

Quadrennial evaluation and strategic management of graduate programs in Brazil: a SWOT analysis of the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB)

Avaliação quadrienal e gestão estratégica da pós-graduação no Brasil: uma análise SWOT do Programa de Pós-graduação em Educação da Universidade Federal da Paraíba (UFPB)

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Abstract

Despite the consolidation of the graduate program evaluation model in Brazil, gaps remain in the understanding of the relationship between evaluation and strategic management, particularly regarding the use of analytical tools that highlight the impacts of CAPES's quadrennial evaluation on program performance. This article aims to analyze these relationships based on a case study of the PPGE/UFPB. It is a qualitative study of an exploratory-descriptive nature, based on bibliographic and documentary analysis, which uses the SWOT matrix linked to the evaluation form's criteria to identify internal and external factors. The results indicate academic consistency and social insertion, but reveal weaknesses in information governance, systematization of evidence, and institutionalization of self-evaluation, also highlighting tensions between the formative logic and the productivity rationality. It is concluded that performance results from the articulation between academic, organizational and regulatory dimensions, highlighting the relevance of structured self-evaluation instruments for the governance of graduate programs.

Keywords: *stricto sensu* graduate programs; CAPES; quadrennial evaluation; SWOT analysis; governance.

Resumo

Apesar da consolidação do modelo avaliativo da pós-graduação no Brasil, persistem lacunas na compreensão das relações entre avaliação e gestão estratégica, sobretudo quanto ao uso de instrumentos analíticos que evidenciem os impactos da avaliação quadrienal da CAPES no desempenho dos programas. Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar tais relações a partir do estudo de caso do PPGE/UFPB. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, de natureza exploratória-descritiva, baseada em análise bibliográfica e documental, que utiliza a matriz SWOT articulada aos quesitos da ficha de avaliação para identificar fatores internos e externos. Os resultados indicam consistência acadêmica e inserção social, mas revelam fragilidades na governança informacional, sistematização de evidências e institucionalização da autoavaliação, evidenciando também tensões entre a lógica formativa e a racionalidade produtivista. Conclui-se que o desempenho resulta da articulação entre dimensões acadêmicas, organizacionais e regulatórias, destacando a relevância de instrumentos estruturados de autoavaliação para a governança da pós-graduação.

Palavras-chave: pós-graduação *stricto sensu*; CAPES; avaliação quadrienal; análise SWOT; governança.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, the evaluation of the Brazilian National Graduate Education System (*Sistema Nacional de Pós-Graduação*—SNPG), conducted by the Coordination for the

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Study conducted at Programa de Pós-graduação em Educação, Universidade Federal da Paraíba (UFPB), João Pessoa, PB, Brasil.



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Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (*Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior*—CAPES), has become one of the principal mechanisms for regulating and promoting the quality of master's and doctoral programs in Brazil. The results of CAPES's quadrennial evaluations guide the allocation of financial resources, the awarding of scholarships, and the renewal of program accreditation, thereby constituting a central element in the organization and operation of graduate programs (Brasil, 2021).

Although this evaluation model is widely recognized for its contribution to the consolidation of Brazilian graduate education, it has also been the subject of considerable debate in the academic literature. Studies have shown that the CAPES evaluation system operates within a logic characterized by performativity and academic productivism, in which the emphasis on quantitative indicators tends to outweigh the substantive quality of scholarly production and the societal impact of research (Rosa, 2008; Moreira, 2009; Sguissardi, 2009; Patrus; Dantas; Shigaki, 2015). In this context, evaluation assumes not only a technical function but also a political one, influencing institutional practices, academic priorities, and modes of knowledge production (Dias Sobrinho, 2003; Verhine, 2015).

This configuration reveals a fundamental contradiction within the evaluation system. Although graduate education is intended to foster advanced training, to generate socially relevant knowledge, and to strengthen academic autonomy, its institutional dynamics have become increasingly oriented toward criteria of measurement, comparability, and performance.

Evaluation, therefore, extends beyond assessing previously achieved results. It shapes institutional behavior, redefines priorities, and conditions management strategies. From this perspective, quality is no longer understood solely as an educational and scientific attribute; rather, it is translated into standardized evidence, performance indicators, and measurable outputs. This shift creates tensions between the academic mission of graduate programs and the regulatory demands imposed by the evaluation system (Dias Sobrinho, 2003; Sguissardi, 2009; Verhine, 2015).

At the same time, although postgraduate education in Brazil has experienced significant expansion and a relative decentralization of programs, regional inequalities and structural asymmetries persist, particularly regarding the distribution of graduate programs and levels of excellence across the country's different regions (Tischer; Turnes, 2025). These challenges highlight the need for more comprehensive analyses of the effects of CAPES's quadrennial evaluation across diverse institutional contexts, particularly with respect to their implications for program planning and strategic management.

