasing internationalization, aspects that inhibit internationalization, and problems in this process. These processes are listed below.

- Benefits of internationalization: a common and global academic model, an increase in the global academic market, the use of English internationally for disseminating research and teaching, the importance of distance learning and the use of the Internet, partnerships with institutions in other countries, offshore campi and the franchising of educational programs and harmonization of credits, courses, evaluation, and measurement of academic progress.
- Barriers to internationalization: few financial resources; pressure due to local needs (low-income students at universities); part of conservative academics and those involved in HEIs; fear of losing local and national traditions.
- Problems related to internationalization: difficulties in evaluating international programs and initiatives, and the dominance of most projects and exchanges by industrialized countries.

This topic is considered fundamental for academia due to the questions associated with its importance, timeliness, and relevance. Thus, many benefits are associated with the cause, including the competition to obtain resources from development agencies, the possibility of developing institutionally, regionally, and nationally, and the dissemination of intercultural skills and communication capabilities between countries (Stallivieri, 2009). Decision-making factors for internationalization are influenced by various elements, including the strategic objectives of the national government, financial and human resource availability, political and economic considerations, and academic motivations (Ahmad; Buchanan, 2017). These factors, when effectively managed, can lead to enhanced academic relevance and reputations, increasing institutional competitiveness.



3 Research Agenda for Internationalization of Higher Education in Brazil

After detailing the framework for the Internationalization of Higher Education in Brazil, the research agenda of this study is presented. It considers a priority the deepening of topic 2.2.2 as it seeks to comprehend which aspects listed below can be seen as benefits, barriers, and problems through future research. Consequently, this topic seeks to provide how researchers can deepen studies in this field.

The importance of transferring international higher education activities from broader to more central points has increased, emphasizing relationships between government, companies, and universities (Miura, 2006; Knight, 2008; Jones; De Wit, 2012). In this sense, the exchange of information and knowledge between these institutions can manage aspects related to the topic addressed such as mobility, partnership in academic research, and the search to highlight the importance of science and technology in other areas of society.

For a long time, developed countries in the North have been producers of knowledge, while countries in the South and other emerging countries have been consumers of this knowledge (Avila, 2007; Bernasconi, 2008; Santos, De Almeida Filho, 2012). Therefore, the validity and application of the present study lies in creating ways for Brazilian researchers to contextualize new approaches and aspects to the topic through the research agenda, detailed in Table 5, to make the country an effective contributor to the topic, emphasizing development of Brazilian HEIs, considering internationalization challenges as its central scope.

In a complementary way, other aspects are relevant to the analysis of the topic. It is necessary to pay attention to aspects that deal with the internationalization of HEIs, emphasizing processes and services (Ab Wahid, 2019; Altbach, 1998; Freitas, 2012) as well as the relationship between the actors. Nogueira (2018) analyzed the impacts of hidden dimensions on the internationalization of HEIs, correlating these impacts with academic literacy in English, which is more recurrent in academic institutions. At this point, analyzing literature in other languages will make it possible to understand other contexts.

Finally, it is considered that strategies for these institutions must ensure their diffusion character, that is, the ability of HEIs to migrate from a condition of nationality to a condition of internationalization, emphasizing the formalization of such processes with the minimum expenditure of energy during their completion. Based on this, it is



necessary to investigate what internationalization means for national institutions and how they identify the relevance of the topic. These aspects are detailed in the following sections.

3.1 Knowledge Transfer in Institutional Processes

To adapt to the new models of information generation, distribution, and application, modern universities must reinvent themselves (Fossatti *et al.* 2020). Countries often invest in R&D, foster entrepreneurship and enterprise skills, investigate direct industrial engagement to facilitate cross-border information flows, and support international scientific group cooperation (Ramos, 2018). HEIs should strive for internationalization to gain from innovative international collaboration and achieve a beneficial societal impact (Alves *et al.* 2023). This experience exchange is made possible by the fact that knowledge is adaptable between numerous contexts and locations without losing its value (Bechi, 2011).

