

Review article

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Cuba

The management of internationalization facing the demands of university governance in Cuba

La gestión de la internacionalización ante las exigencias de la gobernanza universitaria en Cuba

A gestão da internacionalização diante das demandas da governança universitária em Cuba

Abstract

Introduction: internationalization is recognized as a mechanism for managing university quality without relinquishing national identity. **Objective:** to determine the main strategic lines for managing internationalization at the Center for Studies in Educational Sciences of the University of Pinar del Río. **Methodology:** a bibliographic review was conducted of articles published in digital journals over the last five years using Google Scholar and ERIC. The search terms included “internationalization,” “higher education,” “university governance,” and “Cuba.” The theoretical variant of content analysis was employed as the primary method. **Results:** a systematization was developed to establish criteria for managing internationalization based on the demands of university governance. Ten strategic lines were identified that impact university processes, thereby strengthening the mission of the Center for Studies in Educational Sciences. **Conclusion:** educational sciences face the challenge of responding to societal demands and positioning themselves as a reference for countries in the region or those sharing common objectives. Internationalization constitutes a cross-cutting process that must address the dual challenge of defending social causes while fostering development in a world of diverse interests.

Keywords: Higher Education, management, university governance, internationalization, university

Resumen

Introducción: la internacionalización se reconoce como mecanismo de la gestión de la calidad universitaria, sin renunciar a la identidad nacional. **Objetivo:** determinar las principales líneas estratégicas para la gestión de la internacionalización en el Centro de Estudios de Ciencias de la Educación de la Universidad de Pinar del Río.



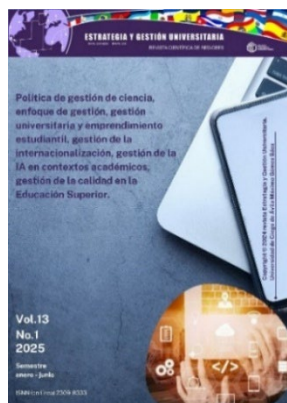
Metodología: se realizó una revisión bibliográfica de artículos publicados en revistas digitales en los últimos cinco años mediante el Google académico y ERIC. Se utilizaron los términos “internacionalización”, “educación superior”, “gobernanza universitaria”, “Cuba”. Se empleó el método análisis de contenido en su variante teórica. **Resultados:** una sistematización para el establecimiento de los criterios de gestión de la internacionalización a partir de las exigencias de la gobernanza universitaria y se precisan 10 líneas estratégicas que impactan los procesos universitarios consolidando la misión del Centro de Estudios de las Ciencias de la Educación. **Conclusión:** las ciencias de la educación enfrentan el desafío de responder a las demandas sociales y posicionarse como referente en los países del área o de aquellos que comparten objetivos comunes. La internacionalización constituye un proceso transversal que enfrenta el doble desafío de defender las causas sociales a la vez que dinamiza el desarrollo en un mundo de intereses diversos.

Palabras clave: Educación Superior, gestión, gobernanza universitaria, internacionalización, Universidad

Resumo

Introdução: a internacionalização é reconhecida como um mecanismo de gestão da qualidade universitária, sem abrir mão da identidade nacional. **Objetivo:** determinar as principais linhas estratégicas para a gestão da internacionalização no Centro de Estudos de Ciências da Educação da Universidade de Pinar del Río. **Metodologia:** foi realizada uma revisão bibliográfica de artigos publicados em revistas digitais nos últimos cinco anos, utilizando o Google Acadêmico e a base de dados ERIC. Os termos de busca incluíram “internacionalização”, “educação superior”, “gobernanza universitária” e “Cuba”. Utilizou-se o método de análise de conteúdo em sua variante teórica. **Resultados:** foi desenvolvida uma sistematização para estabelecer critérios de gestão da internacionalização com base nas demandas da gobernanza universitária. Foram identificadas dez linhas estratégicas que impactam os processos universitários, consolidando assim a missão do Centro de Estudos de Ciências da Educação. **Conclusão:** as ciências da educação enfrentam o desafio de responder às demandas sociais e se posicionar como referência para países da região ou daqueles que compartilham objetivos comuns. A internacionalização constitui um processo transversal que enfrenta o duplo desafio de defender causas sociais enquanto dinamiza o desenvolvimento em um mundo de interesses diversos.

