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# Internationalisation Performance in Higher Education: A Systematic Evidence Review

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**Abstract**

*The systematic evidence review aims to i) determine the prevalence of existing research on internationalisation performance in Higher Education (HE), ii) classify and analyse existing evidence on the complexities and challenges of internationalisation performance, and iii) come up with recommendations for future research to achieve effective internationalisation performance in HE. A search strategy was initiated to examine databases such as Scopus, Cochrane, Embase, Science Direct and Web of Science to qualify the studies between 2000 and 2023. Out of the 2704 publications generated by the search strategy, 1918 were excluded, and 786 were selected, of which 47 publications covering 42 chosen papers were included for final review. As studies on internationalisation performance are important, this review involved research and publications conducted in high-income and developing economies and could not identify internationalisation in HE publications from undeveloped countries. The overall lack of evaluating research on HE sectors, and HE informatics raises attention and unanswered questions regarding their capacity to improve the eminence of internationalisation performance as well as digitalisation, globalisation, cultural competence, complexities, and challenges of internationalisation in HE. In this regard, this study offers a review of HE to decision-makers and HE authorities to deliberate on the present situation of internationalisation performance and suggestions for further research.*

**Keywords**
Internationalisation, Education informatics, Higher education, Cultural competence, Digitalisation, I@H, I@D

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**Introduction**

Research on internationalisation has progressed over time, from where it stands now and how it has advanced. Knight and Liesch (2016) underline their research regarding internationalisation from previous years to the present, summarising suggestions as to how it has gained authority in academic research. Also, identifying critical theoretical models in novel universal research on digitalisation and globalisation suggests the need for future studies to identify their impact on internationalisation performance in Higher Education (HE). De Wit et al. (2005) highlighted the need to reckon on the issues upsetting international education and the variations that happen in HE regarding the management of procedures in the education sector. A conceptual framework that depicts the description of internationalisation performance, consisting of purpose, outcomes, content, activity, location and interactions of staff and students in HE, is essential (De Wit et al., 2005; Udekwe & Obadire, 2024). Knight (2004) believes that internationalisation in HE at both national and institutional levels is important. The national level contributes to policies, funding, programmes, and regulatory frameworks, while the institutional level is where the actual process of internationalisation performance takes place. Therefore, there is a need to identify the important issues facing institutions at the operational levels and their effect on the repositioning of internationalisation performance and strategy accomplishment (Knight, 1999; Liu, 2023).

Van't Land, Corcoran, and Iancu (2021) indicated the need to develop a system to assist in planning the strategies for evaluating the levels of achievement of internationalisation in HE. However, evaluating the level of achievements might not be easily accomplished, which requires research to create a supportive cultural and integrative internationalisation performance in teaching, training, cross-cultural, multi-cultural, and intercultural performance in HE. In these modern days of unparalleled growth in geographic borders, e-learning and distance education, there seems to be significant growth in the relevance attached to geographic borders as the focus is turning to regulatory concerns regarding HE accreditation and funding requirements (Knight, 2015). Also, the challenges of having a comprehensive curriculum on internationalisation are to identify differences in cultures and education systems of various countries (Iwu, 2019; Yu, 2023). Therefore, a need for studies to identify the importance, complexities, challenges, and strategic benefits of internationalisation performance in HE is significant.

## 1. Overview of internationalisation

Although internationalisation is a new term in the education sphere and is growing at an alarming rate, the word internationalisation is identified in diverse ways and used in different forms by institutions. In other words, there is extreme confusion concerning the meaning of internationalisation and its place in the research area. Internationalisation in HE is, however, defined as "a term that is used frequently to discuss the international dimension of HE, and more broadly on postsecondary education" (Yeravdekar & Tiwari, 2014:166). Knight (2007:207) also defines internationalisation in HE as "the delivery of education to other nations through new kinds of arrangements such as subdivided campuses or franchises and using various techniques such as face-to-face and distance learning methods in the education sector". Haigh (2014) identifies internationalisation in three forms, i) International, which illustrates the interaction between two or more countries, ii) Transnational illustrates the cross-border interaction without a close relationship, and iii) Global illustrates the magnitude of wealth and diversity to support the concept. The above definitions highlight the fact that internationalisation is a global initiative that requires attention for future accomplishments. However, as internationalisation demand in HE is growing in scope, demand studies are needed to identify the impact and benefits of internationalisation performance in HE and countries in general regarding the futuristic tendencies of its engagement.

### 1.1 Why a systematic evidence review is needed

The introduction of internationalisation in the spectrum of education, most especially the HE, has brought a need for research into identifying the impact and benefits to the education sector. However, internationalisation is speedily spreading to other sectors of the economy, such as entrepreneurship, which indicates the need for more research and investment resources in the growth of internationalisation in different countries' economies. Thus, this systematic evidence review is critical to highlight in literature studies with suggestions to achieve effective internationalisation performance.

### 1.2 What is new about the evidence review?

This evidence review identified several previous studies on internationalisation in HE and their limitations. The researchers therefore conducted an interdisciplinary systematic evidence review by using sources of evidence from social sciences and higher education

research literature, comprising digitalisation, curriculum development, comprehensive cultural competence, mobility, and other internationalisation research activities around the themes. The review's main objectives are i) to determine the prevalence of existing research on internationalisation performance in HE, ii) to analyse existing evidence on the complexities and challenges of internationalisation performance, and iii) to come up with recommendations for future research on policies and strategic benefits of internationalisation performance in HE.

## 2. Methods

A comprehensive search strategy was initiated and tested during the scoping stage. This method was used to search various international online databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Cochrane, Embase, Norwegian, IEEE, and ScienceDirect (Udekwe et al., 2021). Grey literature sources were also scrutinised in the Department of Higher Education in various countries (Udekwe & Iwu, 2024). Academic theses were searched through Google Scholar and other sources to include additional relevant studies. There were no restrictions on the language used, and the searched publications ranged from 2000 – 2023.

### 2.1 Publication selection and screening procedure

The data were stored in an Excel spreadsheet. After preliminary inspection of abstracts and titles, the full texts of the manuscripts included in the review were examined to measure their adequacy to the inclusion criteria. After the scrutiny, the authors decided on the final chosen papers for the review.

### 2.2 Inclusion criteria

There were 3 inclusion criteria: i) research involving an appropriate approach towards investigating internationalisation, in either the academic or organisational space, ii) research on a broader perspective of internationalisation performance in HE precisely, and iii) the papers will have discussions relating to the identified themes for the review to qualify for the inclusion criteria.

## 2.3    Exclusion criteria

This review excluded descriptive reports, market research, articles and other publications that were not primarily focused on internationalisation or mentioned internationalisation without specifying HE or education in general and did not have information relating to the identified themes.

## 2.4    Data extraction and scrutiny

The first author extracted data from all qualified manuscripts regarding internationalisation in HE, through an organised procedure in the following format: author name, year of publication, background of institution and country of publication, journal discipline, category of publication, research purpose, theoretical basis, research design, findings, and outcomes.  The extracted information was verified by the second author.