Furthermore, the incorporation of new evaluation criteria, such as societal impact, has broadened the scope of assessment while simultaneously stimulating debate over the need to balance quantitative and qualitative dimensions in evaluating program performance (Boufleuer, 2009; Ribeiro, 2007). Within this context, it becomes essential to understand how graduate programs respond to the demands of the evaluation system by mobilizing institutional strategies to meet the established assessment criteria.

Internationally, different approaches to quality assurance and evaluation demonstrate that the relationship between external regulation and institutional management assumes distinct configurations while facing similar challenges. In the Latin American context, Huber-Bernal, Moctezuma-Hernández and Ocegueda-Hernández (2017), in their examination of graduate education policy at the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexico, show that national recognition of program quality is closely associated with institutional planning, peer review, performance monitoring, and effective resource management.

Extending this discussion to the North American context, Liu (2020), based on an analysis of universities and colleges in Ontario, Canada, demonstrates that system-wide quality assurance policies have significant implications for institutional procedures, organizational structures, and academic practices, requiring institutions to reconcile accountability with continuous improvement. Likewise, the experience of the Netherlands, analyzed by Trevisol and Brasil (2023), emphasizes the central role of self-evaluation, peer review, and institutional autonomy in defining objectives, assessing outcomes, and formulating strategies for improvement.

Although these systems differ historically, institutionally, and regulatorily from the Brazilian model, the literature consistently shows that evaluation extends beyond the verification of

outcomes to foster planning processes, self-evaluation, evidence-based documentation, and institutional reorganization.

Despite the consolidation of the CAPES evaluation model in Brazil, studies integrating the analysis of the quadrennial evaluation with strategic diagnostic tools capable of systematically identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats affecting graduate programs remain scarce. This gap limits a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between evaluation, management, and institutional performance.

Against this backdrop, the present study addresses the following research question: **How does CAPES's quadrennial evaluation influence the strategic management of Graduate Programs in Education when considering their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats?** Accordingly, this article aims to analyze the quadrennial evaluation of graduate education in Brazil through a case study of the PostGraduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraíba (PPGE/UFPB), highlighting its implications for strategic management and institutional performance.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach, based on the understanding that phenomena related to graduate education evaluation involve complex, contextual, and interpretative dimensions (Triviños, 1987; Flick, 2009). From an epistemological perspective, it is grounded in Critical Educational Theory, which enables the analysis of the CAPES evaluation system as a regulatory mechanism shaped by tensions among quality, performativity, and academic productivism.

Regarding its nature, the study is characterized as exploratory and descriptive, as it seeks to understand and describe the perspectives and challenges faced by the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraíba (PPGE/UFPB) within the context of the 2017-2020 CAPES Quadrennial Evaluation (Brasil, 2020b).

Methodologically, the research is designed as a single instrumental case study (Yin, 2005), focusing on the PPGE/UFPB within its institutional and regulatory context. This strategy enables an in-depth analysis of contemporary phenomena in their real-life setting, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined.

Data were collected through bibliographic and documentary research. The documentary corpus comprised the PPGE/UFPB Sucupira Report for the 2017-2020 evaluation cycle, the Evaluation Framework for Academic Programs in the Education Area, the Education Area Evaluation Report, the CAPES Area Document, the National Graduate Education Plan, and institutional documents produced by the PPGE/UFPB related to strategic planning, self-evaluation, academic organization, and program monitoring (Brasil, 2019, 2020a).

In addition, documents from the 2021-2024 evaluation cycle were consulted whenever necessary to facilitate the understanding of recent changes in the evaluation model. The documentary corpus was selected according to the following criteria: (i) official or institutional nature of the source; (ii) relevance to the research problem; (iii) alignment with the CAPES evaluation dimensions—Program, Education and Training, and Impact; and (iv) the presence of evidence capable of supporting the identification of internal and external factors. Duplicate documents, purely informative materials, and records unrelated to the program's performance or strategic management were excluded.

Data analysis was conducted using the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) matrix as a strategic diagnostic tool (Kotler; Keller, 2006). The analytical procedure comprised two stages: (i) systematization of the collected data and construction of the SWOT matrix through the identification of internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats); and (ii) analytical integration of the SWOT findings with the CAPES evaluation dimensions (Program, Education and Training, and Impact), allowing the identification of convergences, gaps, and institutional challenges.

The analytical protocol was developed in five stages. First, all documents were read in full, and units of analysis related to planning, education and training, scholarly output, societal impact, internationalization, infrastructure, and governance were identified. Second, these

units were organized into a data extraction matrix indicating both the documentary source and the corresponding CAPES evaluation dimension.

Third, elements over which the program had direct capacity for intervention were classified as internal factors, whereas those resulting from the regulatory, political, economic, or broader systemic environment were classified as external factors.

Fourth, the internal factors were categorized as strengths or weaknesses, while the external factors were classified as opportunities or threats according to their favorable or unfavorable effects on institutional performance. Finally, the SWOT categories were interpreted in relation to the CAPES evaluation dimensions and the specialized literature in order to identify convergences, contradictions, and strategic implications.