Palavras-chave: Ensino superior, gestão, gobernanza universitária, internacionalização, universidade



Introduction

Contemporary society faces challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the geopolitical configuration of the planet. Higher education serves as the driving force behind sustainable development, social transformation, and the pursuit of solutions to economic, socio-political, environmental, and technological challenges. In this context, Alpízar Santana and Villavicencio Plasencia (2023) position internationalization as a mechanism for quality management, aiming for “inclusive and equitable quality... in search of innovation” (Villavicencio Plasencia, 2023, p. 17).

Consistent with this analysis, the III Regional Conference on Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CRES+5) calls to “promote an emancipatory regional integration through inter-institutional agreements, mobility and exchange of students, academic and technical-administrative staff, and scientists, internationalization programs at home, and other strategies for intra-regional and global internationalization” (UNESCO, 2024, p. 3). Achieving these goals requires an integrated organizational culture and visionary leadership that guides the university toward excellence in its processes (Lanner and Derenyi, 2021).

One of the fundamental pathways lies in the success of university governance. Authors such as Bosmenier Cruz et al. (2020), Acosta-Silva et al. (2021), Pérez Martínez and Rodríguez Fernández (2021), Véliz Burgos et al. (2021), and Bayhantopcu and Aymerich Ojea (2024), among others, have explored the Sustainable Development Goals and the role of university governance in achieving them. They reveal various lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic that uncover new interdisciplinary academic perspectives, grounded in research, communication, innovation, and the essential social responsibility. Thus, governance and social relevance are complementary and develop in parallel to fulfill these objectives (Bazán Rezkalah and Sánchez Ortega, 2024).

However, the systemic approach to university governance—considering micro, meso, and macro relationships—requires attention to immediate contexts and their links with ascending subsystems, without losing sight of the university structure, which includes student and academic guilds, support systems, and society itself (Valdés-Montesinos et al., 2021). As a result of this analysis, theoretical studies represent a crucial decision point for developing indicators that allow for the monitoring and refinement of university management processes.

Processes such as academic efficiency, scientific output, and internationalization constitute institutional offerings aimed primarily at raising the quality and competitiveness of the institution (Acosta-Silva et al., 2021). Internationalization becomes a transversal process, distinctive to each university, but characterized by strategic analyses (Pazos and Puppo, 2021) and national trends (Villavicencio Plasencia, 2023) that foster academic dialogue, which underpins university processes.

Consequently, the management of internationalization in Cuba faces geopolitical challenges in the region (Villavicencio Plasencia, 2019; Bosmenier Cruz

et al., 2020), the need to enhance the quality of higher education in times of crisis (Escribano Hervis et al., 2022; Villavicencio Plasencia, 2023), and the audacity to maintain scientific leadership and the social commitment of the defending institution (Pazos and Puppo, 2021). The value is redefined in light of the continuous improvement of university training processes and educational phenomena characterized by transdisciplinarity and the interests of contemporary individuals.

These objectives are encapsulated in the Project on Governance and Management of University Processes for Sustainable Development at the University of Pinar del Río “Hermanos Saiz Montes de Oca”. As a result, this review aims to determine the main strategic lines for managing internationalization at the Center for Studies in Educational Sciences of the University of Pinar del Río (CECEPRI), in response to the demands of university governance in Cuba.

Methodology

A bibliographic review was conducted over a period of five months (March-September 2024). The bibliographic analysis was carried out in three phases. The first phase involved an initial review using Google Scholar and ERIC. The search terms used were “internationalization,” “higher education,” “university governance,” and “Cuba,” in both Spanish and English.

In the second phase, articles were selected based on the following inclusion criteria:

1. Publication in indexed journals or books from 2019 to 2024.
2. Publication in Spanish or English.
3. Direct relevance to the internationalization of higher education and its association with university governance or management.

