

Leadership and Management Strategies in Chinese Higher Education on Attracting International Students: A Systematic Literature Review

Natalina Damayanthi^{1*}, Martinus Tukiran²,

¹Doctoral of Research in Management, Universitas Pelita Harapan – Kampus Sekolah Pascasarjana, Jakarta, Indonesia

²Education Management Doctor Program, Universitas Pakuan, Bogor, Indonesia and Doctoral of Research in Management, Universitas Pelita Harapan – Kampus Sekolah Pascasarjana, Jakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: natalina.damayanthi@gmail.com

Abstract - The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the key factors driving international students to choose China as a study destination. The rapid increase in the number of international students in China in recent years indicates that the country holds strong appeal, academically, economically, and culturally. This research adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, examines leadership and management strategies in Chinese higher education institutions (HEIs) to attract international students, focusing on key frameworks, policies, and practices. Using a systematic search methodology, eight empirical articles from reputable journals were analyzed to identify recurring themes and insights.

Key findings reveal that Chinese HEIs leverage centralized, top-down management approaches to implement large-scale internationalization strategies while integrating service-oriented practices to enhance student experiences. Factors such as cultural diplomacy, reputation building, and the provision of scholarships and high-quality academic programs emerge as critical in attracting international students. This review also identifies challenges, including the need to balance academic quality and rapid enrollment growth, address cultural integration, and adapt to diverse student expectations.

The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how leadership and management strategies shape the internationalization of Chinese higher education and provide insights for future research, including the role of technology and comparative studies across regions. This study serves as a valuable resource for policymakers and institutional leaders seeking to enhance global engagement and competitiveness in higher education.

Keywords: Leadership strategies, management strategies, Chinese higher education, international students, internationalization, higher education policies, global competitiveness.

I. INTRODUCTION

With the growing number of international students choosing China as their study destination, there are also dynamics related to the challenges of adapting to cultural differences. This Systematic Literature Review (SLR) aims to identify and analyze the leadership and management strategies implemented by higher education institutions in China. The primary focus is on leadership models, resource management, and internationalization strategies that have effectively supported the development of Chinese universities as global educational hubs. Through this benchmarking, the study is expected to provide insights for

educational institutions in other countries, including Indonesia, to enhance their international competitiveness.

The internationalization of higher education has become a critical focus for universities worldwide as they seek to enhance global engagement, attract diverse talent, and bolster institutional competitiveness. Government support plays a big role, providing funding, strategic planning, and clear oversight to ensure that universities align their goals with national priorities. This strong partnership between universities and the government has been key to their international success (Li, 2016).

Kezar (2017) highlights the need for leaders to balance academic goals, organizational efficiency, and the diverse expectations of stakeholders. The discussion emphasizes collaborative approaches, like distributed leadership, where responsibilities are shared, and transformational leadership, which drives innovation and positive change. It also explores how leadership shapes an institution's culture, manages governance challenges, and adapts to external pressures like globalization and policy changes. Overall, the entry provides valuable insights into how leadership works in the dynamic world of higher education.

Strategic leadership is described as a multifaceted approach where leaders play a vital role in guiding and aligning an organization's resources, behaviors, and strategies to achieve long-term goals. It emphasizes a leader's ability to navigate complex and ever-changing environments while ensuring the organization remains focused and adaptable (Samimi et al., 2022). Leadership, management and strategic planning play a significant role in shaping the strategies in defining institutional missions and action-oriented goals, particularly in response to global trends (Hu et al., 2017). Effective leadership is essential for aligning institutional goals with national policies, fostering a supportive environment for international students, and addressing the challenges of rapid growth in enrollment. Similarly, management strategies are crucial for implementing sustainable quality practices, enhancing institutional reputation, and creating a culturally inclusive campus experience.

While significant progress has been made in attracting international students, Chinese HEIs face several challenges, including balancing the quality of education with rapid growth, addressing the cultural integration of diverse student populations, and adapting to evolving global expectations (Xi & Rowlands, 2021). Beyond academics, Chinese universities are also seen as tools of soft power, using higher education to promote cultural influence and build meaningful relationships with international students (Han & Tong, 2021). Each university's approach varies, with some focusing on developing skills that prepare students for global careers while meeting local needs (Xianggang, 2023). These challenges necessitate a deeper understanding of the leadership and management strategies that have been successful in driving internationalization.

