

Transnational Education and Institutional Internationalisation Strategy: A Critical Literature Review

Farhan Qureshi¹

¹ University of Hull London Campus, Cambridge Education Group, UK

Correspondence: Farhan Qureshi, Programme Leader - MSc Business Management, University of Hull London Campus, Cambridge Education Group, UK.

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Abstract

Transnational education (TNE) has emerged as one of the most dynamic and rapidly expanding dimensions of contemporary higher education, reshaping the way institutions conceptualise and pursue internationalisation in an increasingly globalised world. As globalisation continues to accelerate borderless educational exchange, TNE has grown from a peripheral activity into a central strategic concern for higher education institutions in both providing and receiving countries. However, despite the growing volume of literature on the subject, there remains a need for a comprehensive and critical synthesis of how TNE simultaneously influences institutional internationalisation strategies and affects the educational systems and economies of host countries, particularly within developing nation contexts. This study therefore addresses two core research questions: how TNE influences the strategic internationalisation processes of higher education institutions in both providing and receiving countries, and what impacts TNE has on the local educational systems and economies of host nations. To address these questions, a narrative literature review was conducted, drawing on approximately 73 peer-reviewed sources gathered from four major academic databases — Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCO, and Google Scholar. The findings reveal that while TNE offers considerable opportunities, including expanded access to higher education, enhanced graduate employability, and increased institutional competitiveness, it also presents significant challenges, among them quality assurance concerns, Western-centric curriculum design, financial dependency, and the risk of educational decline in host countries. Evidence drawn from the United Arab Emirates, Botswana, and Mauritius further illustrates how socioeconomic, political, and cultural contexts shape TNE adoption and its outcomes at the national level. It is consequently argued that sustainable and equitable TNE requires locally responsive, ethically grounded frameworks that balance the commercial imperatives of providing institutions with the genuine educational development needs of host countries, particularly in the developing world.

Keywords: transnational education, internationalisation of higher education, institutional strategy, cross-border education, quality assurance, developing countries

1. Introduction

Transnational education (TNE) represents one of the most dynamic, integrative, and increasingly popular forms of providing students in one country with access to educational programmes delivered by institutions of other countries (Hussain, 2007). It has been developing as a result of globalisation that accelerated borderless educational exchange. According to Vincent-Lancrin (2009), TNE programmes may take various forms, such as distance learning, the establishment of foreign campuses, and the production of online courses for students from other countries. However, almost every form not only contributes to broader educational success but also promotes cultural exchange and understanding between diverse students and programmes. TNE has broadened the scope of educational institutions, which are no longer restricted to national or regional boundaries but are able to offer education to students from all over the world. This promotes a globally competent workforce that can work in different cultural environments and sees everything from broader perspectives. Furthermore, TNE helps educational institutions through their internationalisation, making them more competitive and visible in this global landscape.

1.1 Research Questions

The following are the research questions for this literature review:

- (1) How does TNE influence the strategic internationalisation processes of higher education institutions in both the providing and receiving countries?
- (2) What are the impacts of TNE on the local educational systems and economies of host countries?

1.2 Overview of the Research

In this study, the section on Internationalisation in Higher Education explores the theoretical and practical concepts of internationalised education. The core focus is on the recent practices of internationalisation that have evolved over the past few years, and their benefits and drawbacks are also addressed. The next section on Overview, Evolution, and Historical Context of TNE covers the development and origin of TNE and the transformational development shifts that have played a critical role in its growth in global learning. The section on Models and Trends of TNE comprehensively covers models, specifically branch campuses, online learning, collaborative international programmes and other TNE strategies. The section on TNE in Institutional Internationalisation describes how TNE represents a significant shift in the broader institution's drive towards its internationalisation goals. This section also contains educational providers' benefits and challenges among host countries.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a narrative literature review approach to critically examine the impact of transnational education on the internationalisation strategies of higher education institutions, as well as its broader influence on the educational systems and economies of host countries. As noted by Hussain (2007) and further supported by a wide range of contemporary scholars, transnational education is a multifaceted and constantly evolving phenomenon, and a narrative review approach is therefore most appropriate, as it allows for a comprehensive and thematic synthesis of diverse scholarly perspectives, institutional reports, and policy-driven literature across multiple geographic and cultural contexts.

The literature for this study was gathered through a systematic search across four major academic databases, namely Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCO, and Google Scholar. These databases were selected due to their extensive and internationally recognised coverage of peer-reviewed journals in the fields of higher education, educational management, internationalisation, and global education policy. The search process employed a range of relevant keywords and phrases, including transnational education, TNE, internationalisation of higher education, branch campus, cross-border education, educational globalisation, franchise programmes, and higher education strategy, with Boolean operators applied to refine and focus the results.

A mixed set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was applied throughout the screening process to ensure the relevance, credibility, and academic rigour of the sources selected. Sources were included if they were published in peer-reviewed journals or represented credible institutional and policy reports directly relevant to TNE, internationalisation strategy, or the impacts of cross-border education on host countries. Furthermore, priority was given to literature published from 2000 onwards, as this period reflects the most significant and contemporary developments in transnational education globally. However, foundational theoretical works published prior to this period were retained where they provided essential conceptual grounding — most notably the seminal contributions of Knight (1994, 2004, 2008) and Hudzik (2011, 2014), whose frameworks continue to underpin contemporary understandings of internationalisation. Sources that lacked analytical or theoretical depth, or that could not be verified as academically credible, were excluded from the review.

Following the screening process, approximately 73 sources were identified as meeting the inclusion criteria. These sources were subsequently organised and analysed thematically around four core areas that reflect the structure of this review: the historical development and evolution of TNE, its models and delivery modes, its role in driving institutional internationalisation strategies, and its impacts and challenges within developing country contexts. Within each thematic area, sources were not merely summarised but were comparatively analysed to identify points of convergence, contradiction and gap across the literature. Specifically, where multiple scholars addressed the same phenomenon, their findings and arguments were examined against each other to assess the degree of scholarly consensus, to identify where competing interpretations exist, and to evaluate the strength and limitations of the evidence base underpinning key claims. This comparative analytical process was guided throughout by the integrated framework of Knight (1994, 2004, 2008) and Hudzik (2011, 2014), which provided the evaluative criteria against which TNE models, strategies and impacts were assessed across different geographic and institutional contexts. This

thematic organisation, combined with comparative synthesis, provides the analytical framework through which the research questions of this study are addressed and the broader implications of TNE for higher education are explored.

