Towards a comprehensive internationalization of the curriculum: challenges and opportunities for Colombia

Hacia una internacionalización integral del currículo: desafíos y oportunidades para Colombia

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ABSTRACT

This paper constitutes an analysis of the internationalization activities that higher education institutions at a national and international level are considering to enhance internationalization of the curriculum. A literature review was conducted in 50 published research articles between 2014 and 2023. The selected articles foundation was the internationalization process in higher education, specifically the internationalization at home towards a more comprehensive internationalization of the curriculum. This literature review evidences how higher education has changed and what strategies have been widely used to adapt education to current issues. In this vein, this literature exploration serves as a guide to bridge the gaps found to promote a comprehensive curriculum internationalization in public universities in Colombia. It concludes by emphasizing the importance of consolidating collaborative research and strengthening the English language as a fundamental axis in global communication.

Keywords: internationalization; curriculum internationalization; higher education; mobility; intercultural competences; global communication.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo tuvo como propósito el análisis de las iniciativas de internacionalización que las instituciones de educación superior a nivel nacional e internacional están considerando para mejorar los procesos de internacionalización del currículo. La metodología empleada fue una revisión sistemática de literatura en 50 artículos de investigación publicados entre 2014 y 2023. Los criterios de selección de los artículos seleccionados fue el proceso de internacionalización en la educación superior, específicamente la internacionalización en casa hacia una internacionalización del currículo más completa. Dentro de los principales hallazgos, esta revisión de literatura evidencia cómo ha cambiado la educación superior y qué estrategias se han utilizado ampliamente para adaptar la educación a los problemas actuales. En este sentido, esta exploración de literatura sirve como guía para cerrar las brechas encontradas y promover una internacionalización del currículo integral en las universidades públicas de Colombia. Se concluye enfatizando en la importancia de consolidar la investigación colaborativa y el fortalecimiento del idioma inglés como eje fundamental en la comunicación global.

Palabras clave: internacionalización; internacionalización del currículo; educación superior; movilidad; competencias interculturales; comunicación global.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions always seek to promote opportunities for students to interact globally, expanding activities and resources to grow academically and professionally. Particularly, the main focus of internationalization is to connect globally. It means finding common standards, looking for international collaboration, and exchanging research projects and silks; and also, campus internationalization, where students from different countries are welcomed. From one perspective, the globalization of higher education is where students and the academic community receive international training, and cross-border global policies and partnerships take place. From that sense, internationalization is the deliberate attempt to incorporate and infuse global, intercultural, and international dimensions into the ethos and results of postsecondary education (NAFSA Task Force on Internationalization 2008).

However, some institutions consider internationalization simply as mobility, where isolated actions are invisible, and cross-border competencies, intercultural exchanges, and research are weak since few students can enroll in this type of higher education internationalization because of financial issues. Aligned to that, Knight (2009) asserted that "the small percentage of students participating in short-term study abroad, internships, and international research projects provides more evidence of the exclusive nature of internationalization" (p.10). Consequently, "cross border," seen as internationalization, is perceived as an opportunity for a few students, which results in an exclusive policy.

Alternatively, the new trends in internationalization consider a deep understanding of curriculum internationalization (CI) and its profound influence on policies and strategies that higher education institutions (HEI) need to explore. Sa and Serpa (2020) portrayed the relevance of CI as a "standardization of higher education intended to facilitate a higher flux of students and consolidate HEIs' internationalization process " (p.3). Thus, there is a need "to encourage researchers to explore and expand understandings of worldview as a relevant component of cross-cultural experiences" (Al-Sharif and García, p.143). This curriculum transformation process should consider expanding cross-cultural competencies, incorporating intercultural communication skills, and implementing international standards without neglecting the teaching and learning contexts and conditions of higher education students.

From that sense, comprehensive internationalization drives institutions to bridge the gap among the inequalities caused by mobility. De Wit (2019) established:

> Internationalization needs to evolve into a more comprehensive, more intentional, and less elitist (for all students and staff) process, less focused on mobility and less economically driven, to enhance the quality of education and research and make a meaningful contribution to society. (p.12).

