OUR WAY TO INTERNATIONALIZE: INTRINSIC FACTORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

NOSSO JEITO DE INTERNACIONALIZAR: FATORES INTRÍNSECOS EM INSTITUIÇÕES DE ENSINO SUPERIOR

NUESTRA MANERA DE INTERNACIONALIZARNOS: FACTORES INTRÍNSECOS EN LAS INSTITUCIONES DE ENSEÑANZA SUPERIOR

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ABSTRACT: The study investigates how the internationalization process is operationalized in higher education institutions. Given that internationalization occurs in different ways in the global and national context, we can say that differences also exist at the organizational level and that each institution's intrinsic characteristics explain such differences. Therefore, three public institutions were chosen to compare their operations. The research uses a qualitative approach and three data sources: semi-structured interviews, institutional documents, and archives. The results indicate different internationalization processes, and three organizational factors explain the differentiation: the administrative history, the corporate mission, and the perception of what internationalization is. These factors inform the stage of internationalization, its adherence to external influences, and the direction of the process.

KEYWORDS: Internationalization. Higher Education Institutions. Operationalization.

RESUMO: *O estudo investiga como ocorre a operacionalização do processo de internacionalização nas instituições de Ensino Superior. Uma vez que a internacionalização se diferencia no contexto mundial e nacional, pode-se afirmar que diferenças também existem em nível organizacional e que há características intrínsecas de cada instituição que explicam tais diferenças. Três instituições públicas foram escolhidas para a comparação de suas operacionalizações. A pesquisa tem abordagem qualitativa e utiliza três fontes de dados: entrevistas semiestruturadas com atores-chaves ao processo, documentos institucionais e arquivos. Os resultados indicam diferentes processos de internacionalização, sendo que três fatores organizacionais explicam a diferenciação: o histórico organizacional, a missão organizacional e o entendimento do que é internacionalização. Esses fatores informam o estágio da internacionalização, sua aderência a influências externas e o sentido do processo.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Internacionalização. Instituições de ensino superior. Operacionalização.*

RESUMEN: *El estudio investiga cómo se operativiza el proceso de internacionalización en las instituciones de enseñanza superior. Dado que la internacionalización se produce de forma diferente en el contexto global y en el nacional, podemos afirmar que también existen diferencias a nivel organizativo y que hay características intrínsecas de cada institución que explican dichas diferencias. Se eligieron tres instituciones públicas para comparar sus operativas. La investigación tiene un enfoque cualitativo y utiliza tres fuentes de datos: entrevistas semiestructuradas, documentos institucionales y archivos. Los resultados indican diferentes procesos de internacionalización, y tres factores organizativos explican la diferenciación: la historia organizativa, la misión organizativa y la percepción de lo que es la internacionalización. Estos factores informan sobre la etapa de internacionalización, su adhesión a las influencias externas y la dirección del proceso..*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Internacionalización. Instituciones de educación superior. Operacionalización.*

Introduction

The internationalization of higher education has evolved over recent decades (De Wit; Altbach, 2021). Whereas internationalization previously occurred in a fragmented manner across teaching, research, and extension, it now constitutes a central strategy for universities (Bizarria; Moreira; Do Nascimento, 2022).

One of the most debated issues involves the operationalization of internationalization and the factors influencing its process. With a comparative focus, studies have investigated the global context (Zapp; Lerch, 2020), as well as continental and national contexts(Wu, 2019; Mattos; Flach; Melo, 2020; De Lima Júnior; Stallivieri, 2020; Da Silva; Silva, 2021), with results indicating varying conceptions of internationalization across different geographic regions (Knight; De Wit, 2018).

It is thus argued that the internationalization of higher education is not homogeneous across countries (De Wit, 2019), as national, regional, political, and economic characteristics assume particular contexts (De Wit; Altbach, 2021). While there is an understanding of the factors affecting regional and national levels, the factors influencing the internationalization process at the organizational level remain unclear.

This paper aims to analyze the operationalization of internationalization in higher education institutions (HEIs). Given that the phenomenon occurs in different forms across various regions, it is argued that the same phenomenon manifests differently at the organizational level. The research forms part of a master's thesis on the internationalization of higher education, providing an in-depth description of the process within institutions from a specific region.