3. Internationalisation in Higher Education

Knight (1994) first introduced the organisational process of internationalisation at the institutional level, stating that it is the process of integrating an international and multicultural dimension into an institution's teaching, service, and research. This definition set the ground for the understanding of internationalisation through the 1990s. Later, Knight (2008) clarified that internationalisation at national and institutional levels implies the integration of international, intercultural, or global dimensions into the goals and objectives of higher education. This definition considers both situational-specific aspects of institutional-based activities and a broader generalisation of the concept.

Building on these foundations, Hudzik (2014) introduced the concept of "comprehensive internationalisation". The author defined it as a purposeful commitment by an institution to integrate an international, intercultural, or global dimension into its programmes, policies, and initiatives. Hudzik argued that internationalisation must become an integral part of the fundamental principles, values, and goals of an institution. Hudzik (2011) stressed that it must be supported by institutional management, governing bodies, faculty, students, and every academic unit to achieve comprehensive internationalisation.

Based on the definitions of Knight and Hudzik, it is evidenced that internationalisation is a complex concept, which involves adding international, global, and cross-cultural content into the goals and objectives of higher education systems. This is not limited to adding "international" or "global" programmes because they do not correlate with internal frameworks and teaching projects or reinforce the university brand without seriously impacting the university. It did not have an explicit purpose or goal in the beginning; it has emerged as a process through which university transformation and quality enhancement are aided globally, indicating that internationalisation is a continual process (Knight, 2008).

Taken together, the frameworks of Knight (1994, 2004, 2008) and Hudzik (2011, 2014) provide the unified analytical lens through which this review examines transnational education and its relationship to institutional internationalisation strategy. Knight's framework offers a conceptual and typological foundation, distinguishing between the rationales, approaches and organisational processes through which internationalisation operates at the institutional level. Hudzik's concept of comprehensive internationalisation extends this foundation by emphasising that internationalisation must permeate the entire institutional mission, values and operations rather than remaining a peripheral or opportunistic activity. Applied to the analysis of TNE in this review, this integrated framework raises three core analytical questions that guide the examination of each section: first, whether TNE represents a genuine, mission-driven internationalisation strategy or primarily a market-driven revenue model; second, whether TNE contributes to comprehensive internationalisation in both providing and receiving institutions; and third, whether the implementation of TNE reflects the values of equity, quality and mutual benefit that Knight and Hudzik identify as central to sustainable internationalisation practice. These three questions provide the evaluative criteria through which the models, impacts, challenges and opportunities of TNE are assessed throughout this review.

During the last thirty years, the sector of higher education has changed internationalisation from the periphery to the centre, and the concept of export of higher education has moved from a reactive to a proactive one. The focus of internationalisation has transformed from replicating other universities to articulating individual mission-oriented operations. The common direction that universities take is the evolution from one-off, informal international initiatives by individual faculties into a comprehensive, systematic, institution-wide strategic approach on the part of leading universities the world over, representing a mid-term and long-term plan in response to globalisation and global competition (Brandenburg & De Wit, 2011; Hudzik, 2011; Ota, 2014).

Furthermore, the wider adoption of key American higher education approaches and practices globally has strengthened the position of the United States. The Bologna Process, for example, has two major contributions to Europe: it introduced a credit-based system representing the American way of measurement of output and quality in higher education. It also introduced a two-cycle, three-year undergraduate and two-year graduate structure, which corresponds closely to the American system (Ota, 2014). The increasing role of the English language has driven the international mobility of students to English-speaking areas, including the United States. International students are therefore one of the most financially significant target groups, as they are typically full cost-paying students.

The internationalisation of higher education as a business model has resulted in a surge of universities competing for self-funding international students, with Germany targeting 350,000 and Canada 450,000 international students, highlighting both the scale of global competition and the general fear of brain drain from developing countries

(British Council, 2017; OECD, 2004). Consequently, while universities around the world are geared up to boost their internationalisation efforts to attract students from other countries, the business model of the overseas student trade has created a rapidly growing market alongside its bureaucratic and moral policy implications.

One of the most critical educational goals of internationalisation is to diversify the experience of domestic stakeholders, including both students and teaching staff. As Deardorff (2006) claims, internationalisation encourages students' cross-cultural competence, which is a critical requirement in today's globalised economy. He further emphasises the importance of such skills and points out that internationalised graduates have a better opportunity to position themselves in diverse environments. Similarly, Leask (2009) stresses the role of perspective integration into the curriculum to support the abilities of graduates for problem-solving and decision-making.

Another important factor is that students actively interact not only in curricular but also in extra-curricular activities via international partnerships and exchanges. The second equally important factor is research, as internationalisation has increased the volume and quality of research. Maringe (2010) proposed that cooperation with foreign institutions increased the research geography of an institution. Furthermore, research products supported by an international index have effects on a global scale exceeding a single nation's borders. The third factor of internationalisation is the strategic benefit, as Knight (2004) claimed that universities' internationalisation would help them distinguish themselves in the competitive market. Egron-Polak and Hudson (2014) argue about the strong link of internationalisation with the ranking of institutes, which further ensures attracting more students and faculty.

However, the process of internationalising higher education contains particular challenges. The most common criticism is whether the process is profit-oriented rather than cultural and academic. Altbach and Knight (2007) used two definitions to distinguish between the phenomena of commercialisation and the commodification of higher education. The issue arises from an excessive focus on profit-making, which can undermine the academic integrity of higher education institutions. As Rumbley et al. (2012) claimed, the situation is because of the profit imbalance between developed and developing countries. The only suggested solution is for the less advantaged nations to use foreign aid-oriented research and educational projects to benefit from the situation.

4. Overview, Evolution, and Historical Context of Transnational Education (TNE)

According to Doherty (2020), "transnational" refers to more than just relocating between two cultures; it also refers to establishing a local presence and concurrently belonging to several communities. Physically transferring international curriculum materials from the country of origin to the country of destination is by no means sufficient; local relevance, acceptability, and comprehension of the curriculum content must also be taken into account (Waterval et al., 2017). The innovative nature of transnational education is manifested not only in the breakthrough in the philosophy, strategic development plan and institutional operations but also in the cooperation models between the institutions across the nations and the emergence of new delivery modes of transnational programmes.

Higher education has become increasingly market-driven, a development that has grown in parallel with the expansion of the global economy (Jianxin, 2009). Therefore, colonial-era international education contained a significant element of cultural influence and ideological expansion, often framed as a "mutually beneficial cultural movement". As a result, many developed countries' educational systems began to identify the move from providing financial assistance and educational help to developing countries to recruiting fee-paying overseas students from those countries. Through transnational education methods, the tuition fees collected from overseas students have grown to be a significant source of funding to make up for the lack of resources resulting from domestic budgetary adjustments. As a consequence, transnational education has emerged as a new avenue for global collaboration in education and a source of funding for several institutions worldwide.