Generally, the primary concern of a more comprehensive curriculum internationalization is developing intercultural awareness, communicating interculturally, teaching and learning under international standards, and preparing students to interact as global citizens. Besides, "Working towards inclusive international and intercultural learning for everyone means that we become more respectful of diverse contexts, agendas and perspectives globally" (Wit, 2020, p. 542).

Following the perspective of promoting a comprehensive curriculum, internationalization at home appeared as the best alternative. This approach integrates various opportunities and strategies to be implemented in HEIs to connect local populations with the globe from a more inclusive perspective. That is to say:

> Student participation in international development takes various forms, including study abroad, service learning, internships, teaching, and research experiences. Universities build these activities into the architecture of their international development efforts to provide students

> with the possibility of gaining practical experience, enhancing their soft skills and intercultural competencies, and allowing them to build global networks. (Shchepetylnykova and Alvis, p. 19).

Additionally, an interesting concept strives to reach the goals of curriculum internationalization (CI). Internationalization at home refers to the activities conducted by HEIs to incorporate national, international, and intercultural skills into teaching and learning processes, extracurricular activities endorsed by the inclusion of a diverse range of cultural relationships, foreigner participation, and including foreign languages in daily campus activities (Knight, 2021).

More specifically, these types of activities can be enriched by incorporating technology. According to Hudzik (2011):

> Technology in higher education can make the world a virtual campus, blurring the notion of a campus as being in a particular place and an institution as exclusively in a certain geographic location. This way, the globalization of higher education provides a non-campus-based frame of reference for internationalization. (p.10).

In this regard, internationalization at home (IaH) mediated by technology became more prevalent, specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many national and international universities carried out strategies to close borders and maintain partnerships among HEIs worldwide. In that scenario, international affairs offices faced challenging situations to strengthen academic cooperation by fostering online mobility so students could interact, share knowledge, and develop intercultural and communicative skills from home with other students and teachers nationwide and internationally.

In Colombia, the pandemic was a paramount opportunity for the government and HEIs to adopt internationalization actions, support research collaborations, and "understand that internationalization is a constantly progressing process" (Fernandez, 2022, p. 127). In this regard, this literature review explored research evidence on the comprehensive internationalization of curricula in higher education and the challenges and opportunities for Colombia in this field. The primary purpose was to analyze how curriculum internationalization has been conceived and the strategies implemented in Colombia and worldwide.

METHODOLOGY

The primary approach utilized in this study was a systematic review. "A review systematically entails an orchestrated search of the literature to address a particular question or issue of importance to the field" (Alexander 2020, p. 8). This review covers the most relevant research reports conducted between 2014 and 2023 from databases such as JSTOR, ProQuest, EBSCO host, and Google Scholar. The essential keywords to locate the study's needs were internationalization, curriculum internationalization, internationalization at home, and online internationalization. Besides, studies that included indigenous and immigrant groups were excluded. Content analysis was conducted by selecting analysis units, coding data, and categorizing through iterative reading to determine significant concepts, theories, or approaches. Gaps and limitations in the literature were also recognized, and recommendations for future research were made. I identified and systematized the most relevant aspects of each article's results, discussion, and conclusions while analyzing fifty selected research papers.

I implemented a codification in which the following categories appeared: First is understanding internationalization, where some definitions found in the analysis are highlighted. Table 1 summarizes the information in nine articles on internationalization as a comprehensive approach to education. Second is comprehensive curriculum internationalization, where the most relevant considerations are discussed. Table 2 illustrates the most relevant information encountered while analyzing five research papers. Third is

internationalization at home; its implications are shown in Table 3, where five articles were selected. Fourth is collaborative online learning, where a review of 15 national and international studies is emphasized; this information is summarized in Table 4. Finally, a discussion of some of the challenges and opportunities for Colombia are addressed; these findings are summed up in Table 5, where 16 research papers were considered.

Table 1. Understanding internationalization as a comprehensive approach to education.