## 3.    Results

**Figure 1.** *PRISMA flow chart*
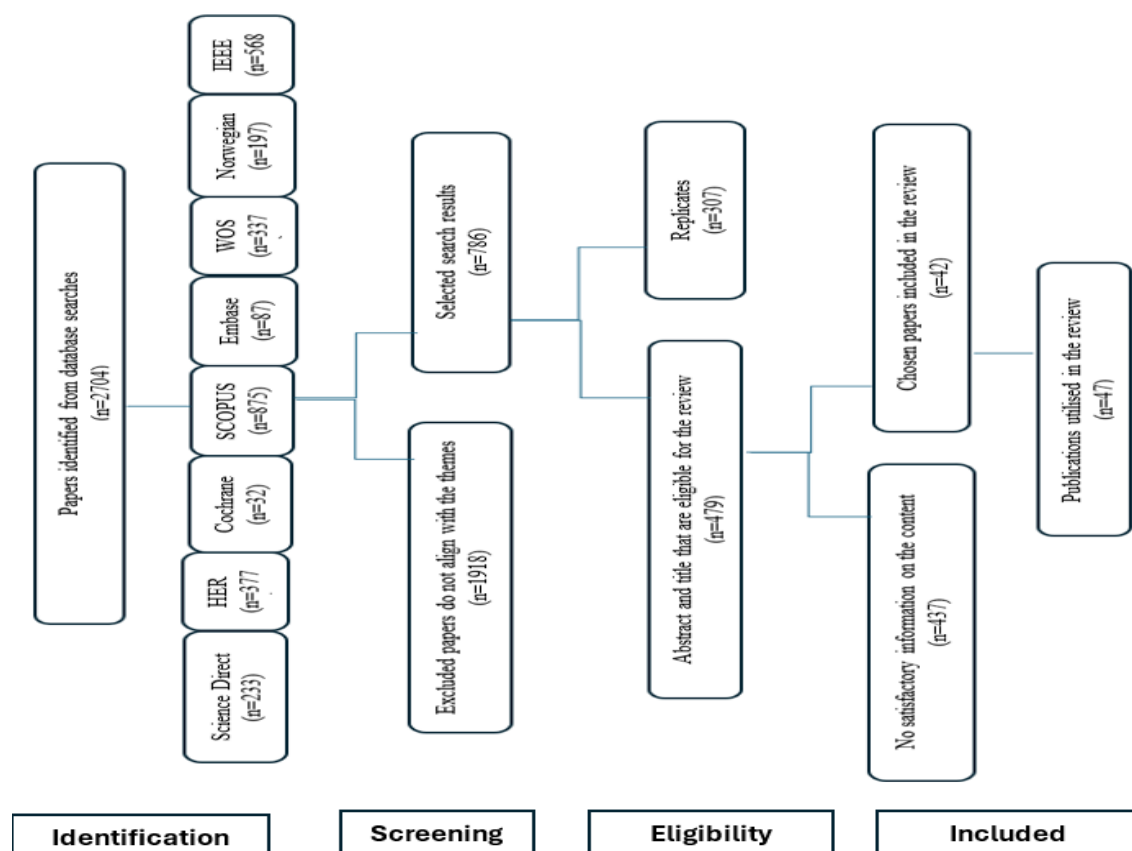
The PRISMA (2020) flow chart in Figure 1 reveals that 2704 publications were initially produced by the search engine, of which 1918 were excluded due to their non-alignment with the study, and 786 were selected. From the selection, 479 abstracts and titles remained after removing 307 replicates. Out of these, 437 did not have enough information in the content for full-text review. After eliminating papers that did not qualify for inclusion criteria in detail, 47 publications representing 42 chosen papers were included in the final process. The contained papers were subjected to discussion as shown in Table 1.

### 3.1    Publication characteristics

The 42 chosen papers used in the review were published between 2000 and 2023.

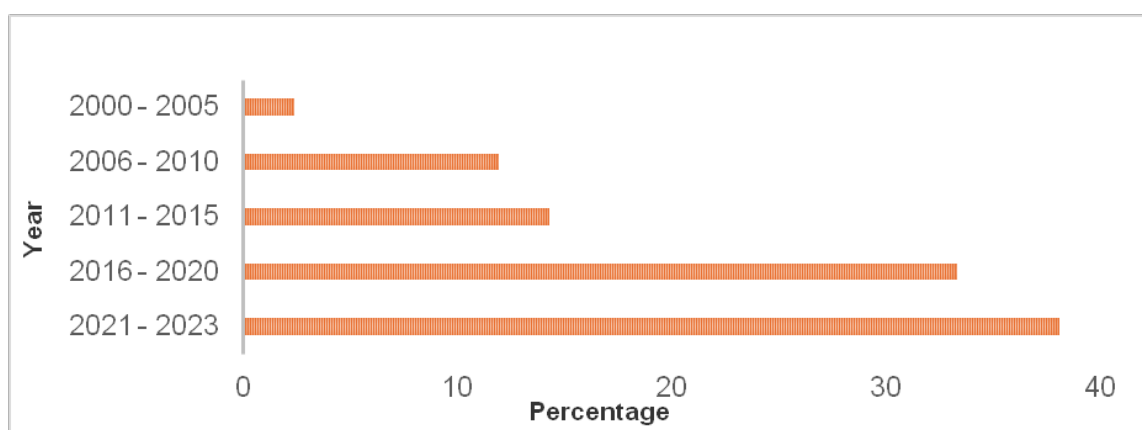**Figure 2.** *Publication year of the chosen papers*



Figure 2 shows that out of the 42 chosen papers, most were published between 2021 – 2023 (16 or 38.10%), followed by 2016 – 2020 (14 or 33.33%). The next is 2011 – 2015 (6 or 14.26%), followed by 2006 – 2010 (5 or 11.90%). The last is 2000 – 2005 (1 or 2.38%).

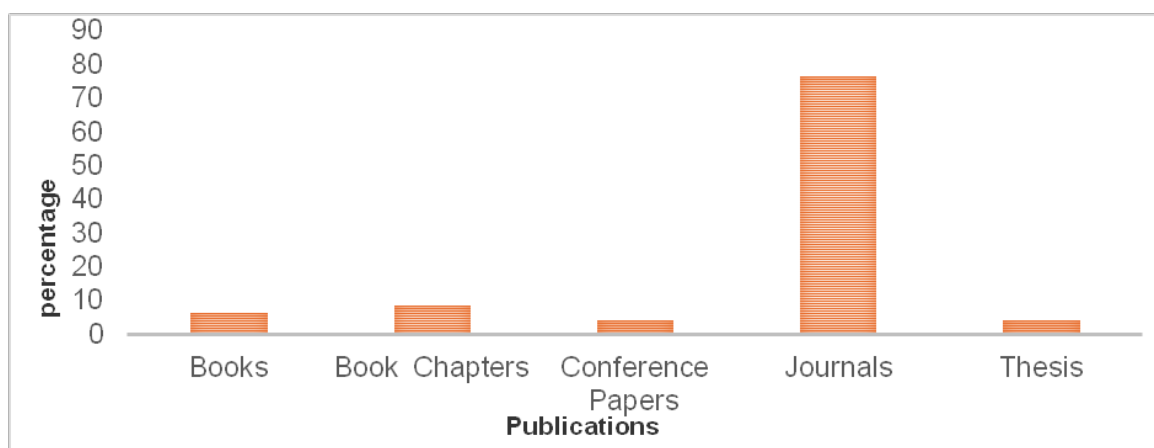**Figure 3.** *Type of selected publications*

Figure 3 shows that out of the 47 publications, journal articles were the most represented (36 or 76.60%), followed by book chapters (4 or 8.51%). The next is books (3 or 6.38%), and the last is thesis and conference proceedings (2 or 4.26%), respectively. The breakdown of the publications by themes is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *Summary of the publications in themes.*

| Category of Themes | Journals | Books | Thesis | Book Chapters | Conference Papers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Globalisation and Internationalisation | S31, | S37, | S03, | S17, | |
| Comprehensive Curriculum | S11, S19, S24, S26, | S33, | | | |
| Classification | S13, S23, S24, S38, S41, S42, | | | S09, | S14, |
| Motivation and Realities | S28, S29, | | | S16, | S01, |
| Competitiveness | S05, S21, S30, S34, | | | | |
| Complexities and Challenges | S04, S07, S25, S27, | | S40, | S10, | |
| Digitalisation | S05, S12, S15, S18, S20, S22, S32, S35, S36, | | | | |
| Cultural Competence | S23, S41, | | | | |
| Strategic Benefits | S02, S06, S38, S39, | S08, | | | |