To offer a fresh perspective on the phenomenon, a comparative study was conducted among institutions that share the same macro-environment but have different approaches to internationalization. In this regard, we seek organizational idiosyncrasies that explain the differences in processes.

This research differs from previous studies in that it focuses on the internal environment of higher education institutions. By selecting institutions subject to the same legal framework and source of funding, we isolate factors previously identified in the literature that are directly related to the economic and political context (Eisenhardt, 2021).

As a theoretical model for detailing the phenomenon, we utilized Knight's (1994) Internationalization Circle, updated by De Wit (2002), which describes the stages for

institutional management of internationalization. Knight (2004) emphasizes that internationalization is a process at the institutional level, justifying the use of this model. Three Brazilian higher education institutions (HEIs) were chosen based on their organizational similarities and differences.

The study contributes to research on the topic by highlighting how internationalization differs between institutions. It was demonstrated that national government policies may be ineffective when applied uniformly across different HEIs. Additionally, it was noted that productivity metrics may represent challenges and even deviations from objectives for institutions whose mission and activities differ from such policies.

Internationalization Circle Model

The Internationalization Circle Model emerged from the search for representations of the phenomenon within higher education institutions (HEIs) and is the first model aimed at capturing internationalization as a planned process, consisting of interconnected stages (Hunter; Sparnon; Latorre, 2022).

In his seminal article, Knight (1994) contextualizes internationalization within institutional strategy. According to Knight (1994), internationalization is a dimension to be integrated into institutional systems and should be present in the stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation, continuously and cyclically. Based on these principles, Knight (1994) proposed a framework for analyzing internationalization, consisting of the following stages: awareness, commitment, planning, implementation, review, and reinforcement. The continuous and cyclical execution of these stages fosters a culture of internationalization in institutional activities, processes, and strategies.

A notable characteristic of the model is the bidirectional flow, meaning that as one stage is executed, the previous one must be reviewed. At this point, institutionalization becomes crucial because the commitment of senior management will be paramount in executing and reviewing the stages.

The proposed model had a significant academic impact, as evidenced by critiques and new propositions. Notably, Knight's model was criticized for being self-directed, treating internationalization as an end rather than a means. To address this limitation, the model needed to consider the impact of internationalization on research, teaching, and community services

(Van Der Wende, 1997). In response to critiques, De Wit (2002) updated the circle with eight stages and introduced a ninth stage at the center, termed the "integration effect" (Hunter; Sparnon; Latorre, 2022). The updated model includes two underlying essential elements for successful implementation: integration and commitment, achieved through stakeholder involvement both within and outside the organization (Jiménez; Albo, 2022).

The Internationalization Circle Model is capable of comprehensively describing the strategic planning process, encompassing activities, policies, and actors. Based on this, this research uses it as a framework for collecting, analyzing, and discussing findings.