Reviewed studies	Key findings
1. Gultekin (2021), 2. Alsharari (2018), 3. Lee and Stensaker, (2021) 4. Barbosa et al. (2020), 5. Pereira et al. (2021). 6. Garson (2016), 7. Chan (2021), 8. Niehaus and Williams (2016), 9. D'Amore & Díaz (2020)	Internationalization critiques Social responsibility Rethink traditional approaches Inclusion of interculturality into the curriculum

Source: author.

Table 2. Internationalization at home: strategies to implement in campus.

Reviewed studies	Key findings
1. Beelen and Jones (2015, 2018), 2. Robson (2017), 3. Choi and Khamalah (2017), 4. Kor et al. (2022), 5. Khaleed and Ali (2020).	Challenges related to time, motivation, and language Competitiveness among institutions Extracurricular activities Professional development for teachers Impact of technology

Source: author.

Table 3. Comprehensive curriculum internationalization as an educational scenario of transformation.

Reviewed studies	Key findings
1. Jones (2022), 2. Zapp and Lerch (2020), 3. Daza (2022), 4. Kotorov et al. (2021). 5. Stefoni et al. (2016).	Transformation of the curriculum Develop skills for global engagement Transformation of mobility Cooperation strategies Curricular changes are needed

Source: author.

Table 4. Collaborative online internationalization as an integral approach.

Reviewed studies	Key findings
1. Tsiligkiris and Ilieva (2022), 2. Mudiamu (2020), 3. Lai (2022), 4. Gracia et al. (2023), 5. Guimarães et al. (2019), 6. Hammond and Radjai (2022), 7. Finardi and Guimarães (2020), 8. Martinez and Mendez-Romero (2021), 9. Leal-Lopez et al. (2021), 10. Cotán Fernández et al. (2021) 11. Moreno-Charris et al. (2022), 12. Tejada-Sanchez and Molina-Naar (2020) 13. Marcano-Navas (2021). 14. Blanco Cano y García Martín (2021) 15. Hernández et al. (2022)	Adaptation of institutions because of COVID-19 Response to HEI's challenges during the pandemic Pedagogical implications of online education Campus initiatives Technology to close gaps Integration in cultural dimensions

Source: author.

Table 5. Challenges and opportunities for Colombia.

Reviewed studies	Key findings
1. Castillo et al. (2023), 2. Figueroa et al. (2022), 3. Rodríguez-Izquierdo, R.M. (2022). 4. Sebastian (2019), 5. Betanzos (2014), 6. Mato (2018), 7. Aguavil Arévalo and Andino Jaramillo (2019), 8. González Bello y García-Meza (2021) 9. Norman-Acevedo et al., (2021) 10. Conceição (2020), 11. Castañeda (2022), 12. Suspitsyna (2021), 13. Raby et al. (2021), 14. Viloria (2022), 15. Rojas and Guzman (2020), 16. Woldegiyorgis de Wit (2018).	Cooperation Strategic policies for collaborative research among institutions Language challenges Innovative teaching methods Fostering student's involvement Inclusion of academics among the policies makers

Source: author.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Understanding internationalization

Globalization and its relation to education have gone through many changes throughout history because of the economic, political, and sociocultural trends in worldwide societies. In the academic world, that relationship is called internationalization. Globalization and internationalization have been misunderstood. Globalization is focused on health, industrialization, the global market, and cross-national policies. Contrarily, internationalization has been widely discussed. Along this literature review, I encountered different definitions. According to Gultekin (2021), it is defined "as the movement between countries of international students or scholars for academic or educational purposes"

(p.98). However, in 2001, De Wit defined it as "the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into an institution's teaching, research, and service functions" (p. 11). Further, Altbach (2002) proposed the following definition:

> Internationalization refers to countries' specific policies and initiatives and individual academic institutions or systems that deal with global trends. Examples of internationalization include foreign student recruitment policies, collaboration with academic institutions or systems in other countries, and establishing branch campuses abroad (p.6).