Strategic leadership plays a crucial role in addressing challenges faced by Chinese higher education institutions, particularly by promoting inclusivity and helping international students integrate culturally while upholding high academic standards (Xi & Rowlands, 2021). Beyond academics, strategic leadership also helps extend China's global influence. Initiatives such as the Confucius Institute and student exchange programs are not only educational but also serve as tools of cultural diplomacy, showcasing China's culture and strengthening its presence on the global stage (Wu, 2019). This systematic literature review (SLR) aims to explore and synthesize the leadership and management strategies employed by Chinese HEIs to attract international students. By analyzing empirical studies published in reputable journals, this review identifies key themes, theoretical frameworks, and practical approaches that contribute to the success of these institutions. Additionally, it examines the

alignment of these strategies with broader national and global objectives, highlighting both opportunities and challenges in sustaining internationalization efforts.

The findings of this SLR provide valuable insights for policymakers, institutional leaders, and researchers, offering a comprehensive understanding of how leadership and management strategies influence the internationalization of Chinese higher education. Furthermore, this review identifies gaps in existing research and proposes directions for future studies to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of internationalization strategies in a rapidly evolving global context.

II. METHOD

This study is conducted as a scoping review SLR, designed to extract relevant information comprehensively, providing an extensive overview of the topic (Xiao & Watson, 2019, p. 99). Additionally, it follows the methodological steps outlined by Petticrew and Roberts (2006). The methodology used in this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is as follows:

1. **Formulating Research Questions**
Define clear and specific research questions, such as identifying leadership strategies or managerial factors that attract international students to China.
2. **Designing Search Strategy**
Use keywords such as *China*, *higher education*, *internationalization*, *leadership*, *international student*, and conduct searches on dimension.ai.
3. **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**
Establish criteria to filter the literature: publication year range, study type (empirical or theoretical studies).
4. **Collecting and Screening Literature**
Collect literature using the specified keywords and screen by reading abstracts to ensure relevance to the research objectives.
5. **Data Analysis and Categorization**
Categorize articles based on themes or variables, such as leadership strategies, the role of government policy, and academic appeal, using a narrative or thematic approach to identify patterns in the research.
6. **Synthesis of Findings**
Perform synthesis by comparing results from various studies, identifying successful strategies, and noting major differences between practices in China and other countries.
7. **Discussion and Managerial Implications**
Explain the implications of the findings for policymakers and university management, particularly how effective practices in China can be adapted for other contexts.
8. **Reporting Results**
Write a report or scholarly article based on structured findings, covering methodology, key results, practical implications, and recommendations.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Chinese higher education institutions employ leadership and management strategies that align with national initiatives such as the "Double First-Class" project and the Belt and Road Initiative to enhance international engagement and attract global talent. The "Double First-Class" project, introduced by the Chinese government, aims to develop world-class universities and disciplines to elevate China's position in global education (Ministry of Education, 2022). These institutions leverage China's rich cultural heritage and soft power to appeal to international students while relying on centralized, top-down management structures for efficient implementation of internationalization strategies.

However, such approaches often fall short of meeting the personalized, service-oriented expectations of international students. To address these gaps, universities have implemented comprehensive support systems, including scholarships, language training, and integration services, and have increasingly utilized technology and digital platforms for recruitment. Leadership also prioritizes enhancing global reputations through partnerships, research collaborations, and improved standings in international rankings. Despite these efforts, the rapid growth in international student enrollment presents challenges in maintaining academic standards, infrastructure, and cultural integration, underscoring the importance of a balanced strategy that combines the strategic with a more student-centered approach. Chinese universities and the government are implementing comprehensive strategies to attract international students, focusing on internationalization, financial support, digitalization, inclusive campuses, and curriculum adaptation. These efforts reflect a holistic approach to building a globally competitive and inclusive higher education environment in China.

Research Questions

Q1: How do leadership strategies in Chinese higher education institutions support their international appeal for foreign students?

Q2: What factors are most effective in attracting international students to higher education institutions in China?

Q3: How do universities in China utilize resources (human, infrastructure, and technology) to support their internationalization strategies?

Discussion

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The search was conducted using Dimensions AI (www.dimensions.ai), an online scientific research tool that integrates with various databases, including Frontiers, Springer, and Taylor and Francis. This research applied specific criteria to identify studies focused on strategic leadership and management, on how the higher education attracting international student (refer to Table 1).