Table 1 shows the categories of selected publications in themes. In journal articles (76.60%), digitalisation is the most represented (n=9), followed by classification (n=6). The next are comprehensive curriculum, competitiveness, complexities, and challenges, as well as strategic benefits (n=4), respectively. The next is motivation and realities, as well as cultural competence (n=2) respectively, and the last is globalisation (n=1). In book chapters (8.51%), four themes were represented, globalisation, classification, motivation, and realities, as well as complexities and challenges (n=1) respectively. In books (6.38%), three themes were represented, globalisation, comprehensive curriculum, as well as strategic benefits (n=1) respectively. In the thesis (4.26%), two themes were represented, globalisation, as well as complexities and challenges (n=1) respectively. Conference proceedings (4.26%) also have two themes represented, classification, as well as motivation and realities (n=1) respectively.

## 3.2    Country

**Figure 4:** *Country of the chosen papers*



**Abbreviations:** UK = United Kingdom, USA = United States of America, SA = South Africa

Figure 4 shows that most of the 42 chosen papers are from high-income countries. SA is the only African country identified and with the highest publications (7 or 16.67%), followed by Canada (5 or 11.90%). Next is the USA (4 or 9.52%), followed by the UK (3 or 7.14%), and Malaysia (2 or 4.76%). Australia, Sweden, Romania, Germany, Georgia, Malaysia, China, India, Ecuador, and Kazakhstan had 1 or 2.38%, respectively. However, each of the eight other publications involved authors from different countries and regions: UK & USA (3 or 7.14%). Others are UK & SA, USA & Australia, USA & Canada, Sweden & Finland, Switzerland & Belgium (1 or 2.38%) respectively. Two other papers were published with data from 126 countries involving 907 HE institutions, however, the authors could not tie the papers to any country. Two other papers did not indicate the country.

## 3.3    Unit of analysis

A wide range of HE and institutions were represented in the review, of which over 50% of the publications are focused on internationalisation in HE of high-income economies, thereby making HE the unit of analysis in the review. It is also indicated in most represented countries; the government and its departments are more interested in internationalisation performance, which shows why most of the selected publications are related to government departments and institutions.

### 3.4  Research designs and study eminence

**Figure 5:** *The study design applied in the chosen papers*
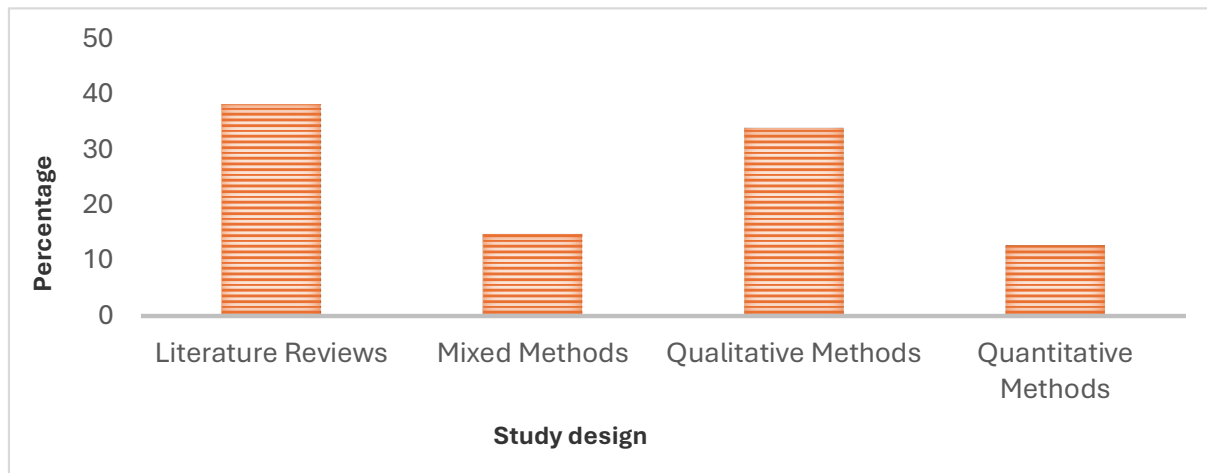


Figure 5 shows that most of the 47 publications were literature reviews (18 or 38.30%), followed by qualitative methods (16 or 34.04%). The next is mixed methods (7 or 14.89%), followed by quantitative methods (6 or 12.77%). The allocation of the research design in themes is shown below.

**Table 2:** *Summary of the study design as applied to themes*

| Category of Themes | Literature Reviews | Mixed Methods | Qualitative | Quantitative |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Globalisation and Internationalisation | S17, S31, S37, | | S03, | |
| Comprehensive Curriculum | S33, | | S11, S19, S24, S26, | |
| Classification | S09, | S23, S41, S42, | S14, S24, S38, | S13, |
| Motivation and Realities | S01, S16, S28, S29, | | | |
| Competitiveness | S21, | S34, | S05, S30, | |
| Complexities and Challenges | S04, S10, S25, S27, | | | S07, S40, |
| Digitalisation | S12, S18, S35, | S36, | S05, S15, S20, S22, | S32, |
| Cultural Competence | | S23, S41, | | |
| Strategic Benefits | S02, | | S06, S38, | S08, S39, |

Table 2 shows the categories of the study design as allocated in themes. In literature reviews (38.30%), the most cited themes are complexities and challenges, as well as motivation and realities (n=4) respectively. The next is globalisation, as well as digitalisation (n=3) respectively. The last is comprehensive curriculum, classification,

competitiveness, as well as strategic benefits (n=1), respectively. In qualitative methods (34.04%), the most cited themes are comprehensive curriculum, as well as digitalisation (n=4) respectively, followed by classification (n=3), competitiveness, as well as strategic benefits (n=2) respectively. The last is globalisation (n=1). In mixed methods (14.89%), classification is the most cited theme (n=3), followed by cultural competence (n=2), then competitiveness, as well as digitalisation (n=1) respectively. In quantitative methods (12.77%), complexities as well as strategic benefits are the most cited themes (n=2) respectively, followed by classification as well as digitalisation (n=1) respectively.

## 3.5 Characteristics of the selected publications for the review

The characteristics of the selected publications used in the review are described below.