Considering the definitions mentioned above, internationalization is widely seen as the educational strategies and policies implemented by governments and higher educational institutions to place students in the global world. However, some academics have criticized the internationalization process because it seemed to be a commercialized and marketized strategy. One of the most questionable aspects is the "difficulty in identifying what social responsibility implies in an internationalization context operating within colonial systems and structures, and along policies and practices that limit such international studies to those who can afford it" (Beck, 2021, p.136). Scholars argue that the limitations and complexities impact a considerable number of students. The economic situation and the social development of society make internationalization a privilege only for those who can afford it. That is why globalization and internationalization have always been correlated. Governments, policymakers, and higher education institutions are always competing and "proactively responding to globalization challenges, governments in different parts of the world have begun making "international understanding and cooperation" more central to university teaching, research, and service" (Mok, 2007, p.435).

Besides mobility, internationalization processes have other alternatives and advantages to consider. According to Alsharari (2018), "Internationalization can facilitate a culturally inclusive dimension in the teaching, research, service delivery, and the commercial and entrepreneurial pursuits of a modern university" (p. 360). The premise is that HEI should transform their attitudes and perceptions towards incorporating strategies to enhance internationalization inside universities. Including a foreign language and developing intercultural skills become key factors when succeeding in international engagement. However, context is an important consideration, meaning that procedures, techniques, and policies might differ depending on each country's internal globalization processes.

Undoubtedly, there are many possibilities and positive impacts, but "a growing body of internationalization and globalization research has examined issues of power and privilege among groups across the world from political frames" (Lee and Stensaker, 2021, p.160), meaning that internationalization and globalization are always seen from different perspectives, such as political, economic, and sociocultural. First, the political perspective focused on the "growing obsession with university rankings around the world" (Hazelkorn 2011, p.6), implying that universities look for excellence driven only by their ranking status, leaving behind those who cannot access them.

The second perspective is economic, where several studies raise the direct relation between internationalization and marketing strategies (Pereira et al., 2021). Third is the sociocultural view, which focuses on the cultural influence of internationalization and the global objective of building a world society. From that sense, "educators must encourage critical thinking by presenting multiple perspectives for consideration so that students can grapple with the complex issues of our times" (Garson 2016, p. 30). These perspectives allow researchers to understand, interpret, and identify the future challenges higher education institutions must overcome to reinforce the internationalization process, especially for Colombian students.

As part of the sociocultural perspective, the inclusion of technology appeared as an emerging consideration for rethinking physical mobility and

the emphasis HEIs give on the priorities of global higher education. Last but not least, the promotion of critical thinking skills to avoid cultural intolerance and recognizing Indigenous languages as foreign languages.

Besides having a deeper understanding of the concept and nature of internationalization, the influence behind it has also been widely researched. Along with this theoretical exploration, I found multiple advantages from which higher education institutions can benefit. Accordingly, the latest focus of internationalization is on the strategies at home. Chan (2021) states, "It provides students access to study toward a foreign qualification without leaving their own country, which suggests that education programs and providers can cross national and regional borders" (p.88). With this backdrop, the view of internationalization changed because of COVID-19, a situation that helped institutions reconsider the traditional way internationalization has been perceived. Niehaus and Williams (2016) wrote:

> To think critically and creatively about the role of international students in their classrooms, recognize the need to infuse international content throughout the curriculum (rather than as a one-day special topic class), and think more carefully if their use of language in the classroom was accessible to all students. (p.62).

Consequently, universities should take different actions to place students in a global society. Understanding the different approaches and transforming the initiatives undertaken would provide a robust framework for a more comprehensive curriculum internationalization. It is also crucial and a paramount factor to consider interculturality policies to engage higher education in the decision-making process of institutions and territories (D'Amore & Díaz, 2020).

Comprehensive curriculum internationalization

Although universities have engaged in different strategies, curriculum transformation is the central approach to guarantee that students acquire the competencies and knowledge to operate in different countries, settings, and contexts and gain the attitudes needed as global citizens. Through this literature exploration, a wide range of definitions of internationalization and its benefits were researched. However, some studies have portrayed the gap between the expectations of institutions and the skills and competencies that students need to cultivate. In this regard, Jones (2022) recognized:

> Equality, diversity and inclusion, social justice, decolonization, global power relations and geopolitics, human rights, anti-racism, gender identity and equality, ethics, multiculturalism, and sustainability are just some of the related elements that can broaden our understanding of internationalization (p. 2).