The rapid economic expansion of emerging countries and the changing demographics of the globalisation period are the main drivers of increasing demands for higher education globally (Alam et al., 2012). It was noted that by 2020, there were 6.7 million foreign students worldwide and the number kept rising, based on existing patterns in the growing global mobility of students (Calderon, 2010). Many Western universities, in particular, are now largely dependent on foreign students who pay fees locally as well as offshore educational services provided in collaboration with other academic institutions, professional associations, and private enterprises abroad (Huang, 2003; Jianxin, 2009; Alam et al., 2012, 2013; Warwick, 2014). Although the excess of education and the financial shortfall in the universities of affluent countries have been acknowledged as the pulling force, the surpassing demands for higher education in most emerging cultures with continuously expanding needs are considered the push element. Such push and pull factors at multiple levels have allowed international education to develop and expand significantly.

The structure of transnational education, as an aspect of educative movement and based on market forces educational endeavours, has also been observed by many, similar to the trend of the international student movement. Here, highly developed nations, like the major English-speaking countries, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia, are the primary and key providers of the transnational education service, while Asia is thought to be the receiving country with the highest participation in transnational education, in addition to other developing nations like the Middle East, North Africa, South America, and other regions. This confirmed numerous studies' findings that the need for higher education in developing economies with a young population — like China and India — is straining domestic educational systems and that international education through developed Western countries is perceived as the quick fix (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2006; Yang, 2008; Jianxin, 2009; Mok & Yu, 2011; Alam et al., 2012, 2013; Warwick, 2014).

Consequently, the majority of international institutions are clustered within five geographical hubs that have been identified. Singapore and Malaysia are among them, followed by China and Hong Kong, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, and South Africa (Alam et al., 2013). In support of the claim that "the rise of transnational higher education within Asia-Pacific countries has unquestionably expressed the increasing rate of internationalisation and the associated challenges imposed by it," Mok and Yu (2011) noted that the authorities of Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong, among others, have all made clear that they intend to establish the corresponding Asian nations as regional centres of education and are actively aiming for market share in the highly competitive worldwide sector for global higher education. This has resulted in rather significant growth in transnational higher education in recent times as a coping mechanism for the respective states.

While the five geographical hubs identified above have dominated much of the existing TNE literature, three additional regional contexts merit closer examination, as their exclusion represents a significant gap in the current understanding of global TNE development.

In Latin America, Gacel-Avila (2020) argues that internationalisation in the region remains primarily focused on student mobility, with other strategies such as internationalisation at home remaining largely underdeveloped. More recently, Vazquez and Mancilla (2025) found that despite almost 95% of higher education institutions in Latin America referencing internationalisation in their institutional development plans, only 59% include it in their mission statements, and only 34% have a quality assurance system in place to evaluate internationalisation outcomes. This gap between stated institutional ambition and operational reality reflects the broader structural and policy weaknesses that have constrained TNE development in the region. Furthermore, Whitsed et al. (2024) found that approaches to internationalisation of the curriculum in Latin American universities have been focused almost solely on student mobility programmes, with genuine TNE engagement remaining limited by financial constraints, language barriers and underdeveloped regulatory frameworks. When assessed through the Knight and Hudzik framework, Latin America therefore represents a region where the conditions for comprehensive, mission-driven TNE remain aspirational rather than operational for the majority of institutions.

In Southeast Asia, the picture is considerably more advanced. Schulze (2021) noted that Singapore and Malaysia have been at the forefront of TNE developments in the region, attracting investments by foreign higher education institutions that operate offshore campuses and deliver foreign degrees in situ, either independently or with a domestic partner, as part of national strategies to transition toward knowledge-based economies. Since the opening of Monash University Malaysia in 1998, the region has witnessed a significant rise in the establishment of international branch campuses, driven by the growth of ASEAN's middle-income families and increasing demand for higher education that domestic provision alone cannot meet. More recently, Vietnam and Indonesia have emerged as significant growth markets for TNE, with Indonesia's higher education enrolment projected to be among the world's top ten by 2035, creating substantial opportunities for TNE providers seeking to expand their regional presence (Amber Education, 2024). The Southeast Asian experience illustrates how TNE can serve as a strategic instrument for national economic development when supported by clear government policy, adequate regulatory frameworks and proactive institutional engagement with international providers.

China, despite being the world's largest TNE recipient country, has received comparatively limited attention in the broader TNE literature. Zhou et al. (2024) noted that China has become the world's largest TNE market, with a total of 2,332 TNE programmes and institutions approved by the Chinese Ministry of Education by 2020, and approximately 800,000 students enrolled in TNE programmes by 2025, with government ambitions to expand this figure to as many as 8 million over the next decade. The predominant model of TNE in China is the Sino-foreign cooperative university, which operates under a distinctive regulatory framework that requires significant curriculum adaptation and joint governance arrangements between Western providing institutions and Chinese partner

universities. As Li et al. (2024) highlighted, as China has emerged as the largest host country for transnational higher education, universities throughout the world have forged partnerships with Chinese universities, though governance dynamics in Sino-foreign joint institutes reflect ongoing tensions between the autonomy aspirations of international partners and the top-down institutional controls characteristic of the Chinese higher education system. The Chinese case therefore represents a distinctive and highly significant variant of TNE that challenges the predominantly Western-centric models discussed elsewhere in this review, and highlights the importance of regulatory and geopolitical contexts in shaping TNE outcomes.

5. Models and Trends of Transnational Education

Examined through the Knight and Hudzik framework, the models and trends of TNE can be evaluated not only in terms of their operational characteristics but also in terms of the extent to which they reflect a genuine commitment to comprehensive internationalisation or primarily serve market-driven institutional interests. The past ten years have seen a significant shift in both the scope and the complexity of higher education providers who transcend international boundaries to provide degrees and programmes in various countries. Although international branch campuses (IBCs) and twinning programmes have historically been the most prevalent types of transnational education, new TNE programmes and partnership formats are evolving, if not transforming the field entirely (Noronha-Barrett et al., 2019). Despite significant concerns about the validity of the double or multiple credentials being provided, joint, double, and multiple (JDM) degree programmes are growing at a remarkable pace.

Providing appealing alternatives to the IBC model, new institutions are being established or jointly developed by multiple universities across different countries (Knight, 2016). Franchised universities are a relatively recent addition to the TNE field. They are established when a local or international organisation opens a private, independent institution in a host nation and provides franchised educational programmes from several overseas sources. The popularity of remote learning continues to grow and new strategies are being introduced to help students enrolled in distance learning by assisting them in the country in which they are studying. TNE is a dynamic and increasingly complex aspect of internationalising higher education and new trends and changes need to be closely monitored and studied.