Inclusion	Exclusion
Scopus Journals	Non scopus journals
Relevant to Leadership and Management Strategies in Chinese Higher Education on Attracting International Students	Not Relevant to Leadership and Management Strategies in Chinese Higher Education on Attracting International Students
Written in English	Not written in English
Listed in dimension.ai	Not listed in dimension.ai
Empirical research	Not empirical research

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Systematic Search Protocol

The author applied restrictions in searching for journals on Dimension.ai, limiting the period to the years 2020–2024, which resulted in 642 articles. Then, the search was further limited by source titles to 11 source titles, yielding 163 articles. The researcher then focused on source titles more relevant to the topic, such as *Frontiers in Education* (Q2), *Frontiers in Psychology* (Q1), *Tertiary Education and Management* (Q3), *Oxford Review of Education* (Q1), *International Journal of Chinese Education* (Q3), *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* (Q2), *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education* (Q2), *Heliyon* (Q2), and *Higher Education Research & Development* (Q2), narrowing it down to 9 journals.

With these limitations, the number of articles obtained was reduced to 142, and from this, the researcher conducted a screening process, resulting in 8 articles relevant to the research topic. Figure 1 is the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses) table for this study, done on 28th October 2024.

Quality Appraisal and Finding Extraction

According to quality appraisal, Xiao and Watson (2019, p. 106) explain that scoping reviews are intended to explore the breadth of available studies rather than assess their quality. Thus, quality assessment is not necessarily a strict inclusion criterion but rather a way for reviewers to identify and acknowledge variations in study quality. In contrast, this review specifically focuses on empirical articles published in reputable journals, identified through a systematic search using Dimensions AI. These articles were selected following an in-depth content analysis, narrowing the final selection to eight articles. In summary, the quality of each article was rigorously validated through a thorough selection process.

For the extraction, initially, the selected articles were organized in Microsoft Excel using a template designed for metadata extraction. Irrelevant data were removed and replaced with key research aspects, such as publication year, authors, title, abstract, journal, research context, themes, theoretical framework, research questions or assumptions, research approach, methodology, findings, and recommendations for future research. These aspects were identified through a detailed analysis of each article and systematically coded into specific categories. The findings derived from the coded data are presented in the following section.

Result

This section discusses the analysis and results. To begin, a table lists the eligible articles obtained from the search, along with their publication year, author(s), title, and research questions (see table 2).