A critical aspect is the need to understand that international interaction is related to the cultural diversity found by traveling or interacting with people from different cultures. Hence, the educational purpose is to engage students in a dynamic and interactive internationalization process. Besides, curricula transformation moves universities into a more comprehensive view where "the idea that internationalization is a straightforward response to the demands for an internationally competent labor force" (Zapp and Lerch, 2020, p.388) must be reconsidered. Recognizing that a comprehensive curriculum internationalization promotes further mobility and international cooperation is necessary. Fundamentally, institutions generate comprehensive intercultural and technological training where students foster their attitudes, skills, and values toward a global environment. Daza (2022) emphasized that:

> It is necessary to say that the curricular contents of undergraduate and postgraduate programs must keep as a quality condition the inclusion and development of comprehensive academic activities in the curriculum, which, in addition, have the responsibility to provide

> contents and conceptual, linguistic, pedagogical, socioeconomic and cultural elements for professional practice within the framework of a world increasingly connected itself (p. 56).

Additionally, Kotorov et al. (2021) established that "The final goal of comprehensive internationalization is not to prescribe a specific model or standard, but by recognizing a diversity of approaches, allow each institution to choose a path consistent to its mission, values, programs and resources" (p.10). These contributions demonstrated that institutions should support initiatives and adapt current trends in education to new global societies that need exploring and expanding their cultural awareness, social responsibility, and worldwide commitment. Furthermore, the current vision of a comprehensive curriculum internationalization demands time, investment, training, organizational changes, and effective implementation of an international culture inside campuses. Overall, internationalization requires leadership and expanding research to sustainable agreements and cooperation strategies to guarantee the participation of the entire academic community, especially to assure quality and excellence in higher education programs striving for international recognition.

Internationalization at home

The conceptualization of a more comprehensive curriculum internationalization has driven universities into structuralizing policies, agreements, and strategies to enhance the competitiveness of higher education students as an enormous contribution to society. However, firstly, it is necessary to consider its definition; according to Beelen and Jones (2015), internationalization at home (IaH) "comprises activities that help students develop international understanding and intercultural skills" (p. 69). Consequently, this strategy does not require the presence of international students but demands students to travel abroad. This conception arises from the basis that hundreds of opportunities and activities can be conducted on campuses, classrooms, and research groups to foster intercultural competencies. IaH is based on the premise that "internationalization efforts are viewed as qualitative processes that offer more internationalized and inclusive experiences for everyone, especially the non-mobile majority" (Almeida et al., 2019, p.21). It should be noted that extracurricular activities and professional development strategies must be a starting point to implement inside institutions.

The transformation of the curriculum towards incorporating IaH has been researched from different dimensions. Supporting academics, planning, and designing learning environments. Beelen and Jones (2018) asserted that "Internationalization at home is not a didactic concept in itself, but it uses existing teaching and learning methods, such as collaborative and experiential learning. Just as with curriculum internationalization, cases, and perspectives from domestic and international contexts become an everyday part of the learning environment, guest lectures offer alternative cultural and national perspectives, as does engagement with local cultural groups" (p.2).

Considering the previous perspective, this literature exploration found some issues to consider. First, using English is the only way to access employment opportunities (Robson, 2017). Second, the success of IaH depends directly on the student's motivation; if students are not willing to learn, there would be a waste of time and resources (Barbosa et al., 2020). Third, regional institutions lack the resources and mechanisms to fund internationalization activities at home (Choi and Khamalah, 2017).

Lastly, language, time management, and prior briefing appeared as barriers when implementing IaH (Kor et al., 2022). Accordingly, previous issues are seen as opportunities to facilitate the learning environment and engage students in meaningful experiences. Hence, higher education institutions should make a holistic transformation to incorporate mechanisms and initiatives to contribute to the intercultural and social development of the academic community. In several of the studies analyzed, IaH appeared as the growing

strategy where the conception of equality and the construction of a socially inclusive society are required. Considering this, Khaleed and Ali (2020) asserted:

> Considering global and international education as the right of all students, all global educational initiatives should aim to develop students' capabilities, attitudes, and values and enable them to work together towards societal transformation. At the same time, it encourages more people to work towards positive change and enhances the sense of their responsibility as global citizens. (p.9).