Figure 1 - Internationalization Circle (Modified Version)
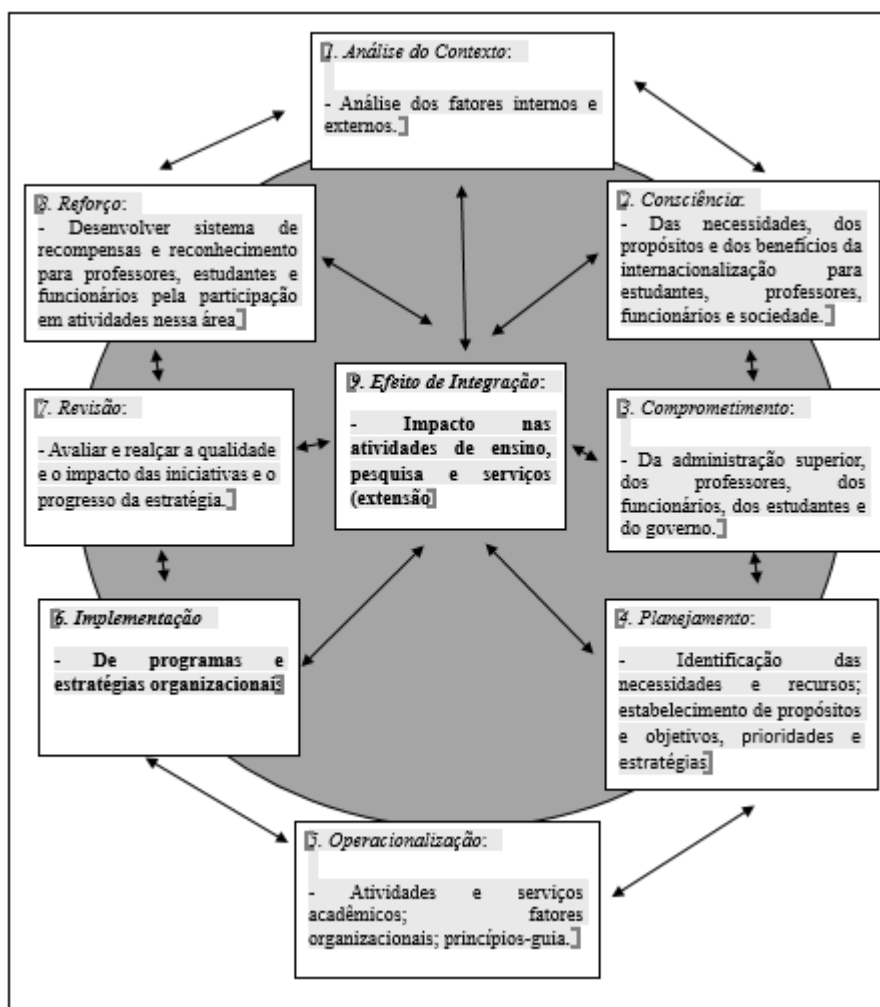
Source: De Wit (2002).

Despite two decades of updates, it is noteworthy that the model remains relevant through discussions in recent works (Lebeau, 2018; Perez-Encinas; Rodriguez-Pomeda, 2018; Almeida, Sant'anna; De Lima, 2021).

Methodological Aspects

Unit of Analysis

The units of analysis selected are three public institutions that offer undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The research involves investigating internationalization at the institutional level of the studied institutions. They are assigned the pseudonyms "Institution 1," "Institution 2," and "Institution 3."

The choice of these three institutions is based on the study's objectives. Since our investigation is focused on the internal aspects of the organization to understand internationalization, it is necessary that the institutions operate in a similar external environment so that the identified differences can be attributed to internal factors (Eisenhardt, 2021).

Externally, the institutions are located within the same federative unit (state), with two having their main offices in the same city; the third institution is located 60 km from the others. Furthermore, the institutions are public and funded by the federal government.

On the other hand, the institutions must also have sufficient internal differences to allow for meaningful comparisons. Institution 1 has been in existence for over six decades, offers undergraduate programs in major fields of knowledge, is ranked nationally as a reference in internationalization, and has internationally recognized postgraduate programs.

Institution 2 is over a century old and is historically known for offering vocational technical courses. The first undergraduate programs were established two decades ago, focusing on technology. The postgraduate programs are few and recent. Institution 2 is not listed in academic rankings related to internationalization.

Institution 3 was founded less than two decades ago and was established to foster integration with Portuguese-speaking countries. Consequently, up to half of its students come from other Lusophone countries. The university offers undergraduate programs in the fields of Social Sciences and Health, with recent postgraduate courses.

Data Collection and Analysis

The development of a case study involves the use of multiple sources of evidence. This research predominantly relied on interviews, documents, and records (Yin, 2010).

Interviews were a crucial aspect, as key actors involved in the internationalization process were selected. Valuable information is obtained from individuals directly involved in the phenomenon under study (Gil, 2002). Due to their involvement in the institutional dimension of internationalization, we selected members of the universities' senior management, specifically rectors and vice-rectors (Knight, 2003). We also interviewed professors involved in postgraduate programs with CAPES ratings of 6 or 7, which indicates international relevance (Table 01).