The methodological design coherently integrates a qualitative approach, a single case study, an exploratory and descriptive research design, bibliographic and documentary data collection, and SWOT analysis, as systematized in the study's epistemological and methodological framework. This integrated approach ensures internal consistency and alignment with the research problem.

SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis was employed as a strategic diagnostic tool (Kotler; Keller, 2006) to identify the internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) influencing the performance of the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraíba (PPGE/UFPB) within the context of the CAPES Quadrennial Evaluation. Its application provided a systemic understanding of the Program's institutional conditions, thereby supporting the analysis of the relationships among evaluation, strategic management, and academic performance.

The analysis was structured around the distinction between internal factors—strengths and weaknesses—and external factors—opportunities and threats. Applying this framework to the PPGE/UFPB enabled the organization of documentary evidence and its alignment with the CAPES evaluation dimensions of Program, Education and Training, and Impact. The results of this categorization are presented and discussed in the following subsections.

In the present study, the SWOT matrix was not used merely as a tool for organizing information extracted from official documents. Rather, its analytical function was to integrate dispersed institutional evidence by distinguishing internal and external factors and examining their interactions with the Program, Education and Training, and Impact dimensions of the CAPES evaluation framework.

This analytical procedure made it possible to move beyond a descriptive account of the formal evaluation results, revealing how institutional strengths—such as faculty stability and societal engagement—coexist with weaknesses related to information governance, alumni tracking, and the institutionalization of self-evaluation. Consequently, the SWOT framework functioned as an interpretative analytical device, enabling the identification of relationships, tensions, and strategic implications that are not explicitly or systematically articulated in the evaluation reports examined.

Based on the application of the SWOT matrix, the main internal and external factors affecting the Program's performance were identified and systematically organized. These findings are presented and discussed in the following section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE PPGE/UFPB

The SWOT analysis was conducted to identify the internal and external factors influencing the performance of the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraíba (PPGE/UFPB) within the context of the CAPES Quadrennial Evaluation (2017-2020). Based on the systematization of documentary and institutional data, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were identified, revealing the Program's strategic conditions, as presented below. Within the specific context of the PPGE/UFPB, the planning and self-evaluation process extended beyond the completion of CAPES's external evaluation instruments. The institutional documents

examined revealed the organization of faculty and student assemblies and consultation processes in which issues related to the Program's academic organization, research lines, education and training, scholarly output, and societal engagement were discussed. These initiatives demonstrate the existence of participatory practices and an institutional commitment to reflecting on the Program's own performance. Nevertheless, the analysis also revealed that some of these initiatives had not yet been fully translated into permanent procedures, monitored indicators, measurable goals, and systematically documented records.

Therefore, the principal limitation of the Program's local evaluation process does not lie in the absence of planning and evaluation practices, but rather in the difficulty of institutionalizing these practices and transforming them into continuous evidence capable of supporting both decision-making and external evaluation. This situation reflects the tension identified by Dias Sobrinho (2003), Sguissardi (2009), and Verhine (2015) between the formative dimension of evaluation and its regulatory function, since the Program's collective experiences must ultimately be translated into standardized and demonstrable information that complies with the criteria established by the CAPES evaluation system.

In this respect, the findings concerning the PPGE/UFPB are consistent with the international experiences discussed previously. In the Mexican context, Huber-Bernal, Moctezuma-Hernández and Ocegueda-Hernández (2017) demonstrate that meeting national quality standards requires the integration of institutional planning, performance monitoring, peer review, and institutional capacity. This experience converges with the Brazilian system regarding the role of external evaluation in promoting quality and the need for graduate programs to organize evidence capable of demonstrating their performance.

Similarly, Liu (2020) highlights the challenge faced by Canadian higher education institutions in balancing external accountability with a commitment to continuous improvement—a tension that is likewise evident in the CAPES evaluation model, where compliance with regulatory requirements may simultaneously foster planning and self-evaluation while increasing formalization and administrative control. In turn, the Dutch experience analyzed by Trevisol and Brasil (2023) aligns with the Brazilian debate by emphasizing the importance of peer review and self-evaluation, while differing in the greater prominence it assigns to institutional autonomy and to objectives defined by the programs themselves.

In the case of the PPGE/UFPB, these similarities and differences demonstrate that the Program's principal weaknesses arise not only from CAPES's external requirements but also from the limited institutionalization of internal practices related to planning, monitoring, documentation, and the strategic use of information. Thus, although the Program has developed participatory initiatives and possesses well-established academic capabilities, its ability to respond effectively to the evaluation system depends on strengthening its information governance and transforming these practices into continuous processes of self-evaluation and evidence-based decision-making.

The Postgraduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraíba (PPGE/UFPB) possesses several strengths that reinforce its relevance within the Brazilian National Graduate Education System. The Program has achieved a high degree of institutional consolidation in the field of graduate education in Education, reflected in the coherence between its mission, research lines, and curriculum structure.