The institution of higher education based in the delivering country creates a fully functional branch campus in the host nation to provide educational opportunities to students from that nation under the conditions of the branch campus agreement. Compared to other options, this arrangement enables the providing institution to undertake educational programmes more efficiently. It permits the arrangement of academic personnel from the providing nation as well as hiring local staff. On the other hand, providing programmes via branch campuses is expensive and requires a large financial outlay from the providing institution. Currently, this design is used for around 5% of courses and programmes (Hussain, 2007; IDP, 2011; Skidmore, 2011; Alam et al., 2012). However, students are starting to choose branch campuses, particularly in countries that are somewhat restrictive like Bangladesh and China and restrictive like India and Pakistan, and liberal like Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. Healey et al. (2022) further highlight that the sustainability of branch campuses depends on a combination of strategic, leadership, academic, financial and operational factors that must be carefully aligned from the outset. Critically, however, when assessed against Hudzik's concept of comprehensive internationalisation, branch campuses represent the model most closely aligned with institutional mission integration, yet they are also the most expensive and the least frequently adopted, suggesting that financial constraints continue to override strategic ambition in TNE decision-making.

The franchises or joint ventures are another trend in TNE where a provider of the offering nation grants permission to a partner or another provider in the host country to provide the courses and programmes under this method of delivery. Every arrangement about instruction, administration, evaluation, profit-sharing, and certification is made by the laws and rules of both the host and the source nations. Instructors from the supplying nation's institution often travel to the partner country to provide intensive lectures in a short amount of time. The academic staff of the providing university moderate the quality of the education and evaluations (Alam et al., 2012). Through this agreement, more than 90% of all courses and programmes are given in the host nation. The approach, although most cost-effective with a certain level of quality assurance, has considerable financial and reputational risks because of the financial and other inadequacies of the local partner. When compared to branch campuses, franchise arrangements therefore represent a compromise between reach and quality, prioritising cost-effectiveness and scale over the depth of institutional commitment that Knight (2004) identifies as central to genuine internationalisation strategy.

Another trend is virtual education delivery mode where courses and programmes are delivered via televisions, radios, computers, the internet, webinars, virtual blackboards, and other means both within and outside of the nation (Healey & Bordogna, 2014; Suguku, 2023). The rapid expansion of online TNE following the COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the adoption of virtual delivery modes, prompting higher education institutions to rethink consolidated practices and purposes (Ferreira Santos, 2024). The quantitative evidence of this shift is considerable. According to Yencken et al. (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic created both significant challenges and new opportunities for TNE provision, accelerating the adoption of hybrid and fully online delivery models that had previously been treated as supplementary rather than primary modes of instruction. Furthermore, as Nguyen et al. (2025) noted in a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of TNE research from 1972 to 2023, the UK reported over 510,000 TNE students across 228 countries and territories in 2020 to 2021, representing a steady 12.7% increase from the previous year, demonstrating that the pandemic, rather than disrupting TNE growth, served in many contexts as a catalyst for its expansion as an alternative to disrupted overseas mobility. Another trend is International Student Mobility as explained by Manalo (2006); under this trend, students may make use of face-to-face intensive lectures and workshops as well as other assistance provided by regional learning or support centres. In this concept, a student from one country's university goes to another country's school for a certain amount of time to study and get a degree. Students get proper acknowledgement for their finished courses at their home universities after completing the course or courses. Students may be exposed to and experience a variety of cultures, languages, and lifestyles because of the arrangement. Students in industrialised countries are fond of this kind of international education. It is less well-liked in Asian universities.

Providing joint or double degrees is a relatively recent development. Bamford (2020) and Chan (2022) further elaborated that in this programme, educational institutions from several nations band together to provide a single-degree programme, a double-degree programme, or both. Students who complete the programme receive credentials from both providers or a joint award from the partners. Universities in Europe, North America, and Australia particularly favour this system. The creation of regional centres for transnational education is currently a new phenomenon that is being used as a strategy to make international higher education accessible domestically at a reasonable cost (Uzhegova & Baik, 2022). As a result of liberalising higher education and introducing market mechanisms, several governments are drawing top Western institutions to offer their educational opportunities to both local and regional students. Li et al. (2024) further note that in the post-pandemic era, TNE policies and practices have continued to evolve significantly, particularly in Asia, where governments are recalibrating their TNE frameworks in response to disruptions caused by COVID-19. Taken together, the diversity of TNE models reflects a spectrum of institutional commitment to comprehensive internationalisation, ranging from the deep structural integration of branch campuses at one end to the more limited engagement of virtual delivery modes at the other. The choice of model is therefore not merely an operational decision but a strategic one, with significant implications for the quality, equity and sustainability of TNE outcomes in host country contexts.

6. TNE in Institutional Internationalisation

Transnational education is seen to follow the general pattern in international education, where the main English-speaking countries like the UK, USA, and Australia remain the primary attraction for students from other countries. The most popular approach is to export educational services to nations with a surplus demand for higher education via various forms of collaboration. The aforementioned claim is confirmed by the combined official statistics presented in the study of Garrett and Verbik (2004), which also makes the magnitude and distribution of enrolment in international education quite evident. In the present growth of transnational education, continental European nations prefer to focus more on "regional cooperation and complementing each other on their strengths" (Jianxin, 2009) rather than fully committing to educational service trading.

Some studies highlight the need for the curriculum supplier to modify the curriculum material to fit the local context of the host (Waterval et al., 2018); the transnational curriculum should result from bilateral integration. Additionally, scholars have written the guidelines and procedures for developing and designing curricula, particularly in a transnational context. A framework for the internationalisation of the curriculum was proposed by Aponte and Jordan (2020) based on three dimensions: the learning environment, the academic programme, and the institutional dimension (Popov et al., 2018; Draskovic et al., 2019; Marks-Bielska et al., 2020). These three aspects stand for the internationalisation of the curriculum at three levels as well: the faculty level, the institutional level, and the classroom level.