Table 01 - Managers and faculty interviewed from the researched higher education institutions

Institution	Position	Interview duration
Institution 1	Rector	53 min
Institution 1	Vice-Rector of Research and Graduate Studies	38 min
Institution 1	Vice-Rector of International Relations	35 min
Institution 1	Vice-Rector of Undergraduate Studies	41 min
Institution 1	Vice-Rector of Extension	44 min
Institution 1	Coordinator of Graduate Program	58 min
Institution 1	Coordinator of Graduate Program	31 min
Institution 1	Coordinator of Graduate Program	25 min
Institution 1	Coordinator of Graduate Program	1h02min
Institution 1	Coordinator of Graduate Program	48 min
Institution 1	Coordinator of Graduate Program	37 min
Institution 1	Rector	36 min
Institution 2	Vice-Rector of Research and Graduate Studies	1h34min
Institution 2	Advisor of International Relations	30 min
Institution 2	Vice-Rector of Education	36 min
Institution 2	Rector	25 min
Institution 3	Vice-Rector of Research and Graduate Studies	54 min
Institution 3	Vice-Rector of Institutional Relations	1h06min

| Institution 3 | Vice-Rector of Undergraduate Studies | 23 min |

Source: Prepared by the authors (2024).

Documents, another source of evidence, have the potential to indicate organizational trends and interests. In our study, Institutional Development Plans (documents outlining the strategic planning for the following four years) and management reports were the most utilized documents, providing relevant information to understand the internationalization process of the studied institutions.

As for the records, we found evidence in yearbooks, which provided quantitative information on partnerships and results from our research units.

For the interpretation of results, we used content analysis, specifically the categorical analysis technique (Bardin, 2016). This technique involves breaking down the excerpts found and regrouping them into categories based on units of meaning and classification (Cardoso; Oliveira; Ghelli, 2021).

Results

The analysis categories are based on the stages of the theoretical model. The stages of the model are: 1) Context Analysis; 2) Awareness; 3) Planning; 4) Operationalization; 5) Implementation.

Context Analysis

In this stage, the focus is on identifying elements from both the internal and external environments that reflect internationalization. Internally, Institution 1 views internationalization as an inherent activity of the university, although its institutionalization occurred recently. According to the interviewees, academic mobility and research are the main ways through which a university becomes international.

Documentary research corroborates the interviewees' statements. In its 2018 Institutional Development Plan (PDI), a strategic planning document for Brazilian universities, internationalization is consistently associated with research, and its objectives relate to

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improvements in academic rankings and the consolidation of internationalization in postgraduate studies, as reflected by CAPES ratings of 6 or 7 (Institution 1, 2018).

Another relevant document is the Internationalization Plan, which addresses the university's internationalization policies for Teaching, Research, and Extension. The existence of this document alone indicates the institutionalization of internationalization at Institution 1. Through reading the plan, we identified international publication partnerships, doctoral programs with CAPES ratings of 6 (an indicator of international engagement), dual degree programs, academic mobility facilitated by the government program "Science Without Borders," and calls for visiting professors (Institution 1, 2017).

The internationalization objectives outlined in the plan emphasize a focus on research. In a discussion about internationalization, Interviewee G admitted that the institution links internationalization with research and highlighted the importance of considering other factors.

At Institution 2, academic mobility is the primary activity related to internationalization. The Institutional Development Plan (PDI) of Institution 2 highlights mobility as the central theme of internationalization. The objectives outlined relate to academic mobility, foreign language training, international relations, and strengthening. Unlike Institution 1, Institution 2 does not center internationalization on research. The interviewees' responses converge on an internationalization focused on sharing experiences among students and faculty and developing culturally aware and globally minded students.

At Institution 3, there is a different perception of internationalization: it is strongly linked to its institutional mission of fostering ties with the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), particularly the African nations, through cultural, scientific, and educational exchanges.

Awareness

This stage concerns the level of understanding within the academic community regarding the benefits and risks that internationalization presents for the institution (Knight, 2004). During the interviews, we sought to determine whether students were aware of the process.

Interviewees from Institution 1 acknowledged that this stage is deficient and pointed to several reasons: the lack of mechanisms to generate student interest (Interviewee L), and the emphasis on postgraduate studies, which results in information asymmetry (Interviewee N). As a result, postgraduate students are more aware of the process compared to undergraduates.