The organization of the Program into five research lines—Popular Education, History of Education, Educational Policies, Teaching and Learning Processes, and Cultural Studies in Education—demonstrates both its breadth and its theoretical and methodological coherence. This structure effectively articulates graduate education and scholarly research. Furthermore, the existence of 75 ongoing research projects during the evaluation period reflects the Program's strong commitment to scientific excellence and societal engagement.

Based on the systematic analysis of documentary evidence and the critical examination of evaluation reports and institutional documents, it was possible to identify a set of structural and academic strengths that contributed positively to the PPGE/UFPB's performance in the 2017-2020 CAPES Quadrennial Evaluation. These strengths are primarily associated with the consolidation of the permanent faculty, the organization of the research lines, and the Program's adherence to institutional policies and current regulatory guidelines, as summarized in Figure 1.



STRENGTHS	POSITIVE INTERNAL FACTORS	DETAILED DESCRIPTION
S1	Alignment between Mission and Curriculum Structure	The research lines and projects are clear and aligned with the Program's mission.
S2	Stable and Qualified Faculty	44 permanent faculty members and a high retention rate (88.37%) provide a robust foundation for training quality.
S3	Strategic Planning	Strategic planning is clear, coherent, and articulated with institutional planning.
S4	Self-Evaluation	Self-evaluation practices (such as assemblies and consultations) demonstrate a reflective organization undergoing continuous improvement.
S5	Quality of Faculty Production	Permanent faculty publishing in Qualls A1 journals or L1/L2 books.
S6	Production Resulting from Theses/ Dissertations	100% of the culminating theses/dissertations resulted in the publication of qualified papers.
S7	Faculty Involvement in Training	Advising, teaching, and defense examination activities under the responsibility of the faculty body.
S8	Impact on Society (Transformative Effect)	The transformative effect of intellectual production on the academic and social environment.
S9	Collaborative Activities and Regional Insertion	The level of impact of collaborative activities (institutional seeding/nucleation, exchanges, cooperation between Graduate Programs).
S10	External Activity of the Faculty	The relevance of Permanent Faculty (PF) participation in academic activities (boards of entities, committees, editorial boards).

Figure 1. Strengths of the PPGE/UFPB.
Source: Prepared by the author (2025).

Strengths

The strengths identified indicate that institutional performance is not solely the result of individual scholarly productivity but rather of the interplay among faculty stability, curricular coherence, the organization of research lines, and societal engagement. Together, these dimensions constitute an accumulated institutional capacity that is essential for ensuring the continuity of graduate education and strengthening the Program's academic identity. Nevertheless, the existence of these strengths does not eliminate the regulatory pressures imposed by the evaluation system. On the contrary, the greater the emphasis placed on standardized evidence of performance, the greater the need to translate academic capacities into verifiable indicators without reducing educational quality to the mere quantification of measurable outputs.

Within the specific context of the PPGE/UFPB, strategic planning and self-evaluation practices—implemented through faculty and student assemblies and consultation processes—demonstrate the existence of an institutional culture characterized by critical reflection and a commitment to continuous improvement. Collective participation therefore represents one of the Program's principal strengths.

However, the strategic and evaluative effectiveness of these initiatives depends on their institutionalization through permanent procedures, systematic documentation, measurable goals, and continuously monitored indicators capable of transforming collective deliberations and institutional experiences into organized evidence to support strategic planning and decision-making. Complementing this institutional capacity is the stability of the permanent faculty, composed of 44 faculty members with a retention rate of 88.37%, which provides a solid foundation for the continuity of institutional initiatives and the quality of graduate education.

Weaknesses

In contrast to the strengths identified, the analysis also revealed significant weaknesses that directly affect strategic indicators within the CAPES evaluation framework, particularly those related to planning, information systematization, and the translation of academic practices into evaluative evidence. Figure 2 presents the first set of these weaknesses, illustrating how they influence the Program's overall performance.



WEAKNESSES	INTERNAL NEGATIVE FACTORS	DETAILED DESCRIPTION
W1	Insufficient integration with undergraduate education	Limited integration, rated as "regular" [satisfactory/fair] by CAPES, with low faculty participation in extension projects and undergraduate advising.
W2	Intellectual Production of Alumni	The item concerning the quality of intellectual production by students and alumni was rated as "regular" [satisfactory/fair]. The percentage of alumni-authors (11.56%) was evaluated as weak.
W3	Postdoctoral Internship/ Senior Research	Registration of only one faculty participation in a postdoctoral internship during the aforementioned quadrennium.
W4	Information on Alumni	The program was rated as "regular" [satisfactory/fair] for indicating only 5 alumni for tracking destination and professional placement, whereas it should have indicated 26.
W5	Absence of a systematized faculty credentialing policy	Administrative vulnerability that may compromise the renewal and equilibrium of the faculty body.
W6	Impact of Intellectual Productions	The quality of the most significant selected intellectual productions was rated as "regular" [satisfactory/fair], given that the justifications ensure quality but do not address the impact of the productions.