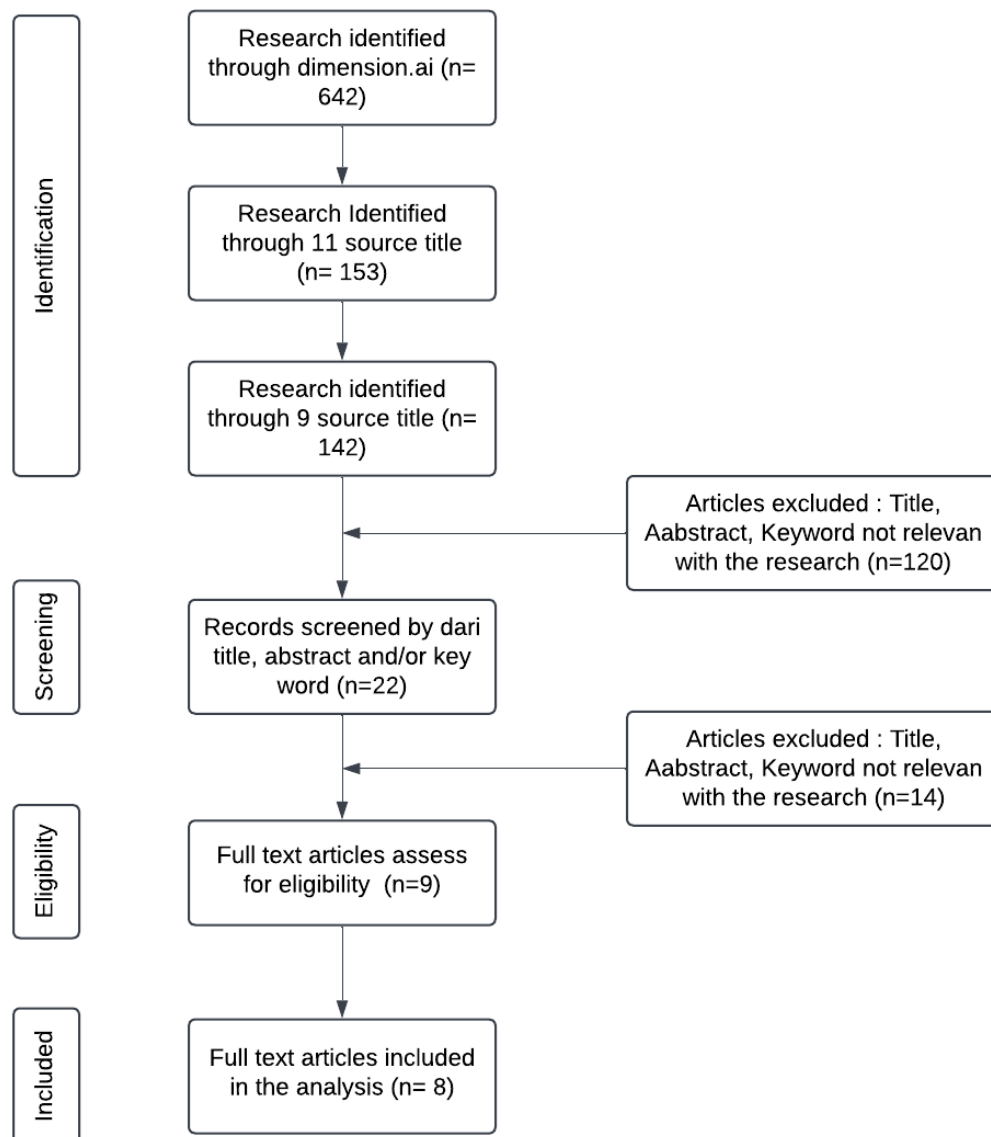


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart of SLR

Source: Petticrew and Roberts (2006)

Leadership and Management Strategies to Internationalization

The findings reveal that leadership and management strategies in Chinese higher education institutions (HEIs) are deeply aligned with national policies like the "Double First-Class" initiative and the Belt and Road Initiative, significantly enhancing their global appeal. The "Double First-Class" initiative, launched in 2015, seeks to elevate China's higher education system by developing world-class universities and disciplines, promoting international competitiveness, and fostering innovation in research and teaching. This policy prioritizes a select group of universities and disciplines, providing substantial government funding and resources to improve academic quality, attract global talent, and strengthen infrastructure (Ministry of Education of China, 2022). Similarly, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), introduced in 2013, focuses on fostering economic, cultural, and educational cooperation across participating countries. Through the BRI, Chinese universities are encouraged to establish partnerships, offer scholarships, and develop exchange programs aimed at students from Belt and Road countries, creating opportunities for mutual learning and cultural diplomacy (ERIC, 2022). By aligning their strategies with these initiatives, Chinese HEIs not only enhance their academic and infrastructural capacity but also solidify their global reputation and appeal, attracting a diverse international student body.

From a management perspective, attracting international students is closely tied to the management and leadership strategies employed. Several studies highlight that organizational reputation, shaped by stakeholders, enhances trust in an organization's capabilities and performance. A study by Sun (2023) found that this is referred to as proactive reputation building. However, the study also discusses the opposite approach, which involves a reactive strategy focused on how universities address reputation damage and maintain public trust following a crisis. Organizational Reputation Theory highlights that stakeholders' perceptions of an organization's abilities, intentions, and performance shape its reputation. In the context of higher education, this pertains to how universities present their brand, respond to challenges, and maintain or enhance their standing on both national and global levels. The Public Relations and Crisis Management Frameworks complement this by focusing on reactive strategies, emphasizing how universities repair reputation damage during crises and preserve public trust. Together, these frameworks provide a well-rounded perspective on reputation management and crisis response in higher education.

Marginson (2022) offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing global higher education. It includes Comparative Education, which evaluates national education systems against global standards to identify variations, and Higher Education and Development, which uses international development theories to explore how education drives socio-economic progress in developing regions. Drawing on Post-Colonial and Decolonial Theory, the framework promotes the rejection of Western-dominated knowledge systems and emphasizes inclusivity and epistemic diversity. Additionally, it incorporates Global Higher Education Studies, which takes a multi-scalar perspective to examine education at national, regional, and global levels, and International Education Mobility, which examines student mobility through the lenses of identity formation and global social hierarchies. Finally, the framework includes the Tianxia philosophy, a Chinese concept that envisions global education as a unified, harmonious community with shared values. Together, these approaches provide a holistic perspective on global education systems.

From the leadership and sustainability point of view, Ozsen (2022) establishes the theoretical framework through the EFQM Excellence Model and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The EFQM model focuses on creating sustainable value by

emphasizing Direction, Execution, and Results, supported by key enablers such as leadership, strategy, people, partnerships, and processes to enhance sustainability initiatives in universities. Meanwhile, the SDGs provide a global perspective, emphasizing the role of education in advancing sustainability and fostering continuous organizational improvement. Together, these models offer a cohesive approach to integrating sustainable quality management practices into higher education, positioning universities as active contributors to sustainable development.