Academic mobility is one of the main forces behind internationalization, as it gives people the opportunity to meet and engage with others from different cultures (Stallivieri; Gonçalves, 2015). However, to obtain large profits, both domestic and foreign companies have been progressively raising their capital expenditures, developing new courses, and establishing new educational centers around Brazil (Bechi, 2011). Thus, to codify, measure, and represent the scale, status, and spatial organization of knowledge output and outcomes, institutions need to develop and use a range of market-like mechanisms (Ramos, 2018). Brand managers see a continuous political conflict between traditional academic curricula and curricula that address the needs of the workplace, skill development, and university-professed expertise (Fossatti *et al.* 2020).

Universities must oversee and integrate knowledge economy processes into their curricula by offering new courses, adapting existing ones, and organizing events that enhance and advance students' professional skills (Thalgi, 2020). It is essential to critically rethink Higher Education structures for the University to continue ensuring its legitimacy (Bechi, 2011). Accordingly, it is necessary to create and qualify more human resources, forge stronger connections with the manufacturing sector, look for partnerships for technology licensing and product co-development, and institutionalize and grow the number of Technological Innovation Groups to create environments that foster entrepreneurship (Alves *et al.* 2023).



Increasing the breadth of teaching, research, and knowledge bases introduces new avenues for curriculum development and research endeavors, enhancing their overall value and reputation in the process (Ramos, 2018). However, the connection between extracurriculars, research, and teaching produces this view beyond the university's walls, enabling people to see beyond formal knowledge (Fossatti *et al.* 2020). On the other hand, the university should aid the faculty members to become more adept at applying the techniques and approaches that are helpful in this area; these are natural steps in the process of determining and verifying the caliber of academic offerings (Thalgi, 2020). That is to say, it is a unified force, leading to the frequent confusion of work and learning (Fossatti *et al.* 2020). Based on these aspects, this section seeks to comprehend and define ways of knowledge transfer through cooperation between different institutions.

- How can Brazilian HEIs guarantee their legitimacy through the exchange of knowledge with international companies and other international HEIs?
- What aspects should Brazilian HEIs consider when establishing innovative international cooperation, focusing on positive global impact?
- What cultural aspects make Brazilian students be sought by international HEIs?
- What are the benefits of establishing connections with citizens from other cultures for Brazilian students, companies, and HEIs?
- How can Brazilian HEIs improve knowledge-oriented mechanisms through internationalization?
- How can the internationalization process influence Brazilian HEIs to adapt to market dynamics?
- What are the new demands in curriculum structure for Brazilian HEIs to internationalize? How can they ensure their relevance in this contemporary scenario?

3.2 Innovative Marketing and Communication Strategies

Brazil must comprehend its full potential regarding the caliber of national research conducted and the interface between technological innovation and scientific production with global integration (Carvalho; Araújo, 2020). Communication among HEIs and interactions between national and international organizations must be considered (Reinert *et al.* 2023). Institutional communication is connected to internationalization through



activities related to the idea of marketing, like image and value (Branding), and the channels of communication used to spread it (Advertising), including social media and websites (Rocha; Stallivieri, 2021). For brand image strategy, HEIs should consider aspects such as country image, school image, department image, and school reputation (Hung; Yen, 2022).

However, the question that now needs to be answered is whether these activities, comprehensively, represent truly internationalized institutions, and, if so, what level of intercultural knowledge is produced in them (Rocha; Stallivieri, 2021). Agreements among HEIs can also result in better experiences for professors and students by developing and implementing procedures that support research, teaching-learning techniques, and institutional administration and by enhancing the performance for the institution's stakeholders (Reinert *et al.* 2023). This is a long-term plan instead of a short-term one, and it might be implemented through online social media channels, friends, and family of graduates, as well as information sources from the institutions themselves (Hung; Yen, 2022).