**Table 3:** *Characteristics of the papers included in the review (2000 – 2023)*

| # | Author, Year | Topic | Journal | Goals | Study Design | Country | Outcome |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S01 | Beloiu, Bostan and Iorgulescu (2015) | Internationalisation Educational Programs | *International Conference World. Educ.* | It reviewed the projects that started initially by several institutions, to inspire international mobility, exchange of ideas and good teaching practice. | Literature Review | Romania | It suggested that international mobility has difficulties in languages and professional skills, and introduced a model that could be applied by institutions through a mutual teaching procedure to inspire mobility. |
| S02 | Buckner et al. (2020) | Strategic Benefits: Internationalisation | *Canadian Journal HE* | It examined how institutions in developed countries articulate their precedence for internationalisation and the rationale behind their approach. | Literature | Canada | It suggested the adoption of partnerships, mobility, and measuring strategic benefits through revenue generation and reputational status. |
| S03 | Ukpere (2007) | Globalisation, Internationalisation, Industrial Democracy | *Cape Peninsula University of Technology* | It highlighted that globalisation and internationalisation seem to have flaws in human resources and industrial democracy in various continents. | Qualitative | SA | It revealed an undesirable relationship between globalisation, internationalisation, and industrial democracy. Globalisation can present a different idea, which could negatively affect industrial democracy and humanity. |
| S04 | Kakutia, Buchashvili and Kokrashvili (2023) | Internationalisation, Technologies, Factors | *European Economic Letters,* | It showed poor support for academic activities due to a lack of equipment, finance, professional development, and creating a valued influence in developing internationalisation. | Literature Review | Georgia | It revealed the challenges academics face and proposed ways to overcome them by developing the potential of institutions in the context of globalisation. |
| S05 | Liu (2023) | Venture Capital on Internationalisation | *Financial Engineering Risk Mgt.* | It highlighted challenges faced by multinational organisations in advancing internationalisation as a lack of access to and capital resources, which are required to facilitate internationalisation performance through signals and expertise. | Qualitative | China | It revealed internationalisation of multinational organisations has problems in seeking to enhance competitiveness, explore foreign markets, and strengthen their level of internationalisation through venture capital. |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S06 | Obadire, Mashau and Misumi (2020) | Understanding the Internationalisation of HE in the Pandemic | *Gender Behaviour* | It aimed to assist international education that was affected by the pandemic, reflecting on the impact of internationalisation in HE and how such effects could be avoided. | Qualitative | SA | It suggested strategies to prevent such future occurrences and establish new conduct of internationalisation for its benefit. |
| S07 | Munusamy and Hashim (2021) | Internationalisation, ASEM Educ. | *HE Quarterly* | It evaluated the relationship between internationalisation of HE and how it is influenced among developed countries for strategic purposes. | Quantitative | Malaysia | It revealed that the support of developed countries influenced the internationalisation of HE processes. It suggested that new internationalisation policies be formulated. |
| S08 | Marinoni (2019) | Internationalisation HE: Evolving Landscape, Global | *International Association of Universities* | It showed an intentional process that is followed by HE is beyond the sphere of institutions; however, internationalisation is still a strategic priority for institutions. | Quantitative | 126 Countries, 907 HEI | It revealed an improvement in strategy implementation at institutions. Also suggested a framework for effective internationalisation. |
| S09 | De Wit and Altbach, (2021) | Internationalisation HE: Future Recommendation | International Dimensions HE | It showed that international mobility is the most active activity in internationalisation, while global citizenship with less mobility receives greater attention. | Literature | N/A | It revealed the challenges faced by the future of IA and I@H, in a time of transformation, development, and pandemic, which are critical for future outcomes. |
| S10 | Knight (2007) | Internationalisation: Concepts, Complexities, Challenges | *International Handbook HE* | It focused on the rationales of internationalisation and emphasised that the challenges are at the institutional level. | Literature | Canada | It revealed that the international breadth of HE is influenced by policy, funding, and regulations. However, the critical process of internationalisation should be measured beyond the institutional level. |
| S11 | De Wit and Leask (2015) | Internationalisation, Curriculum, Discipline | *International HE* | It showed that internationalisation impacts tutoring, resulting in the pursuit of methods to have profound clarity and a greater impact on HE. | Qualitative | N/A | It suggested modern HE collaboration through theoretical coalition among institutions that goes beyond formal and substantial capacity. |
| S12 | Knight (2015) | Updated Definition Internationalisation, | *International HE* | It showed a growing importance attached to cross borders, focusing on regulatory compliance, particularly in accreditation and funding. | Literature | Canada | It revealed that internationalisation is been considered in many countries, cultures, and education systems. It suggested a clarification that is suitable for a broad range of contexts in HE. |
| S13 | Mittelmeier et al. (2019) | I@D and I@H: Academic Adjustment | *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* | It explored the practices of I@D and revealed that academic change is forecasted by emotional adjustment, including an addition to institutions, technology access, and I@H studies. | Quantitative | SA | It suggested a more complex explanation of I@D, considering technological advances, and a need for a potential review of what I@D and I@H should signify. |
| S14 | Yeravdekar and Tiwari (2014) | Internationalisation HE: How is Country Educ. | *International Relations Deve.* | It examined the subject from the position of internationalisation in HE and highlighted the relevance of critical research on the topic. | Qualitative | India | It revealed that the nature of internationalisation in HE requires a need to affirm that enhancement will generate quality education and sustainability. |
| S15 | Kromidha and Robson (2021) | Digital Investment Network | *International Small Business Journal* | It highlighted the relevance of investment signals in digital networks, where investors preferred other | Qualitative | UK | It revealed that investment signals are not necessarily reflected in internationalisation, thus, investment in technology is |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Internationalisation | | investment strategies on internationalisation over digital networks. | | | more significant than marketing firm identity. |
| S16 | Knight (2008) | Internationalisation HE: Realities Complex | *International isation 21st Century* | It showed that internationalisation means different things and appears in different ways. It is critical to pay increased attention to its performance in HE. | Literature | Canada | It revealed that a change in the international dimension is marked by struggle. Tackling them is significant in making internationalisation performance beneficial in HE. |
| S17 | Motala and David (2020) | Impact Internationalisation HE | *Internationalisation in HE SA* | It explored internationalisation policies and practices by identifying the challenges faced by HE in SA. | Literature | SA | It revealed the need to introduce wide-ranging internationalisation perspectives that allow participation in the global dialogue of future HE in SA. |
| S18 | Feliciano-Cestero et al. (2023) | Digital Transformation Internationalisation | *Journal of Business Research* | It provided levels of digital transformation as the individual, organisational, and their effect on internationalisation. | Literature | USA & UK | It revealed the mechanisms, knowledge, and digital technology towards transformation and their impact on internationalisation. |
| S19 | Suo (2023) | Reform Policy Internationalisation HE. | *Journal of Educational Research* | It showed that internationalisation in HE is guided by strong education policies that could enhance safeguards in HE | Qualitative | Malaysia | It revealed the need for the government to provide a guiding role in education policies through sustainable internationalisation in HE. |
| S20 | Reim et al. (2022) | Challenges Internationalisation Digitalisation | *Journal Innovation Knowledge* | It identified model challenges to value creation and service delivery through internationalisation performance. | Qualitative | Sweden & Finland | It revealed the dissection of digitalisation into executable actions that organisations find practicable and suggested a framework for digitalisation practices on internationalisation. |
| S21 | Alcácer Cantwell and Piscitello (2016) | Internationalisation Information Age: | *Journal of International Business Studies,* | It examined the difference in competitiveness, strategies, and technological innovation in internationalisation. | Literature | USA | It revealed the need to focus on the technological paradigm shift to identify the effects and benefits of internationalisation. |
| S22 | Yu, Fletcher and Buck (2022) | Digital Transformation Re-Internationalisation | *Journal of International Management.* | It showed that institutions can transform digitally during re-internationalisation either through strategic or operational means, whichever their trajectories. | Qualitative | UK | It revealed that digital transformation during re-internationalisation is outlined by pressures between strategic, operational and novel ideas, and can be differentiated by how they are managed. |
| S23 | Ramanau (2016) | I@D: Curriculum | Journal Mgt. Educ. | It focused on cross-cultural differences among international learners to identify whether international perceptions were built into their study in different languages. | Mixed | UK | It suggested initiating changes between I@H and IA perceptions of curricula, due to the increasing number of learning at a distance. |
| S24 | Mittelmeier et al. (2021) | Conceptualisation of I@D: | *Journal Studies International Educ.* | It introduced the concept of I@D and outlined a study on international distance education provision at institutions. | Qualitative | UK & SA | It revealed that internationalisation performances need to be reconsidered. It suggested inquiries into the support of intercultural learning for foreign students. |
| S25 | Heleta (2023) | Policy Framework Internationalisation | *Journal Studies International Educ.* | It analysed what the SA policy framework missed and the need to reassess internationalisation to be in line with the transformation in HE. | Literature | SA | It revealed SA policy framework failed with the guideline for developing policies that contribute to internationalisation in HE by not embracing global knowledge. |
| S26 | | Internationalisation | *Journal Studies* | It focused on students' experience of internationalisation by | | Australia | It revealed the need for student participation in |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Phan, Tran and Blackmore (2019) | , Student Engagement, Global Graduate | *International Educ.* | identifying the reasons for not becoming knowledgeable, culturally sensitive, and skilful in professionalism and citizenship education. | Qualitative | | internationalisation and education experts. Also indicated that cross-border mobility creates skills and awareness regarding internationalisation. |
| S27 | Kishun (2007) | Internationalisation HE: Progress Challenges | *Journal Studies International Educ.* | It identified setbacks concerning internationalisation in HE and the contribution to discussions on the importance of future HE. | Literature | SA | It proposed future scenarios on "Africanisation and internationalisation" by deliberating on mobility and skills shortage. |
| S28 | Altbach and Knight (2007) | Internationalisation HE: Motivations and Realities | *Journal Studies International Educ.* | It viewed Internationalisation as policies which organisations, institutions, and governments implement to deal with the global education crisis. | Literature | USA & Canada | It proposed additional campuses, cross-border collaboration, and international programmes for efficient internationalisation. |
| S29 | Kafouros et al. (2022) | Cycles de-Internationalisation, re-Internationalisation | *Journal-World Business* | It recognised the cycle of de-internationalisation and re-internationalisation and institutions' experience towards their performance. | Literature | UK & USA | It revealed explanations of why organisation exhibits cycles of de-internationalisation and re-internationalisation. Suggested integrative framework for future research towards advancing internationalisation theory. |
| S30 | Fletcher, Harris and Richey Jr. (2021) | Retrospective Prospective Learning: Internationalisation | *Journal-World Business* | It identified concepts of successful internationalisation in tutoring various graduate programmes for potential learners. | Qualitative | UK & USA | It revealed that institutions can employ learning ideas for developing knowledge capabilities for future internationalisation performance. |
| S31 | Knight and Liesch (2016) | Internationalisation: Incremental Born Global | *Journal-World Business* | It examined research through an increased level of internationalisation, distinct between old and new institutions, and growth in new global institutions. | Literature | USA & Australia | It spotted the growth of research on the internationalisation of new global institutions to identify legitimacy in the study and revealed important issues for future studies. |
| S32 | Drori et al. (2023) | Digitalisation Internalisation Theory Lens | *Long-range Planning,* | It examined the effect of institutions' digital intensity that drives internationalisation and the effect of changes in digital innovations. | Quantitative | USA | It revealed that big institutions' increase in internationalisation depends on their digital intensity, innovation, and brand. However, digitalisation evolution could become more extensive. |
| S33 | Hudzik (2011) | *Comprehensive Internationalisation: Concept.* | *Association International Educ.* | It explored the influence of comprehensive internationalisation by introducing a model of thinking holistically on internationalisation evolution in HE. | Literature | USA | It revealed that the approach to comprehensive internationalisation is allowing institutions to choose their path and be consistent with their programmes, missions, and values. |
| S34 | Bedenlier and Zawacki-Richter (2015) | Internationalisation HE Impacts on Academic | *Research Comparative International Edu.* | It explored the effect of internationalisation in HE by identifying its importance and impact from an international perspective. | Mixed | Germany | It revealed a distinguished effect of internationalisation between institutions and academic performance for competitiveness. |
| S35 | Hervé, Schmitt and Baldegger (2020) | Internationalisation Digitalisation: Digital Technologies | *Technology Innovation Mgt. Review* | It showed the effect of digitalisation on internationalisation in research by presenting an analysis of recent research on the impact. | Literature | Switzerland & Belgium | It revealed research on international evolution through digital technologies and new insight into current research. It suggested a further study on the digital aspects of theoretical models of internationalisation. |