According to internationalization, Liu et al. (2020) analyze internationalization in education from two key perspectives. Drawing on Altbach and Knight (2007), the study contrasts the motivations for international education, highlighting the profit-oriented strategies of Western institutions and China's focus on cultural influence and soft power. It also compares Management vs. Service Orientation, examining the structured, top-down approach in China against the flexible, student-centered, bottom-up approach in the West. The research proposes a hybrid model that integrates the administrative strengths of China's approach with the service-oriented adaptability of Western systems to better meet the needs of international students and support their integration.

Liu (2020) identifies three primary objectives of internationalization in education. The Liberal/Educational Goal aims to prepare students with the competencies needed to thrive in a globalized world. The Instrumental/Competitive Goal focuses on using internationalization as a catalyst for economic development. Finally, the Idealistic/Transformative Goal seeks to drive social change and advance global equity through education. Collectively, these goals reflect the diverse and multidimensional aims of internationalization within the education sector.

Theoretical Framework

The systematic literature review (SLR) identifies several essential frameworks for understanding internationalization and student mobility in higher education, offering a comprehensive and multi-layered analysis of global education practices. Cultural Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1986), in conjunction with the Internationalization Framework, emphasizes the value of cultural assets in expanding educational opportunities and fostering global competence through both international mobility and localized strategies. This approach demonstrates how domestic initiatives can complement international efforts, creating a balanced model for advancing internationalization.

Push-Pull Theory (Yasmin, 2022) provides critical insights into the factors influencing student mobility by distinguishing between Push Factors, such as limited resources, economic challenges, and constrained opportunities in home countries and Pull Factors, including scholarships, advanced educational offerings, career opportunities, and cultural experiences in host nations. Paired with Expectation Theory, this framework highlights the importance of aligning pre-enrollment expectations with actual experiences to ensure student satisfaction, adaptability, and long-term success in international education settings.

Ghemawat's CAGE Distance Framework (Yousaf, 2022) adds a broader perspective by examining how cultural, administrative, geographic, and economic differences between home and host countries shape students' perceptions of a host country's national image and its higher education branding. This framework emphasizes the challenges institutions face in

bridging these disparities to create attractive and supportive environments for international students.

The Nation Branding Theory (Anholt, 2007) and Brand Equity Theory (Aaker, 1991; Yoo & Donthu, 2001) offer further insights into how a country's national image and the brand equity of its higher education institutions influence international student decisions. A strong national reputation and effective branding efforts enhance not only the attraction of international students but also their loyalty and advocacy, positioning higher education as a pivotal tool for fostering global influence and collaboration.

Together, these frameworks highlight the interplay between cultural, economic, and institutional factors in shaping global education strategies and student engagement. They call attention to the importance of addressing macro-level aspects, such as national branding and global reputation, alongside micro-level considerations, such as individual student expectations and experiences. This integrated perspective provides valuable guidance for policymakers and institutions, enabling them to design effective and inclusive strategies for building global competence, promoting cross-cultural understanding, and enhancing the international appeal of higher education.

IV. CONCLUSION

From a management perspective, leadership and reputation management play a critical role in attracting international students. Organizational Reputation Theory and Public Relations and Crisis Management Frameworks underscore how proactive reputation-building initiatives and reactive crisis management strategies are essential for maintaining trust and demonstrating resilience in the competitive higher education sector. These frameworks are integral to addressing the diverse challenges faced by universities in managing their global image and stakeholder relationships.

From a global education perspective, Marginson (2022) provides a broad framework combining comparative education, socio-economic development theories, and post-colonial critiques to emphasize inclusivity and diversity in knowledge systems. The addition of the Tianxia philosophy offers a unique dimension, advocating for a harmonious global education community based on shared values and mutual understanding. This framework highlights the importance of fostering unity and cooperation among nations through education.

In the realm of leadership strategies and sustainability, Ozsen (2022) integrates the EFQM Excellence Model and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to advance sustainable quality management practices in higher education institutions. Ozsen emphasizing the importance of structured, top-down leadership approaches. Chinese higher education institutions align with national policies like the "Double First-Class" initiative and the Belt and Road Initiative, which enhance their international appeal by integrating sustainability, global partnerships, and quality management. These models provide actionable strategies for embedding sustainability into university operations and strategic planning, positioning universities as proactive contributors to global sustainability and development efforts.