The exclusion criteria were as follows:

1. Scientific studies published only as abstracts, without the full text.
2. Works in other languages.
3. Editorial articles.

In the third phase of the bibliographic review, content analysis was employed in its theoretical variant, establishing the following indicators:

- Distinctive features of the processes of internationalization and university governance.
- Innovations and contributions during COVID-19.
- Challenges facing internationalization as part of the university governance process.
- Organization of the management of university internationalization.

Finally, the results were organized into two sections: analysis of

internationalization and university governance, and criteria for management, along with suggestions for strategic lines for managing internationalization at CECEPRI.

Results and Discussion

The university has a duty to maintain its leadership in science while simultaneously reflecting the transformative nature of society, in pursuit of greater equity, autonomy, and relevance. This argument positions university governance in alignment with contemporary debates regarding the Córdoba Reform, a fundamental milestone in the history of Latin American universities (Pérez Martínez & Rodríguez Fernández, 2021).

The university reform becomes a permanent process that responds to social development and each specific historical moment. It reflects the university's relevance in assuming its responsibility to society, of which it is a part (Sierra Socorro, 2019). This requires a dynamic governance and management system, emphasizing international integration, particularly in Latin America.

In this context, university governance is essential for establishing policies, preserving institutional unity, and making pertinent decisions (Corahua Salcedo & García González, 2023; Nino Jr., 2024), as well as for defining the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in university life. This challenge necessitates dialogue between governance and management processes to address unfavorable conditions while developing capacities to seize opportunities (Bosmenier Cruz et al., 2020). Thus, the governance-management dynamic coexists.

University governance requires a stance regarding the relationships and interactions among the diverse actors involved in decision-making (Valdés-Montesinos & Ganga-Contreras, 2021), the manner in which decisions are made, and the policies that guide this process. The performed analysis subordinates management to processes of organizational and institutional execution, allocating resources, supervising activities, and ensuring the balanced functioning of the university (Corahua Salcedo & García González, 2023), all led by university governance.

In agreement with the studies of Bosmenier Cruz et al. (2020), Valdés-Montesinos & Ganga-Contreras (2021), and Acosta-Silva et al. (2021), strategic management and quality impact motivation for innovation, transcendence, and sustainability in higher education. Theoretically, there is a direct relationship between governance and quality assurance in higher education, which is also associated with university excellence (Sziegat, 2022).

Linked to the demands for quality, internationalization is identified as a pillar of improvement. Authors such as Acosta-Silva et al. (2021) also connect it to institutional competitiveness aimed at academic productivity, administrative efficiency, improved learning outcomes, research, technological development, and innovation in universities.

It is considered that the university can only achieve its maximum development as an institution if the process of internationalization of higher

education is developed efficiently, as per Villavicencio Plasencia (2019). This requires conscious and contextualized planning, without losing sight of the university's mission-driven purposes.

Thus, the need for higher education institutions to establish positioning and visibility at the international level, particularly in Latin America, is reaffirmed. This visibility pertains to the scientific work being conducted, which is an integral part of the internationalization process and should be viewed as a criterion for its management. Additionally, it is essential to confront the homogenizing trend of globalization, which not only fosters institutional strengthening but also progressively improves substantive processes (Escribano Hervis et al., 2022).

In line with this analysis, the contradictory nature of internationalization becomes evident. On one hand, internationalization contributes, through various alternatives, to enhancing the quality of ongoing teacher training while equipping educators to tackle complex tasks in different contexts. On the other hand, there is a tendency to impose foreign cultural and academic paradigms derived from hegemonic and homogenizing positions from global power centers (Villavicencio Plasencia, 2023).

This highlights the need to pay attention to the social responsibility of universities when managing internationalization. One way to illustrate this analysis is through the neoliberal intrusion in educational fields and the multilateral trade agreements governed by the World Trade Organization and others, which disregard the different capacities of countries. Such acts favor commercial analyses, sidelining the needs and legitimate interests of young people (Villavicencio Plasencia, 2019).