Figure 2. Weaknesses of the PPGE/UFPB – Part I.

Source: Prepared by the author (2025).

The weaknesses identified should not be understood as isolated shortcomings but rather as manifestations of a broader issue of institutional governance. The limited systematization of information concerning alumni, internationalization, integration with undergraduate education, and faculty accreditation processes reduces the Program's ability to demonstrate, within the external evaluation process, achievements that may already exist but remain dispersed across its institutional practices. In the case of the PPGE/UFPB, this gap between academic activities effectively carried out and the evidence formally documented is particularly significant, as it simultaneously affects internal planning, institutional memory, and the visibility of the Program's performance.

The analysis of the Program's weaknesses continues with the identification of additional critical issues, particularly those associated with the implementation of institutional strategies, alumni tracking, and the formalization of self-evaluation processes. Although these weaknesses may appear to be specific in nature, they acquire a systemic character within the current evaluation model, as illustrated in Figure 3, which complements the analysis presented above.



WEAKNESSES	INTERNAL NEGATIVE FACTORS	DETAILED DESCRIPTION
W7	Absence of Affirmative Actions	There was no mention of the adoption of affirmative actions in student selection processes within social insertion initiatives.
W8	Web Page (Transparency and data accessibility)	Absence of direct access to the full texts of theses and dissertations.
W9	External Incentive in Self-Evaluation	Incentivizing the presence of external members in the self-evaluation processes was evaluated as weak.
W10	Low internationalization	Restricted participation in international cooperation networks and only one international postdoctoral internship registered (2017–2020).
W11	Limited physical infrastructure	Need for modernization and expansion of the facilities.
W12	Indefiniteness of Strategic Focus	The Graduate Program (PPG) is urged to define whether its focus is internationalization or social insertion, which represents a threat of strategic misalignment if there is no clear definition.

Figure 3. Weaknesses of the PPGE/UFPB – Part II.

Source: Prepared by the author (2025).

Despite its strengths, the PPGE/UFPB faces structural and organizational challenges that limit its potential. The most significant of these is its low level of internationalization, as identified by CAPES, which recorded only one international postdoctoral fellowship during the 2017-2020 evaluation period. The Program's limited participation in international research networks and collaborative projects reduces its international visibility and restricts the global dissemination of its scholarly output.

Another critical issue concerns the Program's limited integration with undergraduate education, which CAPES classified as satisfactory rather than outstanding. The relatively low participation of faculty members in extension projects and undergraduate supervision indicates a disconnect between the two educational levels, thereby weakening educational integration and the development of a research culture throughout the academic trajectory.

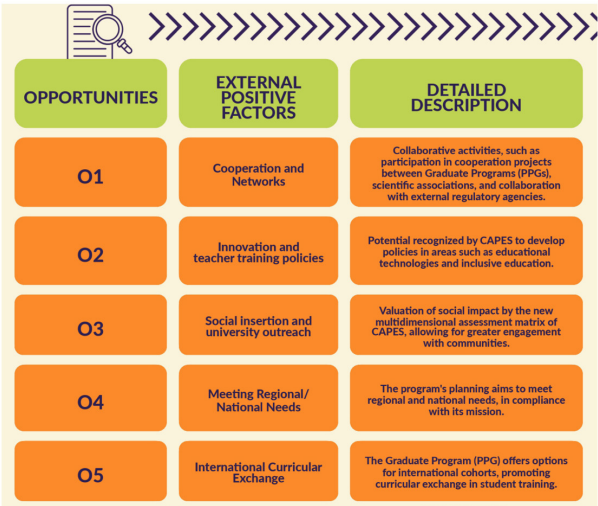
The Program's physical infrastructure also presents limitations, requiring modernization and expansion to better support face-to-face teaching, research, and laboratory activities. The Sucupira Report itself indicates plans for relocating the Program's facilities, highlighting the need for investments in infrastructure commensurate with the Program's size and academic activities.

Another weakness identified by the CAPES evaluation concerns the absence of a systematic faculty accreditation and reaccreditation policy, which was considered an administrative shortcoming. The lack of clear and regularly implemented criteria governing faculty admission and continued accreditation may hinder faculty renewal and compromise the long-term balance of the permanent faculty.

Taken together, these weaknesses indicate that some of the Program's challenges stem not necessarily from a lack of academic activity but rather from the limited institutionalization of mechanisms designed to plan, monitor, document, and communicate its achievements. In this context, information governance assumes a cross-cutting role: incomplete information regarding alumni, societal impact, collaboration, self-evaluation, and scholarly output undermines both internal decision-making and the public demonstration of institutional performance. This represents a significant contradiction, since a graduate program may develop robust educational and research practices while nevertheless receiving a lower evaluation if it lacks stable processes for documentation, evidence management, and traceability.