| | | | | It showed that digitalisation contributes to an increase in decision-making efficiency and optimises strategies for evaluating internationalisation. | Mixed | Canada | It revealed that the benefit of digital technologies is improving strategic objectives through interaction between local and foreign individuals. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S36 | Neubert (2018) | Impact of Digitalisation Internationalisation | *Technology Innovation Mgt.* | It showed that digitalisation contributes to an increase in decision-making efficiency and optimises strategies for evaluating internationalisation. | Mixed | Canada | It revealed that the benefit of digital technologies is improving strategic objectives through interaction between local and foreign individuals. |
| S37 | De Wit et al. (2005) | *HE in Latin America: International Dimension.* | *International Bank Recon. Deve. / World Bank* | It showed that studying abroad creates change in society and community. International mobility drives cultural exchange and knowledge acquisition. | Literature | USA | It revealed that the behaviour of people studying abroad contributes to improvement in their communities, through gained internationalisation attitudes. |
| S38 | Rodas-Tobar et al. (2023) | Curricula Internationalisation: Benefits of ICT | *Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja* | It evaluated the impact of ICT on internationalisation performance and the increased participation of both international and local students from host and partner institutions. | Qualitative | Ecuador | It revealed that ICT assists in improving students' involvement in internationalisation performance. It suggested future research to assess internationalisation through ICT for educational objectives. |
| S39 | Marinoni, Egron-Polak and Green (2019) | Changing View Benefits, HE Internationalisation | *University World News: Global HE* | It highlighted the benefits of internationalisation in HE and the reasons most institutions participate in internationalisation activities. | Quantitative | 126 Countries, 907 HEI | It revealed the benefits to be achieved on internationalisation as: institution profile, graduate employability, networking, revenue generation, and benchmarking. |
| S40 | Holmberg and Holmström-Szugalski (2017) | Internationalisation Risks Challenges | *Uppsala University* | It focused on the new era of academia and the challenges institutions face using e-commerce for internationalisation. | Quantitative | Sweden | It revealed that e-commerce is leveraged by institutions to source, access, and exchange valuable data by reducing risk related to internationalisation. |
| S41 | Karimova, Nurlanbekova and Ailauova (2023) | Effectiveness Internationalisation HE Cross-Cultural | *МРНТИ* | It highlighted that growth is related to improving the competence of future tutors, which needs to be emphasised for cultural competence in internationalisation. | Mixed | Kazakhstan | It revealed that effective internationalisation in HE assists in developing students' cross-cultural competence through the engagement of culturally competent tutors. |
| S42 | Mittelmeier et al. (2019b) | Understanding Adjustment Distance Education. | International Review of Research | It showed that countries like China and SA have become regional centres for distance learners around the world and identified complex regulations regarding studying at a distance. | Mixed | SA | It revealed the impact of distance learning, including access to resources and language differences and suggested the need for more support concerning distance education. |