Behind curriculum internationalization, the main goal of strengthening cross-cultural, citizen skills, and language development is becoming more relevant in higher education. However, technology for cross-border purposes gained much importance after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Collaborative online internationalization

Mobility is one of the most controversial topics when analyzing strategies for internationalization at home (IaH). Because of financial issues, it is only for privileged students. Conversely, the number of students enrolled in human mobility has reduced dramatically because of the COVID-19 pandemic (Chan et al., 2020). Based on that, institutions had to restructure their strategies to keep on offering this type of international access.

Tsiligkiris and Ilieva (2022) conducted a study exploring pre-COVID-19 trends in higher education. They also focused their study on online education and its pedagogical implications, where one of their main findings suggests that "the disruption in international travel and student mobility caused by the global pandemic, there is an emergence of a new wave of TNE programs delivered either entirely online, through local education partners or a locally supported hybrid model" (p. 356). This means the tendency to strengthen online education activities and the internationalization process before COVID-19 included international integration and empowering national virtual collaborative associations.

Mudiamu (2020) asserts that "practicing intercultural communication and problem solving virtually and collaboratively will be an important "career-ready" preparation for all college graduates" (p.1). Collaborative online learning experiences are becoming the most assertive strategy implemented by HEIs because of COVID-19 and because they allow enhancing cross-cultural and foreign language competencies required by the current workforce.

Lai (2022) investigated the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Internationalization at Home initiatives. This researcher compared private and public universities in Hong Kong to explore if there were differences in how those institutions approach internationalization. Lai concluded that "universities in Hong Kong have made a considerable effort to internationalize their campus through Internationalization at Home initiatives and are growing aware of the importance of diversity, equality, and inclusion in recent years" (Lai, 2022, p. 131). Previous studies claimed that universities before and after COVID-19 started employing technology and online Internationalization at Home strategies to transition toward a comprehensive curriculum transformation.

Gracia et al. (2023) provided a case research example of collaborative online international learning (COIL) between American and Peruvian universities. They validated the success of this online learning experience, providing students with authentic cultural and language engagement. Furthermore, Guimarães et al. (2019) concluded:

> IaH is a relevant alternative for HEIs to integrate international and intercultural perspectives into students' experiences, whether through virtual collaboration or at the local campus, primarily because IaH can serve a more significant part of the academic community. When IaH is expanded through virtual mobility (in the form of COIL) and the use of the IA, the

> audience can be significantly expanded to other languages and knowledge. (p. 103).

However, studies revealed the challenges researchers and universities faced when implementing COIL. Hammond and Radjai (2022) mentioned some difficulties: low English proficiency levels and a lack of administrative support since these COIL courses relied exclusively on the teachers' responsibility. Besides, Finardi and Guimarães (2020) reported the digital gap as one of the most prominent challenges in Brazil as an unbalanced internationalization panorama. As mentioned above, these studies demonstrated the benefits and potentials of online collaborative internationalization initiatives and the current need to satisfy other soft skill requirements to provide real possibilities for students to compete globally.

Martinez and Mendez-Romero (2021) reported the results of a study in a private university highlighting that "eLearning scenarios have provided the university with opportunities for educational transformation that promote new dynamics in teaching-learning processes, strategies that transcend the boundaries of disciplines to appropriate new and diverse international knowledge, new cultural dimensions and innovate teaching and learning processes" (p. 77).

From this scenario, Leal-Lopez et al. (2021) carried out a project between The Autonomous University of Nuevo León in Mexico and the Universidad de la Costa in Colombia, where they proposed some suggestions for a more comprehensive internationalization vision. They concluded, "This alternative represents a great opportunity for the educational systems of Latin American countries to internationalize" (p. 457). Accordingly, cultural awareness, a flexible curriculum, and support are fundamental for global education. Two considerations are highlighted: the academic innovation that positions universities at international rankings and the social and global commitment to ensure employment and competitiveness worldwide.