> I think we need to reach out further. As I said, this message needs to reach further out [...] I believe that we now need to move beyond the planning and conceptualization phase, which I consider sufficiently mature, and shift towards having more concrete actions (Interviewee L, our translation).

However, Institution 1 experienced a unique moment in promoting internationalization at the undergraduate level. The institution benefited from scholarships through the "Science Without Borders" program, which resulted in the exchange of students across various fields of study (Interviewee M). The national impact of the program helped raise awareness of internationalization. Additionally, the creation of a specific internationalization pro-rectory and the results achieved since its establishment are cited as indicators of awareness regarding the process.

Therefore, we observe that awareness at Institution 1 occurs in an asymmetric manner. At the top, the senior administration is aware, as evidenced by actions aimed at promoting the process. However, at the other end, undergraduate students receive information sporadically (Interviewee L). In between, faculty and postgraduate students receive information continuously, with increased frequency as the programs become more internationalized.

At Institution 2, awareness primarily occurs through the dissemination of calls for proposals and internationalization activities within academic units (Interviewee B). For example, regarding scholarship opportunities abroad, campuses, faculty, and students engage in extensive dissemination to encourage more students to participate. The high uptake of these calls confirms that institutional efforts to raise awareness reach the student body (Interviewee C).

In addition to international opportunities, awareness is demonstrated by student involvement in the development of the Institutional Development Plan (PDI), including guidelines for internationalization (Interviewee A). Digital engagement also confirms the reach of these efforts to the academic community, as news about internationalization published by the institution on social media is among the most liked and commented on.

It is evident that internationalization at Institution 2 is closely linked to the academic mobility of students and staff. The initial indication is given in the first question, where interviewees describe their understanding of internationalization, with a recurring theme of academic and professional experiences. Its recent history in undergraduate and postgraduate education explains why the community does not (yet) view internationalization from the research perspective, as is the case at Institution 1.

In the interviews conducted at Institution 3, the results indicate that the academic community is aware of the process, as the concept of "international" is intrinsic to the creation and institutional mission. Consequently, everyday activities encompass internationalization, such as hosting international students in all academic units each semester, which inevitably involves the university community (Interviewee Q).

Another form of awareness is the presence of artifacts. At Institution 3, art and culture are central to this process. Artistic activities with themes related to African culture, the Northeast, and internationalization and internalization themes are promoted annually; extension projects focus on developing English skills for student mobility; and there is the Student Guide, providing instructions to students about internationalization and its fundamental role in society (Institution 3, 2017).

Planning

The central question of this stage is understanding how internationalization policies were defined.

As previously explained, Institution 1 developed an Internationalization Plan to apply for international scholarship calls. The pro-rectory responsible for research played a leading role in creating the Internationalization Plan (PIN), alongside the pro-rectory responsible for internationalization (Interviewee L), with active participation from postgraduate programs in defining common objectives and goals, as well as clarifying management and course

responsibilities. Actions also occurred in the teaching dimension, particularly curricular changes and offering foreign language courses to train students. Generally, each Pro-Rectorate intervened within its scope. The reading and analysis of the final document reveal specific objectives for internationalization, with assignments by type.

The subsequent Institutional Development Plan (PDI) incorporated the objectives presented in the PIN. The reason for the procedural reversal (PIN released before the PDI) was due to the institution's need to participate in the PrInt/CAPES call, whose deadline did not allow for the construction of an advance PDI. The new PDI expanded the objectives compared to its predecessor. Notable updates include the promotion of international student, technical, and faculty mobility, the development of international inter-institutional relations, and the preparation of the academic community for hosting foreigners.

In contrast, the planning stage at Institution 2 is minimal, as its development occurred almost exclusively within the international advisory sector (Interviewee C). During the planning process, the sector held meetings with various internal and external stakeholders to gather opinions and suggestions (Interviewee A).

At Institution 3, the Institutional Development Plan (PDI) is the primary document outlining the objectives and actions for internationalization. The topic is addressed transversally across the pro-rectorates. In practice, in addition to the specific objectives of the Pro-Rectorate of Institutional Relations, the other pro-rectorates set their own goals on the subject. All objectives are consolidated in the Internationalization Policy Plan.