With respect to internationalization, Liu et al. (2020) and Liu (2020) analyze the motivations and goals driving global education initiatives. Liu et al. propose a hybrid model that merges China's structured, top-down management approach with the West's student-

centered, service-oriented systems, offering a balanced framework to meet the needs of international students effectively. Liu (2020) further identifies three key objectives of internationalization; educational, economic, and transformative goals which collectively reflect the multidimensional aims of global education strategies.

In the discussion also mentions how universities utilize resources to support internationalization, including human resources, infrastructure, and technology. Leadership strategies align with sustainability goals, optimizing resource use (Ozsen, 2022). The structured approaches in Chinese institutions ensure efficient utilization of human resources and infrastructure, while technology is increasingly leveraged for recruitment, support systems, and virtual learning, as suggested in the conclusion. Furthermore, the CAGE Distance Framework (Yousaf, 2022) explores how geographical, cultural, and administrative factors shape resource allocation to enhance international students' experiences

Together, these research illustrate the interconnected roles of leadership, sustainability, reputation management, and internationalization in shaping the future of higher education. They advocate for an integrated approach that not only aligns institutional strategies with global objectives but also adapts to the evolving expectations of international students.

Future research on internationalization in higher education can explore into various areas to improve understanding and practices. Comparative analyses across cultural and geopolitical contexts can offer valuable insights into tailoring internationalization strategies to different environments. Investigations into indigenous knowledge systems and decolonizing frameworks can enhance inclusivity and challenge conventional paradigms. Furthermore, studies examining the influence of national policies and public-private partnerships can shed light on how internationalization strategies are developed, while research on the economic impact of international students and effective university branding can strengthen global competitiveness. Longitudinal research focusing on the long-term effects of international education on careers and global mobility is also essential. Equally important are initiatives to address equity and access, particularly by involving marginalized groups and bridging the digital divide. Collectively, these research directions aim to foster innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability in higher education.

No	Year	Author	Title	Research Questions/Assumption	Research Theme	Theoretical Anchor
1	2024	Yiying Teng and Meghan E. Cosier	Influences of cultural capital and internationalization on global competence in higher education: a systematic literature review	(1)What are the trends in populations included in the literature regarding factors influencing global competence (GC) in both international and Chinese contexts?(2)What methodologies are used in research on factors affecting GC in higher education?(3)What specific measures and assessments are used to evaluate factors impacting GC? (4)How does cultural capital influence GC in various educational contexts? (5)What role do universities' internationalization practices (such as studying abroad and international curricula) play in shaping GC?	The study explores global competence in higher education through the dual lenses of cultural capital and internationalization . This theme focuses on how students' backgrounds, such as family resources, language skills, and previous global exposure, intersect with educational internationalization practices to influence their global competencies. The research considers both “internationalization abroad” (study abroad programs) and “internationalization at home” (local opportunities to engage with global content and diverse student groups) as methods to foster GC, particularly for students with limited mobility or economic capital.	(1)Cultural Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1986): This framework positions that students from higher cultural capital backgrounds often access more educational opportunities and demonstrate greater global competence. (2) Internationalization Framework: Developed by organizations such as the American Council on Education, this framework assesses the value of both international mobility and domestic internationalization practices in cultivating global competencies. The study synthesizes these theories to argue that while international mobility is a powerful tool for developing GC, domestic initiatives within a student's home country can also effectively support GC for those lacking mobility opportunities.
2	2023	Zhuo Sun and Miguel Antonio Lim	A Systematic Literature Review of Higher Education Reputation Management: Active/Reactive Framework	(1) What are the common understandings of reputation management (RM) in higher education (HE), particularly in the Chinese context? (2) How do Chinese universities perceive and implement RM?	(1) Higher Education Branding and Marketization: Examines how global market pressures influence universities to prioritize their reputations, especially in the context of international competitiveness. (2) Active and Reactive Reputation Management: Focuses on the distinction between proactive branding efforts (active RM)	(1) Organizational reputation theory This theory said that reputation is built upon symbolic beliefs and perceptions by stakeholders about an organization's capacities, intentions, and performance. In HE, reputation encompasses how universities brand themselves to