Moreno-Charris et al. (2022) applied a Likert scale questionnaire to the internationalization offices of 26 HEIs in the Colombian Caribbean region. Here, the conceptualization of integrating the cultural dimension into the academic curriculum and a strategic route between cooperation, research, and the teaching environment plays several roles in the expected promotion of education. Nevertheless, the ability to generalize the findings is limited because the analysis focused on using higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Colombian Caribbean region. As a result, the research should be expanded to various contexts to broaden its applicability. Future research should also use longitudinal designs and panel data to strengthen the statistical analyses.

Lastly, to ascertain whether the institutions impact Market Orientation, it would be advantageous to consider factors such as the institution's age and size.

Tejada-Sanchez and Molina-Naar (2020) described and interpreted a single case study that explored the perceptions of students and administrative staff regarding English-medium instruction (EMI) and internationalization; particularly in this private university, they found "a lack of articulation between the internationalization initiatives and the implementation of EMI as an essential part of the process" (p. 362). These two previous perspectives show that higher education institutions see internationalization as merchandise and students as products instead of undertaking it as an integral, transversal educational and intercultural process.

Marcano-Navas (2021) analyzed 21 scientific research papers between 2012 and 2019 to understand Colombia's internationalization process better. This study's findings "highlight the need to promote a culture of internationalization that involves the university community and positively impacts the substantive function of HEIs (p. 125). That appreciation arises from the analysis that some Colombian universities looked forward to mobility, research collaboration among academics, and dual degrees in undergraduate and graduate programs. Based on her analysis, one of the main issues in Colombia is the low level of bilingual education,

which has been under many changes. Besides restrictive immigration policies, according to the author, "it seems that there is no synchrony between the state and the actions of the business productive sector" (p. 128). These two aspects are challenging for Colombia because students and teachers do not have the same possibilities of traveling abroad to other countries or the same proficiency level.

Furthermore, Colombian studies by Herrera et al. (2023) and Lago Moreno (2022), Rodríguez-Izquierdo (2022), and Norman-Acevedo et al. (2021) alert of the inequality produced by internationalization, even though the Colombian government is trying to overcome poverty, social inequality and access to education. This literature exploration found a gap between the internationalization processes between private and public universities in Colombia. Most of the studies analyzed came from private universities where the investment regarding money, research collaborations, mobility, and COIL is higher than in public universities. The current need to optimize comprehensive internationalization of the curriculum through collaborative online learning is required in public universities where much of the population does not have access to these international experiences.

Challenges and opportunities for Colombia

This section is divided into the most relevant findings, collected through content analysis and related to Colombia's challenges and opportunities in fulfilling educational purposes worldwide. In Colombia, the internationalization process is quite similar to that of other countries. The Ministry of National Education (MEN), the Colombian Institute of Educational Credit and Technical Studies Abroad (ICETEX), the Colombian Administrative Department of Science, Technology, and Innovation (COLCIENCIAS), and the National Accreditation Council (CAN) are trying to promote policies in favor of the internationalization process in higher educational institutions. Colombia became officially an OECD member in 2020, and its main objectives are the internationalization of education and mobility. According to this organization, "the existence of large gaps in tuition fees for national and international students may become a cause for concern if funding becomes an issue" (OECD, 2022, p. 220).

Castillo et al. (2023) suggested that HEIs establish an initial diagnostic with clear short-, medium-, and long-term goals, articulating research, classroom strategies, and activities with the community and fostering cooperative alliance virtually and face-to-face. It is highly recommended that support be considered from the MEN to the international chief offices aligned with ICETEX. The initiatives should be carried out in line with each institution's missional objectives and social context. The alignment of national and international policies with local institutional initiatives would foster the complexity of the multidimensional educational process in the country (Figueroa et al., 2022).

Throughout this content analysis, cooperation appeared to be the most common strategy implemented by most public universities, and it is seen as a crucial opportunity for Colombian students and academics. Sebastian (2019) suggests that "it is convenient to strengthen policies to promote international cooperation with a strategic approach as a structural component of scientific development policies" (p. 95). Therefore, international visibility in indexed journals and research nets, partnerships, and collaborations should be consolidated and evidenced in the classrooms and each higher education campus. Financial support for these types of cooperation is crucial when pursuing an important impact in developing countries like Colombia.