Opportunities

Beyond the weaknesses identified, an integrated analysis of the institutional context and the CAPES evaluation policy guidelines made it possible to identify strategic opportunities that the PPGE/UFPB can leverage to enhance its evaluation performance. These opportunities are primarily associated with recent changes in the evaluation model, the strengthening of self-evaluation practices, and the expansion of internationalization and societal engagement initiatives, as summarized in Figure 4.



OPPORTUNITIES	EXTERNAL POSITIVE FACTORS	DETAILED DESCRIPTION
O1	Cooperation and Networks	Collaborative activities, such as participation in cooperation projects between Graduate Programs (PPGs), scientific associations, and collaboration with external regulatory agencies.
O2	Innovation and teacher training policies	Potential recognized by CAPES to develop policies in areas such as educational technologies and inclusive education.
O3	Social insertion and university outreach	Valuation of social impact by the new multidimensional assessment matrix of CAPES, allowing for greater engagement with communities.
O4	Meeting Regional/ National Needs	The program's planning aims to meet regional and national needs, in compliance with its mission.
O5	International Curricular Exchange	The Graduate Program (PPG) offers options for international cohorts, promoting curricular exchange in student training.

Figure 4. Opportunities for the PPGE/UFPB.
Source: Prepared by the author (2025).

The PPGE/UFPB is well positioned to expand its activities across several strategic dimensions. Societal engagement and university extension constitute particularly significant opportunities, especially in light of CAPES's new multidimensional evaluation framework, which places greater emphasis on the societal impact of research. The Program's research lines have the potential to strengthen engagement with communities and social movements, thereby consolidating indicators of social relevance and knowledge transfer.

Interinstitutional cooperation represents another important opportunity, as the Program participates in the UNESCO Chair on Youth and Adult Education and maintains partnerships with institutions such as the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN), the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), and the University of Valencia. These collaborations create favorable conditions for faculty and student exchanges while fostering internationally co-authored scholarly publications.

CAPES also recognized the Program's potential to develop policies promoting innovation and knowledge transfer, particularly in the areas of teacher education, educational technologies, and inclusive education. Furthermore, the alignment of the Program with the goals established in the National Education Plan (PNE 2014-2024) and the National Graduate Education Plan (PNPG 2011-2020) reinforces its strategic role in the formulation of educational policies and the promotion of regional equity.

The opportunities identified, however, do not automatically translate into institutional improvement. Their effective conversion into enhanced institutional performance depends on strategic planning, clearly defined responsibilities, adequate resources, systematic monitoring, and administrative continuity. Participation in collaborative networks, societal engagement, internationalization, and innovation have the potential to increase the PPGE/UFPB's impact, but only if they are integrated into a coherent institutional policy rather than implemented as isolated or episodic initiatives. In this sense, the analysis demonstrates that, although the external environment offers important opportunities, the Program's ability to capitalize on them ultimately depends on its internal capacity for coordination and institutional governance.

Threats

Among the external threats identified, structural and political factors that extend beyond the internal management of the PPGE/UFPB deserve particular attention. The first concerns academic productivism, resulting from CAPES's evaluation model, which is strongly oriented toward quantitative performance indicators. This pressure may compromise research quality by privileging the quantity of publications over their theoretical depth and societal impact.

A second threat is associated with regional inequalities and the budgetary constraints affecting federal universities in Northeastern Brazil. The concentration of financial resources in the country's more economically developed regions limits the Program's growth potential and directly affects infrastructure, scholarships, and research funding.

The COVID-19 pandemic also constituted a significant contextual challenge, disrupting the defense of undergraduate capstone projects, master's dissertations, and doctoral theses, while simultaneously affecting scholarly productivity and the well-being of the academic community. This situation underscored the need for crisis management mechanisms and greater curricular flexibility.

Considering CAPES's new multidimensional evaluation framework, the Program must undertake a strategic restructuring process. Failure to adapt promptly to this model may place the PPGE/UFPB at a competitive disadvantage, particularly regarding the assessment of societal impact, internationalization, and innovation.

In summary, based on the Sucupira Report (2017-2020) and the CAPES Evaluation Framework (Brasil, 2020b) it was possible to analyze the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraíba (PPGE/UFPB) by identifying the internal and external factors influencing its development. Figure 5 presents a comprehensive synthesis of these external threats.

The PPGE/UFPB demonstrates institutional robustness, internal coherence, faculty stability, a strong commitment to the quality of education, and the social relevance of its research. To advance toward higher levels of excellence, as indicated by the SWOT analysis, the Program must overcome a series of internal weaknesses while mitigating the impact of external threats.