Global shifts in social, cultural, and economic spheres necessitate that administrators view public administration differently in terms of global analysis and innovation implementation requirements (Carvalho; Araújo, 2020). Accordingly, the concepts of lifelong learning, the creation of new distance learning models, the significance of educational technologies, the application of openness principles in educational activities, and the flexibility of education are the main directions of education development in intercultural communication and globalization. (Tastemirova *et al.*, 2020). This fosters conversation and adds benefits to the body of knowledge and research that are developed through information exchange (Reinert *et al.* 2023).

Moreover, the involvement of international students on HEIs' social media platforms has shown that it is easier and quicker to experience a sense of community inside an institution (Rocha; Stallivieri, 2021). To use newly emerging marketing tools more effectively, HEIs should also focus on planning, and direction should be given to creating distinctive and noticeable marketing content rather than to remain utilizing the traditional formula (Hung; Yen, 2022). The authors also suggest that strengthening their adaptability through the analysis of big data gathered from social media seems pivotal. In alignment with that, this section seeks to suggest how HEIs should attract students and institutions through innovative marketing strategies.



- How can Brazilian HEIs expand the demand for the attraction of international students?
- How should communication between Brazilian HEIs and international institutions be established with a view to interaction based on information sharing?
- How Brazilian HEIs should communicate with international institutions and what attributes it should communicate to attract relationships with national and international institutions?
- What marketing strategies can be demonstrated to strengthen the Brazilian HEI brand image through advertising and branding? And in terms of the country's image?
- How can Brazilian HEIs enhance their brand image through intercultural knowledge exchange?
- How can big data help decision-making regarding Brazilian HEI internationalization strategies?
- How can Brazilian HEIs use new distance learning models to optimize their communication between international institutions? Does this lead to a positive impact on brand image?

4 Conclusion

The internationalization of higher education in Brazil is a complex and multifaceted process that requires a structured and cohesive approach (Reppold Filho *et al.* 2010; Laus, 2012; Nogueira, 2018; Dal-Soto *et al.* 2016). This study has developed a theoretical framework (Figure 1) that categorizes internationalization efforts into sectoral and organizational aspects, as well as decision-making dimensions within the insertion environment. By doing so, it offers a comprehensive understanding of how Brazilian higher education institutions internationalize; it also highlights key areas for future research.

One of the major contributions of this research is the identification of two central themes that should guide future studies: (i) knowledge transfer within institutional processes and (ii) innovative marketing and communication strategies. These areas present significant opportunities for the enhancement of Brazil's engagement with the global academic community while acknowledging the challenges faced by institutions in



the Global South (Avila, 2007; Bernasconi, 2008; Santos, De Almeida Filho, 2012). Unlike dominant research that primarily reflects perspectives from the Global North (Pavarina, 2016), this study underscores the importance of understanding internationalization within the Brazilian context, considering the interplay between government policies, corporate engagement, and university strategies.

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study have important institutional implications. Understanding both the benefits and barriers to internationalization can help stakeholders, including government agencies, universities, and private sector partners to develop more effective cooperation mechanisms. Moreover, fostering an integrated approach to internationalization will not only strengthen Brazil's position in the global education landscape, but also enhance the experience of international students and faculty.

However, this study also presents limitations. The theoretical framework was developed based on Brazilian research, which may limit its applicability to broader international contexts. Additionally, the reliance on bibliographic reviews from Google Scholar, while valuable, introduces potential biases and lacks the systematic methodology of more structured literature reviews. Future research should consider expanding the scope to incorporate comparative analyses with other Global South countries and employ more rigorous systematic review methodologies.

Ultimately, this study emphasizes the urgent need for a cohesive and strategic approach to internationalization in Brazilian higher education. Rather than relying on fragmented initiatives, policymakers and educational leaders must advocate for a unified framework that aligns domestic educational goals with international standards. Intentional coordination among government institutions, universities, and civil society is crucial to fostering a more robust and sustainable internationalization process (Hung; Yen, 2022). By addressing these challenges and leveraging the opportunities identified in this research, Brazil can be established as a more active and influential participant in the global higher education community.

Funding

This study was financed in part by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – Brasil (CAPES) – Finance Code 001.



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Recebido em: 25 de fevereiro de 2024.

Aceito em: 28 de março de 2025.