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THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EVALUATION AND THE ACADEMIC RANKINGS IN THE COOPERATIVE CONTEXT OF COUNTRIES AND PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

OS SISTEMAS NACIONAIS DE AVALIAÇÃO E OS RANKINGS ACADÊMICOS NO CONTEXTO COOPERATIVO DOS PAÍSES E REGIÕES LUSÓFONOS

SISTEMAS NACIONALES DE EVALUACIÓN Y RANKINGS ACADÉMICOS EN EL CONTEXTO COOPERATIVO DE LOS PAÍSES Y REGIONES LUSÓFONAS

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Abstract

This article aimed, from the perspective of international cooperation, to map and analyze the implementation of national external evaluation systems of higher education (SNAES) in Lusophone countries. To this end, an exploratory analytical-descriptive study was conducted, including a literature review, legislation, and official websites. The study reveals different stages of SNAES implementation, highlights

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Brazil as the only country with national rankings, and underscores the relevance of international cooperation in strengthening higher education assessment.

Keywords: Portuguese-speaking countries. External Evaluation. Academic Rankings. International Cooperation.

Resumo

Este artigo buscou, sob a perspectiva da cooperação internacional, mapear e analisar a implementação de sistemas nacionais de avaliação externa da educação superior (SNAES) existentes em países lusófonos. Para tanto, realizou-se pesquisa analítico-descritiva de caráter exploratório, com revisão bibliográfica da literatura, de legislações e de páginas eletrônicas. O estudo revela diferentes estágios de implementação dos SNAES, destaca o Brasil como o único que possui rankings nacionais e evidencia a relevância da cooperação internacional para o fortalecimento da avaliação da educação superior.

Palavras-chave: Espaço lusófono. Avaliação externa. Rankings acadêmicos. Cooperação internacional.

Resumen

Este artículo tuvo como objetivo, desde la perspectiva de la cooperación internacional, mapear y analizar la implementación de sistemas nacionales de evaluación externa de la educación superior (SNAES) en países lusófonos. Para ello, se realizó una investigación analítico-descriptiva de carácter exploratorio, con revisión bibliográfica, de legislaciones y de sitios electrónicos oficiales. El estudio revela diferentes etapas de implementación de los SNAES, destaca a Brasil como el único país con rankings nacionales y evidencia la relevancia de la cooperación internacional para el fortalecimiento de la evaluación de la educación superior.

Palabras clave: Espacio lusófono. Evaluación externa. Rankings académicos. Cooperación internacional.

Introduction

From the end of the 20th century, national and international measures of external evaluation of the performance of universities began to be seen as a new demand in the context of the intensification of knowledge as a transnational commodity, in other words, in the context of the geopolitics of knowledge and the growing influence the world-class university[7]. This resulted, in the 21st century, in the creation of national higher education assessment systems (HEAS) and national and international academic rankings that strongly influence states, universities and companies, generating competitiveness in the quest to obtain the seal of excellence that these assessments provide.

7 Extremely select model of universities considered the best in the world by the main international rankings, representing about 0.5% of all institutions in the world (Hazelkorn, 2015).

This scenario impacts in the Portuguese-speaking countries, as well as their bilateral and multilateral cooperation strategies, it is called South-South Cooperation, in which they join each other's development interests in various sectors of society, including universities and education in general. The relevance of this study lies in the existing efforts in relations to strengthen cooperation between the Portuguese-speaking countries, whether within the scope of university networks, as is the case of the Association Forum for Higher Education Management in Portuguese-speaking countries and Regions (FORGES, 2022), or within the scope of initiatives between governments, such as the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP, 2022).

In this sense, the objective of the study is, under international cooperation perspective, to map and to analyze the implementation of existing national higher education assessment systems in each of the six countries and one region selected: Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Macau, Mozambique, Portugal and Timor-Leste, focusing on the place that academic rankings have been occupying in educational systems as instruments of external evaluation. For this, exploratory analytical-descriptive research was carried out, with a bibliographical review of scientific literature, legislation, state norms and web sites.

In front of the new context and the simultaneous demands for competitiveness and international cooperation, this work justified itself by the originality verified in approaching it's still an early field of studies on the evaluation of higher education (HE) in Portuguese-speaking countries, as well as its contribution within this partnership to disseminate the evaluation and accreditation process of each country at different levels of implementation.

Theoretical Framework

This topic sought to describe and analyze the theoretical framework of the research theme by discussing the cooperation relations between the Portuguese-speaking countries and the national forms of external evaluation.