Moreover, the management of internationalization must consider how to safeguard the culture and identity of the institution, the region, and the country. This implies enhancing intercultural competencies (Ladino Marín and Salazar Acosta, 2022) based on respect, mutual enrichment, and the defense of the indigenous. The goal is to achieve a knowledge society that contributes to the growth of local, regional, and global contexts, in line with the works of Alpízar Santana and Villavicencio Plasencia (2023) and Carabelli Mari (2023).

In this way, intercultural competencies serve as a key tool for fostering internationalization. They contribute to building bridges between different cultures, promoting dialogue, collaboration, and mutual understanding. Furthermore, they serve as a starting point for understanding inclusive practices that address the challenges faced by international students pursuing studies in another culture, whether at the undergraduate or doctoral level (Pinto, 2021).

Here, the dialogue between cultural pluralism and the safeguarding of identity emerges. The importance of diversity and coexistence is recognized, as well as its influence on internationalization, which raises concerns about the preservation of national identity (Delgado-Algarra et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the relationship between cultural pluralism, identity, and internationalization should be a premise for development rather than a discordant antagonistic force.

Therefore, cooperation and experiential learning are advocated to address global challenges. Intercultural education and academic mobility are unveiled as key elements for the development and sustainability of educational institutions in an

interconnected world (Neria-Piña, 2022; Álvarez-Ruiz et al., 2024). This should be analyzed through the lens of internationalization models.

Mentges and Costa (2023) discuss the Model of Internationalization of Higher Education and subsequently the Comprehensive Internationalization Model. According to Eriçok and Arastaman (2023), this includes student mobility, internships, policies, collaboration, peer work, curriculum development, and inter-institutional articulation, among other elements. The Curriculum Internationalization Model is also subordinated within this framework. Though, in practice, a contextual and well-founded analysis is recommended for the implementation of a tailored model.

An internationalization model requires a defined intention that acknowledges global aspects while responding to societal needs; it should aim to enhance educational quality and research while improving coordination between international and academic activities (Pazos and Puppo, 2021). This position reaffirms the direct effect of the efficiency of the internationalization process on the quality of university services (Hussein Amzat et al., 2023).

Hence, the management process must ensure connections with international institutions, universities, networks, associations, among others, and identify best practices for solving common problems, as well as establish inter-institutional links for bilateral development. This foundation includes international best practices and joint research aimed at addressing diverse issues, enriching curricula, and generating connections both internally and externally without losing the essence of a country, in line with Linch Aguilera (2023).

These bilateral links are strengthened through the participation and management of networks, particularly collaborative networks (in education, research, and services). These networks hold significant value by forming communities that connect and create knowledge, share perceptions, evaluate, and enhance scientific production processes (Mentges and Costa Morosini, 2023).

It is noteworthy that, in the face of the challenge of constructing knowledge, universities and all stakeholders involved in the teaching and learning process must avoid behaviorist lecture-style classes and place greater emphasis on practical applications rather than theories. This shift aims to achieve a higher education system that is more executive, less declarative, and more participatory, which aligns with the work of Díaz-Guecha (2022). Nonetheless, in formative terms, it is also essential to provide space not only to emphasize practice but also to incorporate meaningful reflections on shared experiences, interests, and needs, which encompasses popular education in dialogue with academia.

In direct relation, external internationalization requires the activation of agreements and academic networks that facilitate the circulation of knowledge and the parity of human resources for international collaborative work (Gómez, 2020; Toledo Hidalgo et al., 2022). This analysis identifies two positions: internationalization at home (internal) and internationalization across borders (external).

Internationalization at home is linked to activities aimed at developing intercultural competence within university settings (Gómez, 2020). In contrast,

exogenous internationalization is associated with market competition and educational aspects. In both cases, collaborative work from an internationalization team with innovative ideas is essential (Hou, 2022).

In promoting the internationalization of the curriculum, key activities are presented that reinforce values of inclusion, interculturality, and diversity. Closely related are marketing, university management, and the monitoring of the entire strategy (Ladino Marín & Salazar Acosta, 2022), as well as the competencies developed.