Deng (2015) suggested dividing curriculum-making into three levels consisting of classroom, programmatic and institutional. According to him, the curriculum should be seen as a multi-level concept with three distinct aspects:

curriculum creation as a practical aspect, normative aspects involving the goal of education, and epistemological aspects including various perspectives on knowledge. Clarke et al. (2016) developed a seven-stage paradigm for transnational curriculum design. Within that context, the local and global cultures of the students should be fully taken into account while designing the curriculum. Periodic data might be used to assess and further enhance the curriculum. In the creation of cross-cultural curricula, He and Liu (2018) identified two techniques: the "accommodating" and the "collaborating" strategies. Ellis (2020) compared the language structure-based technique and the task-based method as two approaches to language curriculum design. He asserted that the benefits of the two approaches might be combined in a modular programme. While the range of curriculum frameworks reviewed here reflects a growing scholarly consensus on the importance of localisation and bilateral integration in TNE design, a critical examination reveals important tensions in the literature. Several frameworks, including those of Aponte and Jordan (2020) and Clarke et al. (2016), are largely prescriptive in nature, offering design principles without sufficient empirical evidence of their effectiveness across diverse national and cultural contexts. Furthermore, as Waterval et al. (2018) acknowledge, the practical implementation of locally responsive curriculum design is frequently constrained by the commercial and reputational interests of providing institutions, which may resist significant adaptation of their programmes for fear of diluting their brand or academic standards. This tension between the theoretical commitment to bilateral integration and the commercial imperatives of providing institutions represents one of the most persistent and underexplored contradictions in the TNE curriculum literature.

7. Transnational Education for Internationalisation and Transformation of Higher Education in Developing Nations

The Knight and Hudzik framework is particularly instructive in the context of developing nations, where the tension between market-driven TNE expansion and the values of comprehensive, mission-driven internationalisation is most acutely visible. A majority of institutions of higher education explicitly express their goals to become internationally cohesive or, in another capacity, to become exceptional. According to Wildavsky (2012), this is a result of the worldwide talent competition and is a component of the larger globalisation process. Although the idea of an international institution and academic mobility is not new, the push to achieve them has grown to previously unheard-of levels. For example, the European Union (EU) plans to spend €80 billion on large-scale, multi-partner, transnational, and multidisciplinary research over seven years from 2014 to 2020 under the Horizon 2020 project (European Commission, 2013; Malette, 2016). The inclusion of small and medium-sized businesses in the creation of the Horizon 2020 framework indicates an increasing understanding of their significance in the global economy. The post-2020 period has introduced a new set of dynamics that have further complicated the TNE landscape in developing nations. According to Universities UK (2023), in 2022 to 2023, 606,485 students across 228 countries participated in TNE provided by 173 UK higher education institutions, representing an 8.8% increase from the previous year, with Asia accounting for over half of all TNE students at 51.5%. More significantly, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2025) reported that in 2023 to 2024, TNE student numbers studying for UK qualifications overseas rose by a further 8% to 621,065, even as onshore international student recruitment in the UK declined due to tightened visa restrictions and restrictions on student dependants. This divergence between declining onshore recruitment and growing offshore TNE enrolment is particularly significant for developing nation contexts, as it suggests that UK institutions, faced with declining domestic fee income and restricted onshore recruitment, are increasingly turning to TNE as a strategic revenue mechanism, intensifying the commercial pressures that Knight (2004) and Altbach and Knight (2007) long identified as a threat to the educational integrity of internationalisation. Furthermore, as ICEF Monitor (2024) noted, the UAE has emerged as the fastest-growing TNE market, posting 20.4% year-on-year growth in 2022 to 2023, reflecting the continued strategic investment in TNE by developing and emerging economies as a tool for knowledge economy development, despite the ongoing quality assurance challenges documented throughout this review.

Conceptualisations of the university in the twenty-first century are increasingly defined by the connection between economic growth and development and research and innovation in higher education. Usually, the globalisation of higher education and, more specifically, the growth of transnational education are driven by this ideological framework. Many internationalisation and TNE initiatives are driven through national and provincial regulations, while a large number of others are a response to various dynamics and pressures that are present in both the internal and external contexts of institutions. Although the Going Global surveys (British Council, 2013; British Council & DAAD, 2014) articulated the broad-based value proposition of TNE, there appears to be convergence around the idea that TNE is based upon a revolutionary ideal which stresses the economic importance of higher education (Stephenson, 2006).

Research suggests that several institutions that established branch campuses in developing nations may have done so partly in response to decreased government support for postsecondary education in their home countries, though it is recognised that institutional motivations in this regard are typically multiple and shaped by specific national and organisational contexts (Stephenson, 2006; Marginson, 2007; Smith, 2010; Soontiens & Pedigo, 2013). Higher education is becoming more and more marketised and corporatised in connection with that. There are examples of institutions in the UK and Australia whose TNE operations increased in connection with substantial reductions to financing and changes to higher education in these nations. Both nations, along with the USA, are top suppliers of TNE, with branch campuses spread around the globe (Soontiens & Pedigo, 2013). This raises the question of what justifications, principles, and ideologies underpin international and transnational higher education in developing nations.

The foundation of internationalisation and TNE activities in developing nations faces several serious obstacles, including high unemployment rates, talent migration and shortages in vital fields, inadequate institutional frameworks, inadequate infrastructure, rising demand for higher education, and a lack of resources to meet it. For example, Africa is in a worse situation even if some of these issues are not exclusive to the continent, particularly when one takes into account how these issues affect the country's economies and people. The need for collaboration in tackling global issues is acknowledged. The problem lies not just in the agenda's ideological and value arguments, but also in who sets it. This is likely to have a significant impact on the procedure and subsequent actions outlined in the agenda. All things considered, domestic agendas and proactive planning are not the sources of internationalisation and TNE in the majority of the developing world. This is not inherently problematic. What is concerning is the capacity to adapt the chosen agendas to the specific demands of developing nation situations. The capacity is often deficient and seems to lack ideological frameworks that are pertinent to the local context. According to Koehn (2012), tackling interrelated global concerns sustainably requires the cooperation of many players, consideration of local requirements, and balancing of national and international frameworks.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has seen a fast development of TNE, which offers significant new perspectives to TNE discussions. Miller-Idriss and Hanauer (2011) credit regional identities together with advancements in the economy, politics, and culture of the region for the UAE's growth. They contend that the strategy to draw Western TNE providers to the area was driven by the desire to improve global competitiveness, ambitions to transition from resource-dependent to knowledge-based economies, and growing economic liberalisation in the region. Developing the human capital of the area, expanding access to higher education, and raising educational standards are other priorities.

The agenda presented in the UAE scenario is primarily motivated by the social, political, and economic justifications for international education, but it also heavily takes into account regional perspectives on inputs and advantages that are seen. The governments invested large financial resources to create hubs that would appeal to Western institutions to make it work. This is not to say that there are not any difficulties with the procedure. In the planning and delivery process, for example, questions have been raised about the extent to which complex contextual, sociopolitical, and cultural perspectives — especially those of minorities — are included (Miller-Idriss & Hanauer, 2011). There is evidence that TNE is developing throughout the African continent — Botswana and Mauritius in this instance — due to political and socioeconomic factors that are comparable to those in the United Arab Emirates.