The cooperation relationships south-south between portuguese-speaking countries

The new context presented by the geopolitics of knowledge has engendered polysemic discussions about the form of evaluation and international ranking regarding its relationship with the market. However, even with (and thanks to) competitiveness and international's interests, the Portuguese-speaking countries have been forming a space of identity

character with cooperation relations. Among the possible forms of cooperation addressed by Preti (2020), this research addresses the horizontal or South-South, a multifaceted technique used between developing countries with similar problems, paths, challenges, and experiences, covering all aspects of society.

The results of this cooperation can already be seen, with Superior Education in Portuguese-speaking countries registering an honest favorable growth "even though in a different pace and in a different context" (Cerdeira, 2020, p. 91, our translation). Records of this involve, for example, the constitution of fundamental engines "for the strengthening and improvement of the quality of the higher education system and produced science" (Cerdeira, 2020, p. 101, our translation).

Within the scope of national systems of external evaluation of higher education and academic rankings, as pointed out by Nóvoa (2018, p. 08, our translation), "it is necessary [...] to remove the barriers and obstacles to cooperation: the only criterion must be the quality and credibility of the institutions, of their teachers and students". The Portuguese-speaking countries spread across Europe, America, Africa, and Asia form, then, a space that already recognizes and uses international rankings, as partial evaluation tools, within the ideological discourse of the so-called UCM, influencing the functioning and measurement of quality of PRLP universities.

Regarding the dialogue between the Portuguese-speaking countries through the CPLP (2022), its platform highlights the specific portal "Portal for higher education, science, and technology", which presents a strategic framework aimed at "economic growth and social development of Member States of the CPLP". In February 2023, it also held the XII Meeting of CPLP Education Focal Points (2023), which, among ten strategic axes, involved the "Assessment of Learning and Educational Systems" and the "Production of Education Statistics," highlighting the relevance of the study topic.

The FORGES held and continues to hold, in turn, a special session during its 8th Conference, entitled "Academic rankings: implications for university governance in the Portuguese-speaking countries higher education," which resulted in the publication of productions compiled in a book and used here, which discuss the cooperative relationships of the Portuguese-speaking countries regarding the management and evaluation of Higher Education (Calderón; Wandercil; Martins, 2019).

The changes described by the new development strategies also impact Higher Education Institution structures in different dimensions of higher education, seeking to reconcile quantity and quality in its means and results, creating the need to intensify the investment in higher education

already seen to enhance its objectives (Cerdeira, 2020). Therefore, arise this international relationship reinforces, for example, as an "imperative need" (Buza; Tomé, 2019, our translation) the development and implementation of SNAES and the use of national and international rankings in the Portuguese-speaking countries, which even highlight the dialogue and partnerships arising from cooperation (more explicit and direct in some countries than in others, as can be seen ahead, for example, between Brazil and Cape Verde).

Conceptualizing the external evaluation and the national accreditation process of universities

Moreover, about international cooperation between countries, to understand their scenarios, it is convenient to draw attention to the close relationship between evaluation and accreditation, pointed out by Hizume (2019, p. 49, our translation) when differentiating them by their objectives as the same object and placing "evaluation as an assumption for accreditation". For the author, objective evaluation is the investigation, the process, while accreditation involves the "declaration of quality based on the result obtained in the evaluation process", concluding that "accreditation does not require evaluation, but evaluation does not always have accreditation purposes".

In this sense, "the act of accreditation is, at last, to the State, whether by direct or indirect administration or by institutions authorized by it as a result of its police powers" (Hizume, 2019, p. 49, our translation). The author points out that accreditation should be synonymous with quality assurance in front of society, maintaining public faith, and generating, in a certain way, a certification based on the analysis of the results collected from internal and external evaluations.

If it is for, the State has the power of accreditation, based on evaluation processes, far from assuming this role, academic rankingtacs[8] have been revealed as unofficial market instruments, certifying or guaranteeing quality, through their own evaluation instruments, without going through any state approval.

National Academic Evaluation and Ranking Systems

This topic maps and analyzes the implementation process of probable national systems of external evaluation of higher education and academic ranking within Portuguese-speaking countries.

8 Due to conceptual differences, not only, academic rankings have been tackled here, but also, ratings indices, and classification tables that we will call rankintacs from now on. The rating evaluates and classifies the HEIs by concepts or stars, while the ranking hierarchizes them.