					<p>and responsive crisis management (reactive RM), analysing how these strategies are employed in HE.</p> <p>(3) Chinese HE Reputation Strategy: Investigates the unique approaches Chinese universities take toward reputation building, particularly through alignment with national objectives and government expectations.</p> <p>(4) Crisis Management in HE: Reviews crisis management as an essential component of RM, emphasizing its role in maintaining or restoring university reputations during challenging situations.</p>	<p>diverse audiences, manage crises, and uphold or enhance their standings in both national and international contexts.</p> <p>(2) Public relations and crisis management frameworks support the reactive RM perspective, focusing on how universities mitigate reputation damage during crises and maintain public trust.</p>
3	2022	Tolga Ozsen, Baris Uslu, Ahmet Aypay	Strategy adaptation for sustainable quality management in universities: a systematic literature review	<p>(1)What strategies are university managers adapting to establish sustainable quality management in higher education institutions? (2)How do these sustainable strategies impact various aspects of university functions, such as governance, teaching, research, and societal engagement? (3)What role do specific sustainability-oriented practices (e.g., resource management, stakeholder engagement) play in enhancing institutional quality?</p>	<p>This research focuses on sustainable quality management in universities. It explores how universities adapt quality management strategies that are not only efficient but also aligned with sustainable development principles. The research systematically reviews literature to identify sustainable strategies that impact governance, quality culture, academic functions, societal service, and internationalization practices in universities, emphasizing the integration of sustainability into institutional operations.</p>	<p>(1)The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model: This model provides a framework focusing on sustainable value creation across three dimensions :Direction, Execution, and Results. The study uses EFQM's enablers, such as leadership, strategy, people, partnerships, and processes, to assess sustainability initiatives in universities. (2) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The UN's SDGs provide a backdrop, particularly in relation to the educational sector's contribution to sustainability. These goals emphasize the importance of continuous improvement in quality and sustainability within organizational structures.</p> <p>This study offers a structured approach to understanding how sustainable practices in quality management can be embedded into the strategic framework of higher</p>

						education institutions, positioning universities as proactive agents of sustainable development.
4	2022	Simon Marginson	Research on international and global higher education: Six different perspectives	(1)How do different perspectives contribute to the understanding of cross-border higher education? (2)What role does global inequality and national agency play in shaping international education dynamics? (3) How do comparative education, post-colonial studies, and global higher education studies differ in their focus on knowledge production and power relations? (4)To what extent do international student mobility and regional educational policies influence global knowledge ecosystems?(5)How does the Chinese concept of <i>tianxia</i> provide an alternative lens for understanding global education relations?	The research explores six perspectives on international and global higher education , covering comparative education, higher education for development, post-colonial studies, global higher education studies, studies on international student mobility, and the Chinese concept of <i>tianxia</i> . Each perspective provides unique insights into the dynamics of cross-border education, addressing issues of power, cultural hegemony, and the socio-political implications of international educational policies. The work seeks to provide a nuanced view of how these perspectives converge and diverge in understanding global education phenomena.	(1) Comparative Education: Examines national education systems in relation to global standards and seeks to understand systemic differences. (2)Higher Education and Development: Anchored in international development theories, it investigates how education supports socio-economic transformation in emerging regions. (3)Post-Colonial and Decolonial Theory: Focuses on resisting Western-dominant knowledge systems, promoting epistemic diversity and inclusivity. (4) Global Higher Education Studies: Leverages the concept of a multi-scalar approach, studying education as simultaneously national, regional, and global. (5)International Education Mobility: Studies mobility through theories of identity formation and global social stratification. (6)Tianxia: A Chinese philosophical approach, envisioning the world as a single community emphasizing harmony and shared values, offering a distinctive normative model for global education relations.
5	2022	Fakhra Yasmin, Shengbing Li, and Gabriela Slaninová	Exploring the Motivational Factors for International Students to Study in Chinese Higher Education Institutions	(1)What are the primary motivational factors influencing international students to choose Chinese	The research theme on the motivations of international students in selecting Chinese HEIs . This theme encompasses an examination of the reasons behind students' decisions to	The study employs Push-Pull Theory as its main theoretical framework: (1)Push Factors: These are constraints or challenges in the