Table 3 shows the 47 publications representing 42 chosen papers in the review. The difference of 5 publications (S05, S23, S24, S38, S41) were cited in two separate themes. S05 was cited in both competitiveness and digitalisation, S23 was cited in both classification and cultural competence, S24 was cited in both comprehensive curriculum and classification, S38 was cited in both classification and strategic benefits, and S41 was cited in both classification and cultural competence.
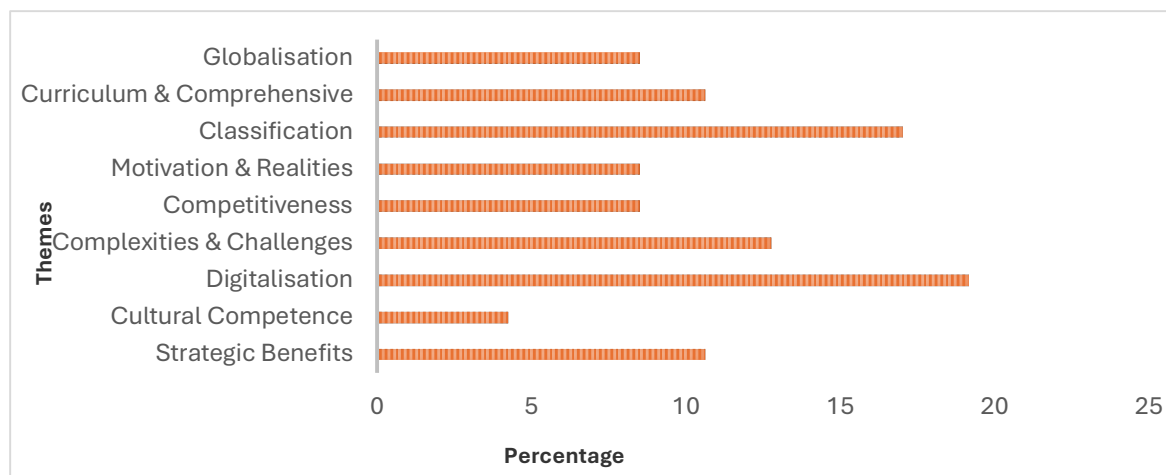
**Figure 6**: *The themes according to the selected publications*



Figure 6 shows that out of the 47 publications themed for discussion, digitalisation has the highest (9 or 19.15%), followed by classification (8 or 17.02%). Complexities and challenges (6 or 12.77%), followed by the comprehensive curriculum, as well as strategic benefits (5 or 10.64%), respectively. Globalisation, motivation, and realities, as well as competitiveness (4 or 8.51%), respectively. The last is cultural competence (2 or 4.26%).

## 4.      Discussion

### 4.1      Globalisation and internationalisation

Globalisation is described as the potency and outcome of transformation and industrialist expansion, which involves the integration of various economic activities at both local, national, and regional levels into a global marketplace (Ukpere, 2007). Internationalisation refers to the propensity of organisations to systematically intensify the international aspect of their organisational activities (Bronkhorst & Nieuwenhuizen, 2019). Globalisation and internationalisation have both shaped the path for HE to recreate policies concerning adherence to global education (Knight & Liesch, 2016). Motala and David (2020) highlighted the need to minimise the risk of globalisation and internationalisation trends by introducing comprehensive internationalisation through best practices. However, such practices are yet to be implemented in HE. Ukpere (2007) thinks that there is an adverse functional connection involving globalisation and internationalisation, which suggests further studies on how globalisation could be practised for a progressive effect on internationalisation performance in the future. Therefore, a need for globalisation and internationalisation to be inducted into the HE

system for effective performance to be in place. A study conducted by De Wit et al. (2005) also highlighted the international aspect of HE, which faces challenges during the process of globalisation and internationalisation. It further highlighted the interdependence of the current economy, which has profoundly affected HE by reshaping globalisation through teaching, research activities, and other academic services. Achieving effective globalisation and internationalisation would need to have a successfully reshaped performance in HE.

## 4.2  Comprehensive curriculum on internationalisation

There has been an increase in discrepancies in internationalisation performance between sending and receiving countries. Also, an increase in the demand for district centres to accommodate international students in developing countries calls for the need for a comprehensive curriculum on internationalisation in HE (Mittelmeier et al., 2021; Udekwe & Obadire, 2024).  A study conducted by Phan et al. (2019) on students' experience regarding internationalisation of the curriculum, identified the reasons students are not becoming skilled, such as a lack of knowledge and cultural sensitivity to professionalism. The study further highlighted the importance of comparative awareness of students' experience participating in an internationalised curriculum, and as educational experts in several countries, this is lacking in most institutions. De Wit and Leask (2015) are also of the opinion that the relevance of a critical approach to internationalisation has an impact on students' learning, which results in a search for a deeper understanding of the standardised internationalisation curriculum in HE.  Perhaps, to encounter dissimilarities and unequal suggestions that characterise many HE collaborations is necessary to develop a concept of equity and alliance among institutions through a standardised curriculum.

A study conducted by Hudzik (2011) on the influence of internationalisation, particularly in developing ideas of comprehensive internationalisation, emphasised the need to recognise a diversity of approaches to comprehensive internationalisation by allowing institutions to choose their path, and their effort to be in line with their objectives, mission, resources, programmes, and values for efficiency in education. Consequently, there is a need for government and institutions to mutually develop more integrated and comprehensive curricula and foster collaboration to augment students' involvement through increased programmes, and provide internationalisation learning

models using advanced technology (Suo, 2023). However, such development is needed to improve the comprehensive curriculum internationalisation performance in HE.

## 4.3      Classification of internationalisation

According to Mittelmeier et al. (2021), internationalisation in HE is classified into three as: Internationalisation at Home (I@H), Internationalisation Abroad (IA) and Internationalisation at a Distance (I@D). Crowther et al. (2000) describe I@H as international-related activities, which exclude staff and students' mobility outside institutions. While Mittelmeier et al. (2019a) describe IA as all modes of mobility across borders, which include the movement of staff and students. De Wit and Altbach (2021) also referred to as "IA", "international mobility", and it is regarded as the most recognised action of internationalisation performance. Then, curriculum, citizenship development and global professionalism are regarded as "I@H". Coincidentally, studying abroad is one of the most impressive ways to develop cross-cultural competence among students and staff. By learning in different countries, they are exposed to new beliefs, values, and cultural norms, which helps them to achieve a better understanding and gratitude towards other cultures and traditions (Karimova et al., 2023; Mittelmeier et al., 2025). Thus, they will be able to learn better ways of communicating with people from different backgrounds and cultures. Yeravdekar and Tiwari (2014) made it known that internationalisation performance in HE has traditionally been associated with the growth of studying abroad participation, employment of internationals, and the growth in language programmes, of which there is a need for diversity in multi-disciplinary approaches to global citizenship programmes to encourage studying abroad.

Mittelmeier et al. (2019b) emphasise that distance learning represents an emerging 'third category' of internationalisation in HE as it swots amid institutions based on culture or distance from their country, while concurrently residing in their home country. This idea combines the I@H and IA by creating opportunities for people to study overseas while living in their country of residence. Thus, the conceptualisation of a further category of internationalisation known as I@D. Ramanau (2016) describes I@D as normal institutional campus-based experiences were not observed. Ideally, studying at an institution without physical presence using technology. The conceptualisation of I@D is a shifting dynamic on the classification of internationalisation performance, which needs to be considered a contingent plan for emergencies (Mittelmeier et al., 2021). This plan concerns the pandemic invasion that made the world put forward I@D in conflict and

suggested further inquiry into the challenges and affordances, and profound intercultural education among international students globally. A study conducted by Rodas-Tobar et al. (2023) explored the involvement of internationalisation performance of international studies at a distance using a regression model, showing educational change is notably predicted by emotions, access to technology, attachment to an institution and at-home studies. Therefore, a need for a conceptualised practice of I@D considering technological adjustments.

## 4.4     Motivation and realities of internationalisation

Altbach and Knight (2007) assessed internationalisation as practices geared towards the realities of educational systems to deal with global education change. They also indicated that motivation for internationalisation performance could be measured through language acquisition, commercial advantage, knowledge, and improvement in curriculum. However, there is a necessity for initiatives such as additional cross-border collaboration, campuses, and programmes for foreign students, as motivating factors, as excellence is integral towards internationalisation performance in HE. Organisations could have a common interest in encouraging collaboration and partnerships to achieve effective internationalisation performance. In this regard, Beloiu et al. (2015) highlighted the necessity of motivating staff and students' mobility and exchange of ideas through collaboration. Beloiu et al. (2015) further identified challenges facing international mobility as languages and professional skills. The study introduced a motivating factor model that could be applied among collaborative institutions with a common methodology for tutoring to arouse international mobility at all levels of the education system.