During the last 20 years, the upper-middle-income countries of Botswana and Mauritius have seen tremendous economic expansion. According to the Central Intelligence Agency (2014), diamond mining accounted for one-third of Botswana's GDP and 70–80% of its export revenue in 2013. The country's GDP per capita was estimated to be \$16,400 in 2013. Mauritius was rated top in Africa for global competitiveness in 2013 and has a GDP per capita of \$15,649 in terms of purchasing power parity (International Business Times, 2013). The need for labour expanded due to the nations' fast development, particularly in professional fields seen to be important for economic expansion. High transition rates and a rise in demand for postsecondary education were caused by the expansion of elementary and secondary education.

In contrast, poor access and participation rates meant that little investment in the higher education sector's development hindered growth and resulted in major bottlenecks. Botswana's higher education gross enrolments are still low, despite a consistent growth in enrolment from 7.7% in 2003 to 20% in 2013 (Human Resource Development Council, 2013). As a result, according to the British Council (2013), Botswana and Mauritius have historically had high outbound study-abroad percentages of over 50% and 30%, respectively. Both nations' domestic higher education systems are also ill-equipped to prepare workers in critical fields for future economic expansion.

The civil service and conventional occupations continue to be the main focus of training in domestic public universities.

TNE providers would see rising per capita wealth and upper-middle-class status as opportunities for the government to spend more on private tuition and scholarships for deserving students. The governments of Botswana and Mauritius created plans to organise TNEs to solve issues with low participation rates and restricted access (Armah, 2015). The nations created Education Hubs with the express purpose of drawing in offshore institutions and bringing down the unaffordable cost of studying overseas. Additionally, Botswana saw TNE and the Education Hub as tools for economic diversification (Modise & AvOSEH, 2016). The government anticipated a large influx of cash spurred by TNE campuses and higher enrolment rates for overseas students. The Education Hub in Botswana is a component of the larger framework that is used in other economic sectors to achieve economic diversification, including Innovation, Transportation, Agriculture, and Diamond Hubs.

While it is evident that Botswana's TNE is justified similarly to that of Mauritius and the UAE, the country's situation is different due to the anticipated revenue generated by this procedure. But unlike Mauritius and the UAE, Botswana did not provide comparable capital incentives to entice branch campuses. It is unclear whether Botswana's TNE strategy was well-thought-out in terms of revenue generation and business case. The degree to which the nation has considered the many structural, socioeconomic, political, and cultural elements required to propel the process is also unclear. A comparative analysis of the three cases examined in this review reveals important patterns that have broader implications for developing nation TNE strategy. The UAE represents a context in which substantial government investment, clear economic diversification objectives, and proactive policy frameworks have created relatively favourable conditions for TNE development, albeit with ongoing concerns about cultural and sociopolitical inclusion. Mauritius presents a similar pattern of government-led TNE development driven by economic ambition, though at a smaller scale and with greater attention to regional positioning. Botswana, by contrast, illustrates the risks of adopting a TNE strategy without comparable capital investment, clearly defined quality assurance mechanisms, or a sufficiently robust institutional framework to support it. When assessed through the Knight and Hudzik framework, these three cases collectively suggest that the success of TNE in developing nation contexts is not determined by the TNE model itself but by the quality of the enabling environment, including government commitment, regulatory capacity, institutional readiness and clarity of educational purpose, within which it operates.

8. Impacts and Benefits of TNE and Internationalisation

Assessed against the Knight and Hudzik framework, the impacts and benefits of TNE reveal the extent to which current practice aligns with or departs from the principles of comprehensive, equitable and quality-driven internationalisation. Research on the advantages and effects of internationalisation and transnational education continues to develop. The joint survey conducted in 2014 by the British Council and DAAD is the most thorough analysis of the advantages and effects of TNE. Data were gathered for the survey from a wide range of participants, including companies, government organisations, academics, students, and experts in higher education. It examined how TNE affected ten host nations (Botswana, Egypt, Hong Kong, Jordan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Turkey, UAE, and Vietnam) in terms of academics, cultures, socioeconomics, and skills. Access to and affordability of higher education was seen to be TNE's main advantage. This is particularly significant for developing countries with low higher education transition rates and limited resources for study abroad scholarships.

Faculty and students often highlight improved employability for graduates and a greater knowledge and comprehension of global concerns as advantages of internationalisation (University of Botswana, 2011). Mixed findings were obtained, meanwhile, regarding TNE's economic principles and intercultural awareness. According to Eldridge and Cranston (2009), cultural differences present a problem for Australian universities offering TNE degrees in Thailand. It was suggested that Australian branch campuses adjust to the collectivist approach, uncertainty in the culture, and how Thai people do things. Including sociocultural factors in curriculum development and teaching makes sense. Zheng and Ouyang (2023) further found that developing a shared culture in management and quality assurance is one of the key challenges for TNE sustainability, noting that intercultural communication disagreement between Western institutions and developing countries often arises from differing approaches to student-centred versus hierarchical educational structures.

According to the British Council & DAAD (2014), local institutions in the Going Global research gave the commercial advantage of TNE the lowest rating, while policymakers gave it the highest value. While policymakers saw the potential, local institutions were sceptical about TNE's ability to contribute significantly to the local economy. TNE was not thought to improve cooperative research in the host nations, given that branch campuses are intended to encourage research and innovation in the host nations. Additionally, branch campuses are said to have

the ability to lessen the brain drain that occurs in developing nations (Lien, 2008). The issue is that branch campuses have little effect on brain gain when they provide low-quality instruction. It is therefore possible that branch campuses operating at low quality standards may contribute to longer-term challenges in the development of skill sets in host nations, though further empirical research is needed to confirm the extent of this impact. This finding points to a fundamental tension at the heart of TNE impact assessment: the same model that holds the potential to reduce brain drain in developing nations simultaneously risks exacerbating it if quality assurance mechanisms are inadequate, highlighting the degree to which TNE outcomes are contingent on implementation quality rather than model type alone.

According to the British Council & DAAD (2014), internationalisation and TNE have a variety of challenges. Some of these include curriculum content which is Western-centric and not respectful of local culture; lack of official local recognition or accreditation of branch campuses; excessive use of English as the language of instruction (especially in non-English speaking cultures); limited on-campus student experience; and high cost for students compared to local programmes. Among the contentious topics of TNE are quality assurance and certification. For example, concerns regarding quality assurance exist in Botswana, particularly in light of certain TNE institutions' large enrolments that exceed available space and resources. There is a great deal of doubt over the financial motivations of some of the schools due to their quick growth and ambiguous admissions policies. Zhu et al. (2022) further emphasise that developing a shared culture of institutional governance and quality control represents one of the most persistent structural challenges in TNE cooperation between Western and non-Western partners.