				<p>higher education institutions (HEIs)? (2)How do academic, personal, financial, and experiential factors differ in significance across students from various regions (Asia, Africa, Europe, and America)? (3)To what extent do push (home country limitations) and pull (host country advantages) factors determine the decision-making of international students? (4)How do students' motivations impact their satisfaction with their educational experience in China?</p>	<p>study in China, focusing on factors such as the desire for quality education, career advancement, financial security, and cultural experiences. The study addresses how these motivational factors vary by students' geographic backgrounds and explores how they affect the overall satisfaction of international students in the Chinese academic environment.</p>	<p>students' home countries, such as limited educational opportunities, economic instability, or inadequate job prospects, which drive students to seek education abroad. (2)Pull Factors: These are attractive features of the host country (China), like scholarship opportunities, perceived quality of education, career prospects, and cultural exposure that draw students to Chinese universities.</p> <p>Additionally, the study incorporates Expectation Theory to analyse how pre-enrolment expectations influence students' satisfaction and adaptability, suggesting that meeting these expectations is crucial for positive student outcomes in an international context.</p>
6	2020	Wei Liu	The Chinese definition of internationalisation in higher education	<p>(1)How do Chinese professionals in higher education define "internationalisation"? (2)What are the primary goals and motivations of Chinese universities in engaging in internationalisation? (3) What approaches do Chinese institutions adopt to achieve internationalisation? (4) What challenges do Chinese institutions face in the process of internationalising? (5)To what extent does the Western concept of internationalisation</p>	<p>The study investigates how Chinese institutions interpret and implement internationalisation, diverging from the traditionally Western-centric model. It emphasizes the adaptation of global standards within a unique Chinese cultural and political context, exploring how China balances the adoption of Western practices with the need to maintain national identity.</p>	<p>(1)Liberal/Educational Goal: Fostering students' ability to operate globally. (2) Instrumental/Competitive Goal: Utilising internationalisation as an economic driver (3) Idealistic/Transformative Goal: Aiming for social transformation and global equity through education.</p>

				align with or diverge from the Chinese approach?		
7	2020	Salman Yousaf, Xiucheng Fan & Fahad Laber	Branding China through the internationalization of higher education sector: an international students' perspective from China	(1)How do national branding initiatives in higher education influence perceptions of China among international students? (2)To what extent do country distances (cultural, administrative, geographic, and economic) impact the national image of China from the perspective of international students? (3)Does a favourable national image of China translate into higher brand equity for Chinese higher education institutions (HEIs) and promote positive behavioural intentions toward China? (4)What role does brand equity play in reinforcing international students' future loyalty and positive perceptions toward Chinese higher education?	The research theme of this study is the role of higher education internationalization as a tool for nation branding and education diplomacy . The research explores how China's effort to brand itself through its higher education sector influences international students' perceptions, enhances the country's soft power, and drives favourable behavioural intentions. It particularly focuses on how international students' cultural and economic distances from China shape their views of Chinese HEIs and the broader national image, contributing to China's strategic goal of becoming a preferred study destination.	The study employs a multi-theoretical framework, combining: (1)Ghemawat's CAGE Distance Framework (Cultural, Administrative, Geographic, Economic): This framework assesses how "distance" factors influence international students' perceptions of China's national image and higher education brand. (2)Nation Branding Theory (Anholt, 2007): This theory underlines the importance of national image in attracting foreign audiences and enhancing a country's reputation, helping frame China's strategic use of HEIs for promoting a positive national image. (3)Brand Equity Theory (Aaker, 1991; Yoo & Donthu, 2001): This theory helps analyze how the positive image of China influences brand equity perceptions of Chinese HEIs, which in turn shapes students' loyalty and advocacy intentions. This theoretical foundation supports the study's examination of the effectiveness of China's education diplomacy in establishing a globally attractive national image through the strategic promotion of its higher education sector.
8	2020	Wei Liu and Zenghua Liu	International student management in China: growing pains and system transitions	(1) What challenges arise in the transition from quantitative to qualitative improvements in	The research theme of this study is the transformation and adaptation of international student management in	(1)Altbach and Knight's (2007) perspective on internationalization as influenced by economic and

				<p>China's international education? (2)How do different management models impact the experiences and integration of international students in Chinese universities? (3)What are the frontline perspectives on transitioning Chinese higher education management from a top-down approach to a more service-oriented model? (4)How do international education policies in China balance the traditional "hand-held" management with the more autonomous, "hands-off" approach seen in Western contexts?</p>	<p>Chinese higher education. It investigates how Chinese universities transition from traditional, centralized control structures to more student-centered, service-oriented models. The study explores systemic changes aimed at better integrating international students while maintaining a distinctively Chinese approach within a rapidly globalizing educational landscape.</p>	<p>cultural motives: This theory highlights the varied motivations behind international education, contrasting profit-driven Western motives with China's focus on cultural influence and soft power. (2) Management vs. Service Orientation: Drawing on comparative models between Western "service-focused" (bottom-up) and Chinese "management-focused" (top-down) approaches, the study assesses the effectiveness of each model in addressing student needs and fostering integration.</p> <p>The research emphasizes the need for a balanced model that aligns with both Chinese administrative structure and evolving international student expectations, suggesting that an optimal model might integrate aspects of China's managed structure with Western service-oriented approaches.</p>
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Table 2. Result of the SLR

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