Besides, internationalization demands the development of linguistic competencies and bilingual education linked to multiculturalism (Abduh et al., 2022) and the home curriculum. Flexible study programs are necessary for international students, emphasizing the training of teachers, staff, and learners in a second language. According to authors like Díaz-Guecha et al. (2020), English should be prioritized due to its global significance (Carabelli Mari, 2023).

It is acknowledged that learning English also carries a linguistic heritage that has political and cultural implications, requiring special care in its teaching (Despaigne, 2019). The responsibility of English teachers in the decolonization process is evident, especially in light of social challenges and the advocacy of social movements (Ehlers-Zavala, 2023). Other studies reveal the inevitable influence of English in internationalization and the need for awareness regarding the preservation of the mother tongue and the role of cultural heritage (Tejada-Sanchez & Molina-Naar, 2020).

However, some positions differ slightly in prioritizing English, emphasizing the need to advocate for multilingualism and eliminate the supremacy or ethnocentrism of English over other languages. This goal can be achieved through a coherent and systematic language policy (Pazos & Puppo, 2021).

This analysis creates a dichotomy between favoring the teaching of English or diversifying proposals to broaden opportunities and advocate for diversity, which may include the study of indigenous and minority languages (Carabelli Mari, 2023). It is considered that the diversity of linguistic advancement opportunities constitutes a pillar of the growth of internationalization and its impacts.

Linguistic competencies enable effective communication among people from different cultures and nationalities, providing access to global job and academic opportunities. This process extends beyond establishing individual or group relationships to encompass the management of communication in a broad sense. Another underexplored aspect is the identification of linguistic barriers as one of the major challenges faced by international students, alongside pedagogical and academic differences, as well as loneliness (Pinto, 2021).

Communication should constitute another criterion for managing internationalization, as linguistic and intercultural competencies enhance the understanding of different perspectives, enriching not only the portfolio of international services but also the quality of university services based on best practices and lessons learned. Therefore, the communication process encompasses not only the management of human resources but also the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), resulting in institutional communication as a

creative and harmonious integration.

Véliz Burgos et al. (2021); Cardeno Portela et al. (2023); López González (2023); and Jiménez-Pitre et al. (2023) recognize various dimensions of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among these, the importance of socio-emotional skills and interpersonal relationships in organizational management by directors is highlighted. The analysis emphasizes the need to care for the socio-emotional climate to face challenges, one of which is the use of ICT under crisis conditions. Both criteria are deemed essential in the management of internationalization.

During the pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, internationalization took a back seat to more urgent needs in universities, primarily the response to the health crisis, with the subordinate goal of maintaining teaching and learning processes. One immediate solution was the migration to digital teaching environments and the experimentation with virtual mobility (Neria-Piña, 2022).

As a result, a wide range of online modalities emerged, including:

e-learning (electronic learning), be-learning (blended learning, which combines e-learning with face-to-face activities), T-learning (transformative learning, which focuses on continuous competency development), and m-learning (mobile learning, which utilizes mobile devices) (Valdés-Montesinos and Ganga Contreras, 2021, p. 443).

Additionally, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) were adopted, and technology emerged as a virtual resource to engage others in favor of internationalization (Gómez, 2020). With varying degrees of effectiveness, universities have systematized the practice of online meetings and other events. ICTs have become vehicles for strengthening ties and facilitating exchanges during virtual meetings, enhanced by platforms like Zoom (blocked in Cuba), Google Hangouts, Google Meet, as well as academic and scientific social networks like WhatsApp, Messenger, and ResearchGate (Macazana Fernández, 2021).

ICTs are recognized as an integral aspect of the internationalization process, also referred to as virtual internationalization (López Bidone, 2024). This aligns with Bruhn's (2020) assertion of the hybrid future of internationalization and reflects the need for a transformation of traditional governance in light of the hybrid university model (Sziegat, 2022).

From this analysis, ICTs constitute an important indicator to consider in the management of internationalization. In addition to training platforms, their impact on institutional communication, collaborative work, data management, analysis, and their role in administrative management must be emphasized. Attention should also be given to simulation, virtual reality, and the ethical use of artificial intelligence, facilitating simulated immersion experiences for students in global contexts.