Angola

In Angola, in Africa, until the second half of the 20th century, there wasn't HE, which appears after the publication of Decree-Law n. 44,530, of August 21, 1962, which "creates university General Studies in the provinces of Angola and Mozambique, integrated into the Portuguese University, providing for the respective teaching staff, courses to be taught and installation commissions" (Angola, 1962, our translation). As a result of this recent process of HE constitution, the national public assessment of HEIs in Angola is under discussion, intrinsically contemplated by accreditation.

Facing its objectives of approving specific legislation necessary to evaluate HEIs, it created an intervener, the National Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Higher Education Studies (INAAREES) (Buza; Tomé, 2019; Tauchen; Borges; Correia Filho, 2019), through Presidential Decree No. 252/2011, to execute "evaluation and accreditation policies and ensure the implementation and development of external assessment processes". This, according to Tauchen, Borges and Correia Filho (2019), conditioned the country to approve a new Basic Law for the Education and Teaching System in 2016, which designates, among its articles, the responsibility of "monitoring, controlling, inspecting and evaluating the institutions" holder of the Executive Branch.

In an attempt to create a national evaluation base, Presidential Decree No. 203/2018 was approved to establish the Legal Regime for the Evaluation and Accreditation of the Quality of Higher Education Institutions, promoting intervention in three processes: self-assessment, external evaluation, and accreditation (Tauchen; Borges; Correia Filho, 2019). The same Decree, according to the authors, establishes the National Council for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education (CASES) as a consultative body for coordination and supervision.

The authors Buza and Tomé (2019) point out that Angola approved the Legal Regime in 2018, with the objective of conferring, the credibility of all types of HEIs in graduate and postgraduate courses. The Regime Decree combines the assessment of the national context and, at the same time, the requirements of international ranking standards, seeking to consider its particularities and also including the country in world trends. Such assessment is allowed in three copies in the following order: self-assessment, external evaluation and accreditation. The national external evaluation, then, provides an accreditation that presents itself as a viable space to formulate indicators and advance in established a national ranking (Buza; Tomé, 2019). Self-assessment is the responsibility of the Self-

Assessment Committees at the HEI level and is established as a starting point to ensure the quality of higher education (Tauchen; Borges; Correia Filho, 2019, p. 18, our translation).

> In this way, within the scope of globalized political action, there is no doubt that the States need to produce the ordering apparatus of educational institutions and produce regulatory systems, which operate through evaluation. The credibility of the systems and the financing of the reforms are subordinated to the incorporation of educational guidelines or counterparts that transcend the State apparatus. Therefore, even in African countries such as Angola, Cape Verde and Timor-Leste, where public university higher education is recent, the evaluation system of higher education institutions is already imperative and stems from State policy (Tauchen; Borges; Correia Filho, 2019, p. 21, our translation).

From literature analysis of national systems of external evaluation of higher education in Angola, it was verified that there is no type of evaluation through rankings. However, challenged to reflect on the possibility of rankings produced by the country, itself, Buza and Tomé (2019) consider that it is necessary to implement rankings for the future that indicate aspects to improved HE, as multiple criteria and adapted to the country in the challenge of implemented "educational policies aimed evaluation".

Brazil

In Brazil, it was in 1977 that the evaluation of HEI management by the Ministry of Education (MEC) began with the University Reform Evaluation Program (Rothen, 2018). The author complements presenting the creation of the Institutional Evaluation Program of Brazilian Universities (PAIUB) in the first half of the 1990s.

In this scenario, after debates and negotiations, on April 14, 2004, the National Congress approved "Law 10,861, which institutionalized the National Higher Education Assessment System (SINAES), its objective of organizing the evaluation of higher education" (Rothen, 2018, p. 30, our translation). After its application, according to the same page, it was only in 2008 that were drafted the indices to compose the results of the system, "the Preliminary Concept of Courses and the General Index of Courses (IGC), to be instruments for revalidation of recognition of courses and accreditation of institutions".

To the presence of the terms of rankings in the state evaluation of HE, Calderón et al. (2019) pointed out that, the growth in the number of enrollments from 1980 increases the concern with the forms necessary to render public sector accounts in HE. Also according to the authors, Brazil still has SINAES, its has the objective of evaluating HE in three instances and its results, which are: the academic performance of students, HEIs, and their graduate courses.

The National systems of external evaluation of higher education attributes concepts to the evaluated courses with the maximum score of 5, at other words, it ended up incorporating manager aspects into its conception by producing rankings such as: "regulation instrument focused on results [...]; quality inducing element [...]; an instrument to streamline and strengthen the educational market [...]; information transparency tool [...] (Calderón et al., 2019, p. 149, our translation).