Kafouros et al. (2022) study indicated that the motivation for knowledge of internationalisation performance in HE pathways requires further consideration to formulate an integrative framework that will assist in comprehending a plan for further research and to advance the internationalisation concept and performance. There is a belief that internationalisation is used to describe the international characteristics, especially in the education sector. However, Knight (2008) stipulated that internationalisation is described in different forms and defined in different words. Therefore, there is a need for motivation for internationalisation performance to achieve a coordinated meaning, objective and performance in HE.

## 4.5    Competitiveness of internationalisation

The capability of institutions to compete in the global environment requires the use of their essential competencies to build competitive internationalisation performance and familiarity with the global HE market that is persistently revolving (Makoela, 2021). Global competitiveness does affect HE's ability to sustain its internationalisation performance. Bell, Farrell, and Cassim (2002) describe competitiveness as the ability to achieve critical economic policy while still maintaining an optimistic balance of overhead. Liu (2023) emphasised the role of initiating capital projects for competitive internationalisation, and emphasised the need for institutions to explore their inclusion of overseas academic space. This will assist in enhancing their competitiveness globally by strengthening their focus on internationalisation performance in the education sector.

The HE policy framework identified that one of the internationalisation goals is to facilitate and harmonise HE in the country through employability, mobility, and competitiveness. However, these identified goals are yet to be accomplished (Decreto, 2010). Internationalisation performance to be competitive needs to be incorporated with education policies to include quality, academic training, prestige, and the ability to create knowledge (Fletcher et al., 2021; Ndaipa, Edström, & Geschwind, 2022).

A study conducted by Alcácer et al. (2016) examined the contradictory nature of competitiveness, strategies, and government structuring through internationalisation in HE and realised the need to categorise institutions based on their location, ownership, and management for better advantage. Bedenlier and Zawacki-Richter (2015) also explored the effect of internationalisation in HE by highlighting the importance of an international perspective and realised the necessity for further studies on the impact of competitiveness in HE. Therefore, there is a need to differentiate the effect of internationalisation performance between institutions' activities and their academic performance for competitive advantage.

## 4.6    Complexities and challenges of internationalisation

The complexities and challenges of internationalisation in HE are of great concern, as the collaborative strategy between HE institutions and countries. This has become an internationalisation instrument necessary to acquire and transfer their best performance with overseas associates for quality education (Munusamy & Hashim, 2021). However, most countries' HE faces challenges regarding I@H, mobility programmes, teaching,

learning, research, and international recruiting networks (Arokiasamy, 2012). These challenges create a gap in the fundamentals of internationalisation performance in HE. Heleta (2023) also indicated that the complexities and challenges faced by internationalisation lie with a difunctional and colonised policy framework. The study further mentioned that most frameworks are structured according to the European education model. Therefore, colonisation is a challenge facing internationalisation performance in the education system. Knight (2007) also highlighted the approaches, rationales and strategies of internationalisation performance, identified the critical moments of internationalisation between institutional and national levels as a challenge. Knight (2007) further emphasises that the significance of internationalisation is at the national level for funding, policy, frameworks, and programmes. However, the complexity of the process lies at the institutional level due to its implementation.

Kishun (2007) also highlighted that acknowledging the importance of internationalisation performance in the African HE system would be useful in contributing to the future of the continent's education system. Kishun (2007) further pointed out the challenges associated with internationalisation in HE as the circumstances of non-Africanisation, mobility, trade in education and skills shortages. Kakutia et al. (2023) also emphasised that challenges facing internationalisation performance need to be addressed through the provision of supportive mechanisms for academic activities and development in HE. Holmberg and Holmström-Szymanski (2017) also highlight that the challenges that internationalisation performance faces could be minimised through leveraging resources, better access and exchange of information. This would assist in reducing the complexities of internationalisation performance. Therefore, a need to improve internationalisation strategies through international engagement and collaboration, a standardised centre for learning and knowledge distribution to achieve globalisation in HE (Dumanig & Symaco, 2020). This would assist in identifying solutions to the complexities and challenges facing internationalisation performance in HE.

## 4.7    Digitalisation of internationalisation

Digitalisation is said to embrace change in the international education system by profoundly altering internationalisation procedures, processes, and strategies. It altered how learning and knowledge are exchanged across geographical borders (Drori et al., 2023; Knight, 2015). In this regard, digitalisation could assist in enabling international

expansion in HE. Also, Neubert's (2018) study indicated how digitalisation is critical in internationalisation performance. The study revealed that digitalisation increases decision-making efficacy, optimises strategies and processes for evaluating international education. With digital technology, HE would be efficient in growth processes to accomplish strategic goals in internationalisation performance. Reim et al. (2022) also indicated how digitalisation can assist in surmounting the HE model regarding internationalisation, identified a digitalisation model to assist in accomplishing service delivery, value creation and information processing of internationalisation performance. Therefore, there is a need for a framework that aligns the digitalisation model for internationalisation performance in the HE.

Liu's (2023) study indicated that numerous high-profile institutions have vehemently expanded into overseas educational markets by quickening their journey to digital technology. However, they face several challenges such as inadequate resources, lack of media access, poor desirability competence, unbearable location, and poor infrastructure. Hervé et al. (2020) study also highlighted the effect of digital technologies on internationalisation and suggested a further study on digital facets of theoretical models for internationalisation performance. Therefore, there is a need for further ventures into the development of digital technologies to support internationalisation is essential.

Kromidha and Robson (2021) are also of the opinion that a high technology embracement could foster internationalisation performance in HE, emphasising the importance of digital transformation in the education system. There is a notion that a high digital transformation presence could be more favourable than funding the non-digital internationalisation activities. consequently, most investors and stakeholders prioritise their resources on non-digital internationalisation (Kromidha & Robson, 2021). Feliciano-Cestero et al. (2023) highlighted their concern regarding digital transformation in three levels: individual, institutional, and governmental. The study revealed that digital transformation could have an impact on internationalisation at any of the above-mentioned levels. In other words, digital transformation can either be against or support internationalisation performance. Yu et al. (2022) are also of the opinion that institutions can be digitally transformed in two ways: operational and strategic. Therefore, internationalisation performance can be distinguished by how digital transformation strains are executed and managed within the strategic and operational levels.

## 4.8      Cultural competence in internationalisation

There is a resonating argument regarding the relevance of intercultural and cross-cultural competence on internationalisation performance, however, the role of internationalisation in developing cross-cultural competence among students cannot be identified. Thus, cultural competence provides students with appreciable opportunities to widen their prospects, learn new skills, and become well-equipped to pilot globalised professions (Zhu & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2013). Ramanau (2016) highlighted the need for further international support in education research from both intercultural and cross-cultural perspectives. Also, to explore the nature of local and global distinctive development on internationalisation performance. This could be accomplished through the differing roles of learners and teachers to achieve cultural competence. Karimova et al. (2023) believe that developing cross-cultural competence in students is related to increasing the intercultural and cross-cultural competence of future teachers. Therefore, a need for internationalisation performance towards developing students' cross-cultural competence with the engagement of skilled and qualified teachers in cultural competence in HE.