Operationalization

Operationalization is the stage where institutions describe in detail how they intend to achieve the objectives and goals proposed during the planning phase. Each action and activity must be aligned with a strategic objective, indicating how it will be achieved and who is responsible for its accomplishment.

At Institution 1, evidence is found in its Internationalization Plan, which outlines governance structures to facilitate the implementation of the proposed actions and objectives. Additionally, it includes regulations that govern the process and establish criteria for project selection (Institution 1, 2017). There is no mention of budgetary provisions or human resources

to ensure a sustainable process, which are important aspects highlighted by scholars in the operationalization phase (Knight, 2004).

At Institution 2, operationalization, similar to planning, is concentrated within the international advisory sector. Other sectors are involved within their competencies, but without a proposal for comprehensive internationalization. The achievement of objectives is outlined in the PDI, with key actions focusing on language education and institutional internationalization. It is noted that these actions are somewhat generic. Documents and interviews did not clarify how the actions would be operationalized. Actions with operational descriptions are those that reinforce or expand the scope of existing actions.

At Institution 3, operationalization reflects the planning stage: each pro-rectorate has a set of actions and intrinsic responsibilities detailed in the PDI. Given that the organization is a university focused on the integration of countries, everyday activities inherently incorporate internationalization actions. However, there are gaps in operational actions for internationalization with non-Portuguese-speaking countries. From this point, internationalization becomes fragmented across areas of knowledge: those engaged with Portuguese-speaking countries stand out in contrast to areas that require greater partnership with Global North countries.

Implementation

In this phase, what has actually been implemented is assessed against what was proposed in the planning and operational stages (Knight, 1994; Miura, 2006).

At Institution 1, implementation involves the continuation of previously established actions, but with a higher degree of institutionalization. Key strengths of internationalization include the arrival of visiting professors, calls for PhD programs abroad, and the pursuit of funding from funding agencies (Interviewee N), the establishment of a specific pro-rectorate, research groups at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels (Interviewee M), calls for foreign visiting professors (to create an international environment at the university), sandwich PhD programs, and regulatory changes that enable students to participate in experiences abroad (Interviewee E).

Cultural facilities are cited as evidence of implemented internationalization actions. In this regard, Institution 1 has the Foreign Culture House, identified as the main one (Interviewees

G and L), and the Confucius Institute (Interviewee L). In summary, it is reaffirmed that internationalization at Institution 1 has been institutionalized through the formalization of activities that already existed at the university.

Implementation at Institution 2 also reflects the previous stage, occurring through institutional programs for international scholarships. The international advisory sector is responsible for implementation and receives support from various campuses to disseminate and select students. Subsequently, the pro-rectorate in the teaching area manages processes involving curriculum integration and documentation.

Looking ahead, Institution 2 aims to establish a Language Center. The current obstacle lies in budgetary and staffing issues at the interior campuses. A similar situation is observed at Institution 3, which has not yet succeeded in implementation, despite having institutional policies focused on linguistics (Interviewee S).

Institution 3 implements activities resulting from its own organizational responsibilities but still faces challenges with those considered strategic and that extend beyond its institutional mission, such as partnerships with non-Portuguese-speaking countries, the establishment of a foreign language center, and attracting students from outside the Lusophone world.

> There is a proposed language policy at Institution C, which is still pending approval by the University Council. Before it goes to the Council, it must be reviewed by the university community, as it sets out the framework for language development. It is paradoxical that we do not yet have a language center, which is something we need to prioritize in order to build upon the institutionalization of this policy and take a more substantial step forward in this regard (Interviewee S).

The activity of welcoming international students is another example, as it is the responsibility of the international relations sector to manage admissions, passport control, visas, and national documentation (Interviewee T).

Discussion of Results

Throughout the description of the data based on the model, it is evident that internationalization presents different nuances among institutions. Firstly, different mechanisms are used to raise awareness. At Institution 3, the institutional mission focused on internationalization facilitates awareness among students, faculty, and administrative staff. At Institution 2, academic mobility is the driving force, while at Institution 1, it is the postgraduate programs, supported by higher administration. In all three cases, while these factors facilitate internationalization, they also impose limitations. The differences in awareness relate to what each institution understands by internationalization. At Institution 1, internationalization is prominent in the research dimension, which is linked to the organization's focus on achieving higher performance levels in academic rankings and seeking greater international prestige. At Institution 2, the emphasis is on academic mobility.