Nevertheless, scientific visibility is linked to language and cultural development, especially in English. Conversely, language is considered a growing opportunity but a considerable challenge. In Colombia's case, proficiency in English is very low. Betanzos (2014), Mato (2018), Aguavil Arévalo and Andino Jaramillo (2019), and González Bello and García-Meza (2021) affirmed that internationalizing the curriculum must be done through innovative English teaching methods, considering the

language's complexities and the possible lack of intercultural competence of students and teachers.

On the other hand, the predominant use of English in internationalization is a controversial topic. Conceição (2020) considered revising language acquisition policies essential to internationalization. Discussion over the English language appears to be a barrier because of the understanding that English is the only language appropriate for accessing the worldwide process. This concern focused on the need for a new conceptualization and approach to foreign languages and teaching processes in higher education.

However, another related issue is the predominant use of English as the primary language for scientific academic publications. Castañeda (2022) asserts that "it is not only a matter of English proficiency, but also a matter of who defines what is worthy or not for the academic field" (p. 182). These criticisms have been widely discussed, where the attention has been focused on the role of English in a neoliberal capitalist market, making the internationalization of education “intellectually limiting” (Suspitsyna, 2021; p. 58). Within the framework of this content analysis, the role of English in the Colombian system is established and regulated by MEN, and some Colombian researchers have also criticized these regulations and policies.

Another factor is the communication process involving students in internationalization activities. The lack of support and practical information for students makes mobility challenging. Raby et al. (2021) evidenced that "students identified a lack of institutional coordination and communication between on-campus services as a primary barrier for preparing to study abroad" (p. 637). Identifying students' perceptions, interests, and motivations and characterizing teachers' willingness, needs, and receptiveness to implementation methods in each university is required to transition successfully into a more comprehensive internationalization. Besides, including collaborative research projects within classrooms and the community would allow students to understand their sociocultural realities (Viloria, 2022).

A final remark is that the internationalization of research should include many actions that support the research needs and skills of academic community members to favor the interaction in international, intercultural, and scientific contexts (Rojas and Guzman (2020), Cotán Fernández et al. (2021) and Blanco Cano and García Martín (2021)). Including good practices and an intercultural culture in campuses founded on research will generate profound and rich experiences able to impact humanity and the planet. However, this exploration is aligned with Woldegiyorgis and de Wit (2018), who assert that more detailed empirical research is needed, especially in public Colombian and Latin American universities.

CONCLUSION

This literature review evidenced that adopting a comprehensive curriculum reform requires adopting local policies depending on the needs of each HEI. The tendency found in the literature has revealed the need for professionals to interact internationally. Besides, it requires a drastic change in the cultural environment in the universities. However, the current strategies to promote mobility show that the traditional internationalization model, which relies on a one-way flow of personnel across borders, is encountering educational justice and quality challenges.

Consequently, incorporating technology, digital communication, and collaborative research helps to empower the implementation of internationalization at home, which promotes equal access to intercultural encounters among higher education students.

It is necessary to build a solid and accessible international and intercultural path for implementation, especially in Colombian public universities, given that collaborative online teaching and learning are effective strategies to develop intercultural skills, foster English language learning, and promote research collaboration among teachers and students.

In conclusion, exploring alternative internationalization procedures is crucial as higher

education institutions seek to promote significant intercultural learning experiences. This is particularly important in Colombia, where only a few private universities have implemented and published detailed intercultural experiences highlighting its results. Although much work remains to complete the internationalization vision, these endeavors mark the start of a shift toward a more inclusive and holistic approach to curriculum internationalization.

Furthermore, the expansion of internationalization must include various issues, such as sustainability, ethics, and diversity, where students can acquire the skills and perspectives necessary to thrive as citizens of the world by critically engaging with these global challenges.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

The author declares that during the process of writing the manuscript no personal or external circumstances influenced her actions, including misconduct and values. This literature review followed ethical research principles as established at any investigation procedure.

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