Conversely, this digital potential to enhance the quality of international services, based on appropriate university governance, is hindered in Cuba by financial constraints, the U.S. blockade, and the global economic crisis, among other factors (Villavicencio Plasencia, 2019). One way to address this situation is through internationalization, which, with a strategic format, becomes a tool for increasing

visibility, opening opportunities for external resources, and creating alliances (Sisavath, 2024).

International congresses held in Cuba, particularly the various editions of the University Congress, have constituted a potential resource, with the CECEPRI coordinating the Higher Education Pedagogy Workshop for over 25 years. In this regard, Toledo Hidalgo et al. (2022) recognize the importance of this opportunity not only for knowledge acquisition but also for identifying niches and opportunities, as well as for developing projects that can enhance research quality and the training process.

In the pursuit of new niches and opportunities, current demands for quality and institutional competitiveness must be taken into account. Evaluations of higher education institutions have highlighted a competitive spirit, which places universities in developing countries at a disadvantage; however, establishing alliances and synergies among institutions can improve the standing of all involved, both in service quality and international rankings. Alpízar Santana et al. (2023) acknowledge the South's disadvantage in various rankings but reaffirm their importance for visibility, prestige, and quality enhancement.

Even though there are criteria that reflect advancements in the process of internationalization at universities, in the case of Cuba, a greater quality of higher education could be achieved by managing international opportunities more efficiently (Toledo Hidalgo et al., 2022). The reality is that internationalization enhances the reputation of the university and its members, attracts talent, prepares young people for globalization, and becomes an attractive proposition for students (Eriçok and Arastaman, 2023).

Another contrasting element is how intense competition in the internationalization process is addressed, which requires substantial preparation; simultaneously, there is a need to share knowledge and efforts with other institutions that may be identified as more fragile (Mentges and Costa Morosini, 2023). Yet, the competitive use of knowledge and technological innovations can lose its social essence and become mere commodities, subordinating itself to market laws and privatization.

Consequently, it is essential to defend the essence of competitiveness derived from the Bologna Declaration, which links the university's relationships and actions as a catalyst for attracting students and well-prepared, prestigious faculty, while advocating for the continuous management of the quality of its substantive functions (Escribano Hervis et al., 2022). This involves learning from best practices, creating alliances, and developing networked science capable of defending the university's mission and strengthening its position, particularly in the region.

Authors such as Hussein Amzat et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of the opinions of international students—not just the reasons for leaving their home countries, but also the factors that lead them to choose their university. In Cuba, given the socioeconomic conditions and the U.S. embargo, constant monitoring of these criteria may serve as an effective gauge for improving service quality and as a tool for international advocacy.

Nevertheless, evaluating quality through a rankings table does not always

reflect the true hierarchy; thus, debates tend to advance more qualitatively toward institutional quality (Seyedeh Golafrouz and Jani, 2024). In their publication, Voigt and Smith (2021) highlight the “halo effect” and its influence on the existing gap between universities. This underscores the need to reduce cognitive bias and the necessity of accessing sufficient data to have a meaningful tool for evaluating educational quality.

Likewise, Macazana Fernández et al. (2021), beyond the rankings table, identify the importance of motivated environments in constructing excellence frameworks. The authors highlight the competitive market of higher education, the hierarchy derived from quality evaluation and accreditation systems, and performance associated with a culture of continuous improvement in processes.

For Cuba, and particularly for the Ministry of Higher Education, a challenge lies in increasing the number of journals indexed in Scopus, which is essential for improving rankings in Latin America and gaining maximum visibility in publications. Studies by Serra Toledo et al. (2021) indicate that only the University of Havana and the Central University of Las Villas have been able to climb in the SIR World ranking, given the requirement of having a minimum of 100 documents in journals indexed in Scopus during the last year of the evaluation period.

To achieve these goals, important indicators of good internationalization management include student mobility, the management of credential recognition and credits, academic training programs, and joint research (Gómez, 2020; Macazana Fernández et al., 2021; Escribano Hervis et al., 2022; Villavicencio Plasencia, 2023). All of these can lead to quality publications.