## 4.9      Strategic benefits of internationalisation

Buckner et al. (2020) observed how developed countries' institutions articulate their precedence on internationalisation performance and the rationale behind their approach, identifying revenue generation and reputational status as strategic benefits. Ideally, internationalisation strategies are observed by institutions in different ways as criteria that can be used to measure the benefit of internationalisation performance. Marinoni (2019) also emphasised internationalisation performance as one of the strategic priorities in HE. Therefore, a need to implement policies that would elevate internationalisation performance to accomplish strategic benefits in HE. Marinoni et al. (2019) also highlighted the perception of the benefits of internationalisation that institutions could accomplish are, i) cooperation, ii) capacity building, iii) graduate employability, iv) curriculum acknowledgement, v) institutional profile, vi) quality of learning and teaching, vii) awareness and engagement with global matters, viii) networking, ix) revenue generation, x) benchmark and xi) institutional research output. However, these benefits still need to be accomplished in several institutions.

     A study by Obadire et al. (2020) on how internationalisation in HE was affected by the pandemic revealed the need for long-term strategies to prevent such occurrences

in future. Therefore, a need to establish novel ways of delivering internationalisation activities a accomplish strategic benefits through preventing unforeseen circumstances. Rodas-Tobar et al. (2023) also highlighted that several countries have limited access to Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), which deprives them of realising the strategic benefits of internationalisation in the education sector. They further evaluated the impact of ICT on internationalisation performance through education informatics and the need for host and partner students' involvement through technology on internationalisation activities to achieve benefits. Therefore, a need for studies to assess the extent to which internationalisation initiatives rely on ICT to achieve strategic benefits in the sector.

**Table 4**: *The identified key points in the discussion.*

| Themes | Information |
|---|---|
| Globalisation | 1. Recreate policies of adherence to global education (S31). 2. Reduce the risk of globalisation through comprehensive and best practices (S17). 3. Globalisation practices for a progressive performance (S03). 4. The interdependence of the current-day economy affected HE through reformed globalisation (S37). |
| Comprehensive Curriculum | 1. Increase district centres for international students in developing countries (S24). 2. Students not becoming skilled and culturally sensitive to professionalism (S26). 3. Need for standardised curriculum in HE (S11). 4. Allow institutions to choose their path for consistency (S33). 5. Government and institutions to develop integrated curricula and expand collaboration (S19). |
| Classification | 1. IA is the most recognised achievement of internationalisation, but without cross-border mobility (S13, S09). 2. Studying abroad is a method of developing cross-cultural competence (S41). 3. Multidisciplinary approach to global citizenship influences studying abroad (S14). 4. A merger of I@H and IA provides opportunities to learn abroad while residing at home (S42). 5. I@D is where a normal campus-based experience was not observed, using technology (S23). 6. I@D is shifting dynamically regarding the classification of internationalisation performance (S24). 7. The regression model showed that academic change is predicted by emotional adjustments (S38). |

| Themes | Information |
|---|---|
| Motivation and Realities | 1. Refers to language acquisition, knowledge, and curriculum improvement (S28).<br>2. Model as a motivating factor to be applied among institutions with a common methodology (S01).<br>3. Through knowledge and an integrative framework for future research (S29).<br>4. To achieve synchronised meaning and objective in HE (S16). |
| Competitiveness | 1. The positive significance of exploring overseas academic space for competitiveness (S05).<br>2. Be incorporated with educational policies for quality, knowledge, and competitiveness (S30).<br>3. Contradictory nature of competitiveness, strategies, and government structuring (S21).<br>4. Future studies on the nature and impact of competitiveness (S34). |
| Complexities and Challenges | 1. Challenges concerning cooperation and collaboration strategy (S07).<br>2. Contemporary complexities and challenges concerning the policy framework (S25).<br>3. Identify critical moments between institutional and national levels (S10).<br>4. Identify difficulties of internationalisation performance in African HE (S27).<br>5. Challenges to be addressed to provide suitable development in African HE (S04).<br>6. Challenges of engagement to become a standardised centre for global learning (S40). |
| Digitalisation | 1. Alter how learning and knowledge are interchanged across geographic borders (S12, S32).<br>2. Increase decision-making, optimise strategy, and evaluate international education (S36).<br>3. Surmount HE model encounters associated with internationalisation (S20).<br>4. Institutions expand into overseas markets by escalating their digital technology journey (S05).<br>5. Further studies on theoretical models of digitalised internationalisation performance (S35).<br>6. Investors prefer other focused investments than digital transformation on internationalisation (S15).<br>7. Digitalisation can support or threaten the effectiveness of internationalisation (S18).<br>8. Performance is determined by how digitalisation tensions are managed and executed (S22). |
| Cultural Competence | 1. Research to discover the nature of local and global distinctive development in HE (S23).<br>2. Cross-cultural competence encourages the capability of future learners and tutors (S41). |

| Themes | Information |
|---|---|
| Strategic Benefits | 1. Nations articulate their precedence through partnerships and international mobility (S02). <br> 2. Dedicated team to implement policies/strategies through an effective framework (S08). <br> 3. Identified benefits that institutions gain through internationalisation performance (S39). <br> 4. Establish ways of delivering performance to prevent unforeseen circumstances (S06). <br> 5. ICT and education informatics for better participation of host and partner students (S38). |

## 5. Key messages

Internationalisation is underrepresented in the literature in various sectors, including HE, despite its potential contribution to information-driven learning in HE, and the substantial financial and other resources poured into the growth and development by several developing countries. Also, most research is based on minor evidence and an important gap in awareness of the effect and benefit of internationalisation performance in HE. This calls for further research to identify characteristics of the importance of digitalisation, technology, and other significant factors that can support effective internationalisation performance in the education sector.

## 6. Limitations

This study excludes studies on HE that do not specify internationalisation in their abstract and title; with this elimination process, the authors might have missed some studies with valuable information that could be useful in the review. Also, the timeline of the review shows that there was a high level of current publications, which signifies that the authorities of internationalisation in HE with seminal studies were not significantly represented in the review. Therefore, a need for further studies to represent the missing piece of information that will assist in identifying the effectiveness of internationalisation performance in HE.

## 7. Conclusion and recommendation

This study made it known that globalisation and internationalisation have both shaped the path to recreating policies regarding global education, and a need for internationalisation performance in HE through effective teaching, research, and other academic activities to

achieve a global education system. Digitalisation is also an identified issue of concern for internationalisation performance in HE, which requires more scrutiny of the relevance of digital technology towards internationalisation performance. The rise in demand for international studies has resulted in the need for a comprehensive education system with a standard curriculum to accomplish effective internationalisation performance. This requires further identification of learning models using ICT and other digital technologies for internationalisation performance. Internationalisation has embraced the combination of I@H and IA to introduce I@D, as a novel internationalisation practice through technology, as the world plan education system. This would also require the impact of education informatics to embrace the novel internationalisation practice in education.

Internationalisation cannot be emphasised without mobility, cross-cultural and intercultural competence, which requires further investigation into the need for mobility and cultural competence and their relation to the strategic benefits of internationalisation performance. Institutions need to use their essential competence to build competitiveness over other institutions in the global education system. Several challenges facing internationalisation performance were identified, such as non-Africanisation, mobility, trade in education, colonial and skills shortages, and a need for solutions towards these challenges for effective internationalisation performance.

This evidence review further addresses the important gap in the literature regarding internationalisation performance in HE, assisting the government and institutions in planning and executing academic studies, policymaking, and sponsorship of research-related activities for internationalisation performance. A recommendation for further studies is to identify novel ways of introducing digitalisation and other support for internationalisation performance without interference. The study also showed that most high-income countries, the USA, SA, UK, and Canada (45.23%), were represented, which requires a need to include low-income countries/continents for opinions on different levels of economies concerning internationalisation performance in the education system.

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**Data Availability Statement**

No data were created or analysed in this study. Data sharing does not apply to this manuscript.

**Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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