9. Challenges and Opportunities of TNE

The challenges facing TNE, when examined through the Knight and Hudzik analytical framework, reflect a persistent tension between the theoretical ideals of comprehensive internationalisation and the commercial realities of TNE implementation in diverse national contexts. There are numerous challenges facing TNE and internationalisation. One such challenge is that excessive dependence on branch campuses may contribute to a decline in the host nation's higher education system (Shams, 2012). Davis et al. (2012) highlighted that the creation and implementation of TNE initiatives for internationalisation may be affected by strict regulations and procedures as well as other sociopolitical and cultural issues. Building on the quality assurance concerns identified in the previous section, inadequate regulatory frameworks further expose host nations to misuse by organisations that prioritise profit maximisation above educational quality. The issue of finding a balance between increasing access to and involvement in postsecondary education and giving top priority to skill development in fields essential to economic growth also has to be addressed.

As established in the earlier discussion of developing nation contexts, the challenge of balancing rising higher education participation rates with the urgent need for focused skills development in emerging economies remains unresolved, and necessitates well-considered frameworks that are aligned with national economic development goals. The numerous objectives and purposes of education, such as the development of a wide range of skills and competencies required for growth, innovation, and entrepreneurship, as well as the preservation of a solid foundation for the production of basic knowledge, which is considered invaluable by universities, would be met by an organised, well-balanced educational system. The traditional implications of higher education in underdeveloped countries and policies still adhere to strict, antiquated structures and their colonial past. Critically examined, these challenges are not isolated or independent problems but interconnected manifestations of a deeper structural tension within TNE: the tension between the educational development needs of host countries and the commercial and reputational interests of providing institutions. When regulatory frameworks are inadequate, it is frequently because host country governments lack the capacity or the leverage to impose conditions on powerful Western providers. When curriculum design remains Western-centric, it is often because the financial terms of franchise agreements give local partners limited authority to adapt content. When quality assurance is weak, it is partly because the competitive pressure to expand enrolments conflicts with the resource requirements of maintaining standards. Recognising these interconnections is important because it shifts the analytical focus from individual institutional failures to systemic structural conditions, and suggests that sustainable improvements in TNE practice will require not only better institutional decision-making but also stronger regulatory frameworks, more equitable partnership models, and a genuine reorientation of TNE strategy toward the educational development goals of host communities.

Consequently, there will be great significance placed on internationalisation and TNE collaborations that not only increase access and participation but also work together to solve persistent local issues in the developing world. External partners must serve as sounding boards for the process, which must be led from the inside. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skill development is one area where internationalisation and TNE

might support developing nations (Yamada, 2018). Branch campuses might collaborate with nearby establishments to further STEM education while also fostering young entrepreneurship, creativity, and leadership. If this is linked to young people's social entrepreneurship and initiated during their formative education, it is probably going to be successful. The available evidence suggests that the advantages of TNE may outweigh the drawbacks where programmes are properly planned, adequately resourced and executed with a genuine commitment to educational quality, though this relationship is not guaranteed and remains context dependent. Reputable TNE programmes may increase the visibility of postsecondary education in the host nation and boost its competitiveness internationally. Involvement may result in the creation of revolutionary policies.

As observed from the previously presented examples of Botswana, Mauritius and UAE, the need to solve issues with accessibility, inadequate participation rates, and the high expense of training overseas led individuals to participate in TNE in Botswana, Mauritius, and the UAE. It is reasonable to say that this had a role in the new regulations that these nations implemented to change higher education. Branch campuses have the power to challenge the typically conservative structures of state universities. For example, the University of Botswana, the nation's flagship school, began to consider institutional visibility, programme relevance, and the quality of procedures and services as a result of the country's new private institutions and their innovative marketing strategies. Additionally, they swiftly dominated the underserved technical and vocational education sector, which is held by private institutions. The credentials were appealing because of their branding and strong marketing.

10. Discussion

The findings of this literature review provide a comprehensive response to both research questions and reveal that the relationship between TNE and institutional internationalisation is neither straightforward nor uniformly beneficial. As evidenced throughout this review, TNE functions as a powerful driver of strategic internationalisation for providing institutions, while simultaneously presenting complex and often contradictory outcomes for host countries, particularly those in the developing world.

10.1 Addressing Research Question One: TNE and Institutional Internationalisation Strategy

With regard to the first research question, it is evidenced that TNE has become a central pillar of internationalisation strategy for higher education institutions in providing countries, most notably the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia. As Brandenburg and De Wit (2011) and Hudzik (2011) noted, the evolution of internationalisation from informal, faculty-driven initiatives to comprehensive, institution-wide strategic frameworks has been significantly accelerated by the growth of TNE. Through models such as branch campuses, franchise arrangements, joint degree programmes, and virtual delivery modes, providing institutions have been able to extend their educational reach far beyond national boundaries, strengthen their global brand, and generate substantial revenue streams in response to declining domestic government funding (Stephenson, 2006; Marginson, 2007; Soontiens & Pedigo, 2013).

However, it is reasonable to say that the strategic motivations of providing institutions are not always aligned with the educational needs of host countries. As Altbach and Knight (2007) argued, the distinction between the internationalisation and the commodification of higher education is a critical one, and the evidence reviewed in this study suggests that the line between the two is increasingly blurred. The commercial imperatives driving TNE expansion — particularly the dependence on fee-paying international students as a revenue source — raise serious concerns about whether the strategic goals of providing institutions genuinely prioritise quality education and mutual benefit, or whether they primarily serve institutional financial interests (Rumbley et al., 2012).

Furthermore, for receiving countries, the findings suggest that TNE has also begun to reshape national internationalisation strategies, albeit in a different way. As demonstrated through the cases of the UAE, Botswana, and Mauritius, host country governments have increasingly incorporated TNE into their broader economic and educational development agendas, using Education Hubs and policy incentives to attract Western providers as a means of expanding access to higher education, developing human capital, and reducing the financial burden of outbound student mobility (Miller-Idriss & Hanauer, 2011; Modise & AvOSEH, 2016; Armah, 2015). Consequently, TNE has become a tool of national strategy as much as institutional strategy, reflecting the deeply interconnected nature of global higher education policy.