These characteristics are reflected in the stages of planning, operationalization, and implementation, which differ among the institutions. Institution 1 has both an Institutional Development Plan and an Internationalization Plan. The former partially describes how actions will be operationalized, while the latter does not provide details. When operational descriptions are absent, postgraduate programs and academic units with notable experience use their expertise to fill the gaps. This is made possible by the programs' previous and historical experience, highlighting that internationalization predates the initial existing policies. Thus, it is identified that the institution's process of internationalization occurred in a bottom-up manner, where sectors within the organization initiated the process, which the organization gradually absorbed until it became institutionalized.

At Institution 2, the internationalization process operates top-down, starting from the senior administration and flowing toward the operational sectors. This is due to the absence of sectors with a history of internationalization, as the institution has focused on vocational education and only recently (within the last two decades) established undergraduate programs. Postgraduate programs are still few and relatively recent. The top-down approach directly influences the stages of planning, operationalization, and implementation, which are centralized in the international affairs office, with regular contributions from other sectors, particularly the research office.

At Institution 3, the stages are more discernible as internationalization is integrated into the daily activities of academic and administrative sectors. Thus, operationalization and implementation result from the university's intrinsic functions

It can be stated, therefore, that internationalization occurs in all three institutions studied. The differentiation lies in its manifestation due to each institution's unique characteristics. These idiosyncrasies are based on the institution's history, mission, and the influence of internal actors and external sectors. There is no uniformity, model, or singular way to navigate the process of internationalization. Each institution's vision generates its objectives and goals, with successes and areas for improvement. This observation highlights that, despite existing pressures to standardize processes, institutional peculiarities must be respected.

From an institutional perspective, internationalization leads to different organizational designs. At Institution 1, it is a process that unifies actions and policies already present in the programs but executed in fragments. At Institution 3, the process is inherent to the organization itself, and there is a need to create policies that strengthen it. At Institution 2, although established for some time, the phenomenon is recent and growing, with the challenge being to expand actions throughout the organizational structure.

Final considerations

Internationalization is inevitable for higher education institutions. Beyond its cultural and social benefits, integration between universities enhances reputation and competitiveness to attract more students (De Wit, 2019; Knight, 2021). This article investigated how internationalization is operationalized across different institutions. We identified three basic mechanisms of operationalization, which relate to the intrinsic characteristics of the institutions.

We identified that internationalization is used to reinforce the organization's strengths, contributing to its reputation beyond national borders. In this context, to internationalize is to "enter the game": competing in academic rankings, participating in public funding policies, and publishing high-impact articles, for example.

Organizational history plays a significant role in this process. Institutions with a consistent background in internationalization are more aligned with current changes and trends in the field. Internationalization does not rely solely on institutional policies, as sectors have the experience to develop their actions. In cases where internationalization is more advanced,

senior administration may face challenges in controlling the process. Conversely, institutions without a consistent history of internationalization tend to engage in sporadic actions, with policies still in the process of being developed and consolidated. Due to the inexperience of the sectors, senior administration acts as a catalyst, establishing operational guidelines.

The organizational mission is another factor influencing the process. In institutions created with a more specific purpose, internationalization becomes subordinate to the organization, rather than the other way around. Managers shape the internationalization process to meet institutional goals. Concern with external factors, such as "entering the game," is less relevant. The organization is less adaptable to international demands and risks being sidelined in the process.

By understanding how internationalization differs among institutions, we highlight that national government policies may be ineffective when treating diverse higher education institutions uniformly. Additionally, we point out that productivity metrics may pose challenges and even deviations from objectives for institutions whose mission and activities differ from such policies.

For future studies, we recommend analyzing an additional level: the individual. In doing so, consider the following questions: How do individuals within the academic community perceive the internationalization process? How do organizational structures and factors affect this perception? What individual characteristics influence a member of the academic community's engagement with the process?

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