In general terms, the quality of scientific production and its capacity for dissemination hinge on several success criteria. This involves not only volume but also international impact and visibility, necessitating the tracking of metrics by researcher and area of knowledge. De Souza et al. (2021) identify collaboration, production, visibility, and impact as indicators associated with this analysis. This assessment holds significant importance in evaluating the position of universities.

However, Macazana Fernández et al. (2021), in discussing the creation of rankings, clarify that citations received per publication or researcher are not the sole pathway to prominence, as various dimensions of knowledge have evolved beyond just research. Accordingly, internationalization requires constant updating of indicators for its refinement and impact on the quality of university services, as well as an analysis of different rankings (Alpízar Santana et al., 2023).

A strategic vision of the internationalization process is essential, enabling self-improvement, fostering change, and enhancing academic quality by promoting a globalized view of learning and decentralizing knowledge (Ladino Marín & Salazar Acosta, 2022). Concurrently, a supportive process is suggested to avoid different forms of exclusion that may lurk within a community that appears open and tolerant, as indicated by studies conducted by Guo and Guo (2022) in Canada.

Nonetheless, strategies should not be copied; they must align with the characteristics of each location and the endogenous processes in place (Sisavath, 2024). Villavicencio Plasencia (2019) warns of the threat posed by centers of power proclaiming unified strategies and advocates for the contextualization of approaches

tailored to each institution and country as a guiding principle.

The internal evaluation of the effectiveness of strategic internationalization actions is also crucial. Experiences shared by Jantassova et al. (2021) propose comparative evaluation studies to develop capacities for internationalization and link this process to the accreditation of academic programs (Crocco Valdivia & Fernández Cofré, 2024). In the case of Cuba, fulfilling strategic indicators in conjunction with accreditation processes presents valuable alternatives, although these can be enriched by results from theoretical updates and systematization.

Based on the analyses conducted, the following ten strategic lines are identified to lead the internationalization process at CECEPRI:

- Identification of features that define institutional and local culture to foster the development of intercultural competencies.
- Internationally comparative curricular analyses, emphasizing practical, executive, and participatory approaches over merely declarative ones.
- Improvement of institutional communication, work environment and social climate, institutional image, management of networks, and linguistic competencies.
- Management of ICT use in accessible digital environments for both communication and innovative curricular, cultural, and research proposals.
- Development and promotion of the academic services portfolio.
- Execution of agreements with higher education institutions, networks, associations, NGOs, and others that facilitate the identification of niches and opportunities to promote internationalization.
- Coordination of academic networks and active participation in them, establishing partnerships and collaborative work among professionals from different higher education institutions and countries.
- Determination of joint research initiatives and scientific production with greater impact and visibility of results.
- Promotion of student and faculty mobility, scholarships, and collaborative professional training efforts.
- Management of international projects, funding, and technological equipment.

Therefore, the internationalization of CECEPRI constitutes a transversal axis. Deriving from this analysis, it is considered an essential part of the Institutional Strategic Plan, given its significant impact on the processes managed within the center to enhance the quality of education sciences in general, with an emphasis on higher education.

Conclusions

In line with the 2030 Agenda, the role of internationalization is defended as

essential for achieving inclusive, equitable, and quality education. To accomplish this goal, researchers in the field of Education face the challenge of responding to social demands while simultaneously keeping up with scientific and technological advancements that allow for a significant impact on the training of professionals nurtured within the university.

This objective can only be achieved through a strategic design of the internationalization process that addresses the specific characteristics of the higher education institution, distinguishing between each area and center that comprises it. The CECEPRI has the essential purpose of managing the training of competent professionals at the University of Pinar del Río Hermanos Saiz Montes de Oca, with a sustainable effort spanning just over 25 years.

Ten strategic lines were identified that integrate into university processes, including the pursuit of improved institutional communication, curriculum development, scientific production based on research and innovation, and the diversification of international academic services, among others. These are necessary for enhancing the internationalization strategy and, consequently, for a greater contribution from CECEPRI to elevating the quality of Higher Education at the University of Pinar del Río.

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