10.2 Addressing Research Question Two: Impacts of TNE on Host Country Educational Systems and Economies

With regard to the second research question, the evidence reviewed in this study reveals a complex and mixed picture of TNE's impacts on host country educational systems and economies. On the one hand, the findings confirm that TNE has made a significant contribution to expanding access to higher education in countries where domestic provision is insufficient to meet demand, particularly in rapidly developing economies with young populations such as those found across Asia, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa (Alam et al., 2013; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2006; Mok & Yu, 2011). As the British Council & DAAD (2014) survey of ten host nations confirmed, access to and affordability of higher education remains the primary advantage of TNE for receiving countries, alongside improvements in graduate employability and the development of cross-cultural competencies among students. Significantly, post-2020 data further confirms the continued expansion of TNE as a response to both growing demand and disrupted traditional mobility patterns. Universities UK (2023) reported that collaborative provision, the most popular form of TNE, experienced growth of 10.9% between 2021/22 and 2022/23, while the number of students pursuing taught postgraduate TNE courses increased by 60.9% between 2018/19 and 2022/23, indicating a substantial and sustained shift in how international higher education is being delivered and consumed in the post-pandemic era.

On the other hand, the evidence also highlights a number of significant and persistent challenges that must be addressed if TNE is to fulfil its transformative potential in host country contexts. The concerns raised in this review regarding Western-centric curriculum design, the excessive use of English as the medium of instruction, inadequate quality assurance frameworks, and the limited integration of local cultural and sociopolitical perspectives into TNE programmes are not merely academic criticisms — they represent structural weaknesses that undermine the long-term educational value of TNE for host communities (British Council & DAAD, 2014; Waterval et al., 2017; Eldridge & Cranston, 2009). As Koehn (2012) argued, tackling interrelated global challenges in higher education sustainably requires the cooperation of many players, a genuine consideration of local requirements, and a careful balancing of national and international frameworks.

The economic impacts of TNE on host countries have also proven to be more ambiguous than initially anticipated. While TNE has generated revenue for some host country governments and institutions and has contributed to the development of knowledge-based economies in contexts such as the UAE, the evidence from Botswana in particular raises important questions about the extent to which TNE strategies are carefully planned and economically sustainable in the long term (Modise & AvOSEH, 2016). The finding that branch campuses have limited effect on brain gain when they provide low-quality instruction, and may in fact contribute to long-term skill deficits in host nations, is a particularly concerning outcome that policymakers and institutional leaders cannot afford to overlook (Lien, 2008; British Council & DAAD, 2014).

10.3 Synthesis and Implications

Taken together, the findings of this review suggest that the impact of TNE on both institutional internationalisation strategy and host country educational systems is fundamentally shaped by the motivations, frameworks, and governance structures that underpin it. Where TNE is driven primarily by commercial considerations and pursued without adequate attention to local context, quality assurance, and mutual benefit, its outcomes are likely to be uneven and potentially damaging — particularly for developing nations that are already grappling with significant structural challenges in their higher education systems. Conversely, where TNE is grounded in ethical, locally responsive frameworks that genuinely prioritise educational development alongside institutional sustainability, the evidence suggests that it has the potential to make a transformative contribution to global higher education access and quality.

As the cases of the UAE, Mauritius, and Botswana illustrate, the difference between TNE that empowers and TNE that exploits often lies not in the model itself, but in the degree to which host country governments, providing institutions, and local communities are engaged as equal partners in the process. It is consequently argued that the future of sustainable and equitable TNE requires a fundamental shift in the way that providing institutions conceptualise their international strategies — from a primarily market-driven expansion model towards one that genuinely integrates the educational development goals of host communities into its core institutional mission (Koehn, 2012; Hudzik, 2014; Knight, 2016).

11. Conclusion

This critical literature review has assessed the multifaceted landscape of Transnational Education through the integrated analytical framework of Knight (1994, 2004, 2008) and Hudzik (2011, 2014), examining its considerable and wide-ranging influence on the globalisation and internationalisation of higher education. The application of this framework has enabled a consistent evaluative lens to be applied across the analysis of TNE models, institutional strategies, and developing nation contexts, assessing the extent to which TNE practice reflects or departs from the principles of comprehensive, mission-driven internationalisation. The exploration of TNE's influence, from its strategic incorporation into higher education institutions to its effects on local educational systems and economies, highlights the complex interplay between educational advancements and cultural integrations. The analysis also highlights the dual role of TNE in both promoting global educational standards and responding to the local needs of host countries, thereby contributing to a more interconnected global educational framework.

11.1 Critical Aspects of TNE Implementation and Strategy

The critical review of TNE's integration into institutional strategies illustrates a deliberate shift from merely replicating educational models to adapting and enhancing them within diverse cultural contexts. This strategic realignment is driven by the necessity to not only extend educational reach but also to enrich educational experiences through cross-cultural competencies. However, this review also acknowledges the inherent tensions between commercial gains and academic integrity, which the application of the Knight and Hudzik framework throughout this review has consistently highlighted as the central challenge facing sustainable TNE development.

11.2 Implications for Local Educational Systems and Global Interactions

The impact of TNE on local educational systems has been considerable in a number of developing country contexts, particularly where it has contributed to filling gaps in higher education provision, though the depth and sustainability of this impact vary significantly across different national and institutional settings. However, this has come with the risk of dependency, which could potentially impede local educational innovation and autonomy. The review critically examines how TNE can lead to brain gain by attracting and retaining local talent, yet simultaneously risks exacerbating brain drain where quality assurance mechanisms are inadequate and institutional motivations are primarily commercial rather than educational.

11.3 Research Outcomes and Future Directions

Reflecting on the initial research questions, this review confirms that TNE significantly influences the strategic internationalisation processes of educational institutions globally, acting as a catalyst for both spreading global educational standards and adapting to local educational demands. Moreover, the economic and cultural impacts on host countries appear significant in a number of documented cases, necessitating policies that seek to maximise benefits while carefully managing the risks of exploitation, dependency and educational inequality. The future of TNE requires a nuanced understanding of these dynamics to foster educational models that are both internationally competitive and locally responsive. The review suggests a continued need for innovative research in the development of TNE strategies that are ethical, equitable, and education-centric. This includes further exploration into regulatory frameworks, quality assurance measures, and the development of TNE programmes that genuinely enhance the educational landscapes of host countries.

11.4 Concluding Thoughts

While TNE presents numerous opportunities for expanding global access to higher education, it also poses significant challenges that require careful consideration and strategic planning. The balance between leveraging global opportunities and nurturing local educational capacities is delicate and necessitates a concerted effort from all stakeholders involved. The evolution of TNE is likely to continue shaping the future of global education and will require continuous critical assessment and adaptive strategies to ensure it contributes positively to educational and societal advancement worldwide.

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