THREATS	EXTERNAL NEGATIVE FACTORS	DETAILED DESCRIPTION
T1	Productivism and performativity	Pressure from CAPES' evaluative logic centered on quantitative indicators, which may compromise research quality.
T2	Regional inequalities and budgetary restrictions	Limitation of growth due to the concentration of resources in more developed regions, affecting infrastructure and funding.
T3	Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic	Contextual obstacle that caused interruptions in academic production and affected the well-being of the community.
T4	Increasing demands in the new CAPES model (2021-2024)	Need for strategic restructuring to quickly adapt to the new multidimensional model (social impact, internationalization, innovation).
T5	Constant changes in CAPES evaluation forms	Requirement for constant alignment and a defined system for monitoring the evaluation and self-evaluation process.

Figure 5. Threats to the PPGE/UFPB.

Source: Prepared by the author (2025).

Achieving this objective requires the development of a long-term institutional policy capable of promoting academic excellence in alignment with the criteria established by the CAPES Quadrennial Evaluation. Such a policy demands continuous planning, systematic monitoring, and sustained institutional commitment, fostering organizational change while reinforcing the Program's social and regional mission, which constitutes a defining element of the PPGE/UFPB's identity.

External threats affect graduate programs unevenly, as their capacity to adapt depends on the institutional, regional, and financial conditions under which they operate. The intensification of evaluation requirements, when combined with budgetary constraints and persistent regional disparities, has the potential to exacerbate existing inequalities within the Brazilian National Graduate Education System.

For graduate programs located outside the country's principal scientific and financial centers, the increasing pressure to demonstrate internationalization, innovation, and scholarly productivity tends to generate additional adaptation costs. Consequently, academic productivism and performativity should not be understood merely as challenges affecting individual academic work; rather, they function as mechanisms capable of reinforcing institutional and territorial inequalities.

Building upon these analyses, Figure 6 compares the results of the two most recent CAPES Quadrennial Evaluations of the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraíba (PPGE/UFPB),

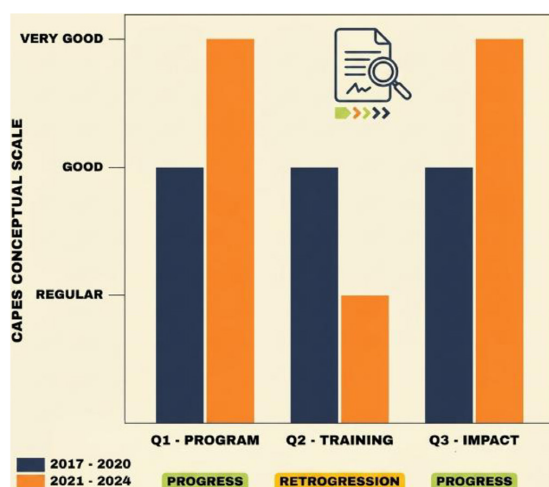


Figure 6. Evaluation Trajectory of the PPGE/UFPB (2017-2020 and 2021-2024).

Source: Adapted from the CAPES Evaluation Report (2017-2020 and 2021-2024 Quadrennial Evaluation Cycles) (Brasil, 2020b, 2025).

covering the 2017-2020 and 2021-2024 evaluation cycles (Brasil, 2025). The figure provides a comprehensive longitudinal representation of the Program's institutional performance over time, summarizing the principal components of the evaluation framework while illustrating the trends of development, stability, and institutional reorganization observed across successive evaluation cycles.

Rather than offering a fragmented or isolated assessment of specific evaluation outcomes, this longitudinal visualization supports an interpretation of the evaluation process as a historical and relational phenomenon, in which institutional performance reflects not only the Program's level of achievement but also transformations in its academic organization, strategic management practices, and capacity to respond to the regulatory and policy demands of the Brazilian National Graduate Education System.

The analysis of the PPGE/UFPB evaluation process, illustrated in Figure 6, reveals a trajectory marked by significant institutional reconfigurations that cannot be understood as a linear process of development. The two evaluation periods (2017-2020 and 2021-2024) show fluctuations in the Program's institutional strengthening and weakening, reflecting an asymmetric pattern of development. This trajectory supports the argument that CAPES evaluation results reflect not only the intrinsic academic quality of the Program but also its capacity to produce, organize, and communicate evidence in accordance with the regulatory and technological mechanisms that underpin the evaluation system itself.

Accordingly, Figure 6 should not be interpreted merely as an indicator of academic success or failure. Rather, it represents an expression of performative evaluative rationality, in which visibility, traceability, and the standardization of evidence become as important as, or perhaps even more prominent than, the substantive production of knowledge.

In this sense, the evaluation trajectory of the PPGE/UFPB largely reflects the ongoing tension between academic quality, bureaucratic requirements, and governance rationalities, suggesting that the consolidation of excellence within the CAPES evaluation system increasingly depends on graduate programs' ability to integrate scholarly production, strategic management, self-evaluation, and effective information governance.

The findings demonstrate that the Program's performance cannot be understood solely through isolated indicators. Instead, it emerges from the interaction among academic, organizational, and regulatory dimensions, reinforcing the central role of strategic management within the CAPES evaluation framework.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article aimed to analyze the quadrennial evaluation of graduate education in Brazil by examining the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Paraíba (PPGE/UFPB) as a case study, with the purpose of understanding its implications for the strategic management of *stricto sensu* graduate programs. The findings achieved the proposed objective by identifying and analyzing the principal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats affecting the Program's performance within the context of the CAPES evaluation system.

The use of the SWOT matrix, integrated with the CAPES evaluation dimensions, made it possible not only to conduct a comprehensive institutional diagnosis but also to understand the relationships among evaluation, strategic planning, and governance. The findings indicate that the PPGE/UFPB possesses important strengths related to its academic consistency, the qualifications and stability of its permanent faculty, and the relevance of its societal engagement. Conversely, weaknesses were identified in areas such as information governance, the systematization of evaluative evidence, alumni tracking, and the institutionalization of continuous self-evaluation processes.

Within the external environment, important opportunities were identified, particularly those associated with expanding societal engagement, strengthening interinstitutional cooperation, promoting internationalization, and developing innovation and knowledge transfer initiatives. At the same time, significant threats were observed, including academic productivism, regional inequalities, budgetary constraints, and the increasing demands imposed by the CAPES evaluation model, especially following the adoption of its multidimensional framework.

The principal analytical contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that the performance of a graduate program does not depend exclusively on the intrinsic quality of its scholarly production. Rather, it also depends on the institution's capacity to plan, coordinate, document, interpret, and communicate evidence in accordance with regulatory requirements. This finding highlights a fundamental tension: although evaluation mechanisms can foster planning, self-evaluation, and institutional improvement, they may also shift attention away from graduate education and the substantive production of knowledge toward the visibility, traceability, and standardization of performance indicators.

From this perspective, the study reinforces the critiques advanced in the literature regarding the productivist and performative rationalities that permeate graduate education evaluation. Although evaluation mechanisms contribute to the organization and quality enhancement of the Brazilian National Graduate Education System, they may also subordinate formative and qualitative dimensions to criteria based primarily on measurement, comparability, and performance. Consequently, there is a need to advance toward more balanced evaluation models capable of integrating quantitative indicators, qualitative assessment, societal impact, and institutional and regional specificities.

The findings also resonate with international experiences in quality assurance and evaluation. Studies conducted in Mexico, Canada, and the Netherlands demonstrate that external evaluation tends to influence institutional planning, the formalization of procedures, the organization of evidence, and self-evaluation processes. At the same time, these experiences indicate that the effectiveness of evaluation depends on institutions' ability to balance accountability, institutional autonomy, academic participation, and continuous improvement. In the case of the PPGE/UFPB, this relationship is reflected in the need to transform existing participatory and academic practices into institutionalized, systematic processes that are fully integrated into strategic decision-making.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study establishes connections among evaluation, strategic management, information governance, and critiques of performativity. Methodologically, it proposes the application of the SWOT framework in conjunction with the CAPES evaluation dimensions through an analytical protocol that distinguishes internal and external factors and relates them to the dimensions of Program, Education and Training, and Impact. From a practical perspective, the analytical approach developed in this study may support self-evaluation and strategic planning processes in other graduate programs, provided that it is adapted to the specific characteristics of each institutional context.

This investigation is limited by its design as a single case study and by its predominantly documentary evidence base. Nevertheless, the contextualized analysis of the PPGE/UFPB allows for analytical generalization by identifying categories, relationships, and tensions that may inform future studies of other graduate programs.

Future research should include comparative studies involving graduate programs from different institutions and regions of Brazil in order to deepen understanding of the structural inequalities embedded within the CAPES evaluation system. It would also be valuable to develop studies employing mixed-methods approaches capable of incorporating the perspectives of different segments of the academic community while promoting meta-evaluations of the system's criteria, indicators, and institutional impacts. Such investigations may further illuminate the relationships among evaluation, self-evaluation, information governance, and strategic management within the implementation of the multidimensional evaluation model.

Although this article establishes a theoretical dialogue with international experiences in quality assurance and evaluation, it does not undertake a systematic comparison between the Brazilian model and evaluation systems adopted in other countries. Such a comparison would require a distinct comparative research design, the definition of equivalent analytical categories, and an expanded documentary corpus. Future studies may therefore examine the convergences, divergences, and tensions between the CAPES evaluation system and other national graduate education evaluation systems while considering their respective historical, regulatory, and institutional specificities.

In conclusion, although graduate education evaluation in Brazil constitutes an important mechanism for regulating and promoting quality, it requires a more critical, reflective,

and strategically oriented approach. The integration of evaluation, strategic planning, self-evaluation, and institutional management is essential not only for enabling graduate programs to respond effectively to regulatory requirements but also for strengthening their academic identity, social commitment, institutional autonomy, and capacity to produce relevant and transformative knowledge.

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KSXA: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Original manuscript writing. MGGVG: Supervision, Validation, Critical review, Manuscript editing. Both authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

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