Concerning the presence of rankings promoted by the private sector, the authors present that, among many, the one considered the most consolidated and popularized is the one promoted by Jornal Folha de São Paulo (Ranking Universitário Folha – RUF). It also has the Faculty Guide and the Ranking of Entrepreneurial Universities (Calderón et al., 2019). Therefore, Brazil has shown itself to be at the forefront in terms of evaluation policies and also, in terms of the establishment of public and private rankintacs consistent with its multiple criteria for academic quality evaluation, something essential in terms of evaluation and regulation when considering its extension and, consequently, its number of HEIs and students.

Cape Verde

Cape Verde is part of the African continent, and HE emerged in 1979 to deal with imperatives, and urgent development needs, in a context of acute shortage of senior staff in many areas of the country's development (Varela, 2013). In 1990, was approved the first Basic Law of the Education System (LBSE), which generically regulates HE, and were established an installation commission, whose functions were afterward absorbed by the then General Directorate of HE and Culture. It was only in the second half of the 2000s that its piecemeal regulation was carried out with the approval of the Statute of Private Higher Education and the statutes of the Public University, continuing the system to suffer from the lack of a general and coherent regulatory framework.

This scenario and aiming cooperation in the implementation of the Education Program as a Brazil-Africa Strategic Bridge, with a focus on

communication and educational policies, led, in 2011, to the proposal for the development of a Higher Education Quality project (evaluation system) for Cape Verde with a partnership between Brazil and Cape Verde (Tauchen; Semedo; Devechi, 2017).

The first step was to insert internal evaluation in HEIs in order to formulate documents that would serve as a guide to the creation of instruments for external evaluation.

In October 2013, there was a seminar that led to the production of the "Guideline for External Institutional Assessment and Guidelines of the National System of Quality Assurance in Higher Education" (Snaqes) (Tauchen; Semedo; Devechi, 2017, p. 95, our translation).

The Snaqes directives include mechanisms leading to the institutionalization of the Higher Education Assessment System (SAES), involving the regulation processes of the SNAES and courses, together with self-assessment to form a strategic vision of quality related to State actions (Cardoso, 2017; Tauchen; Semedo; Devechi, 2017).

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Therefore, SAES would start from the evaluation of HEIs in two modalities: internal (self-assessment) and external (accreditation and hetero-evaluation), forming a "credible system for assessing the quality of Higher Education" (Cardoso, 2017, p. 155, our translation). For Cardoso (2017, pp. 246-247, our translation), HE in Cape Verde needs "reliable, credible, legitimate and transparent mechanisms that could accurately and rigorously assess the level of quality of the offers made available in the Cape Verdean context".

The SAES implementation process occurred, only partially, during the years 2013 to 2016, but was discontinued due to political alternation and it is now going by restructuring (Cardoso, 2017, p. 40, our translation). To achieve the Quality Assurance objectives of Higher Education in Cape Verde, based on the assumption of Education of Excellence, in March 2016, the Government, to transform HE into a Strategic Hub for the Development of the country, competitive in the global context, based on the tripod: "excellence, efficiency, and internationalization", creates the Higher Education Regulatory Agency (ARES) through Decree-Law No. 121/VIII/2016 with the mission to assure the law and current procedures to be developed through the: "(a) Regulation; (b) Supervision and (c) Sanctioning of infractions within

the scope of HE Entities", as well as of study cycles (Dias, 2019, p. 158, our translation). Therefore, according to the author, one of the strategic objectives of ARES for 2020-30 is "to restructure its Digital Platform, in order to generate an information system for the publication of ordinary reference indicators of quality assurance and to reinforce the sharing of information about accreditation and regulation of courses".

Macau

Macau is an Administrative Region of China, a region in which efforts and educational reforms were massively expanded from the 1990s onwards and put into practice in the last years in an attempt to change pedagogical ways, including "improving curricula, school materials, systems of assessment and teaching methods", with "the demand for the development of higher education is a growing trend" (Nogueira, 2019, p. 14, our translation).

Macau went through changes after being handed over from Portuguese rule to the sovereignty of the Popular Republic of China in 1999, being called the Macau Special Administrative Region and not being considered an independent territory, being under the motto "One Country, Two Systems" (Nogueira, 2019).

Dealing specifically with the educational and pedagogical aspects of Macau, it appears that the accelerated development was also marked by the increase in the demand for more opportunities in education and with a focus on HE (Nogueira, 2019). Its HE, however, does not have a uniform teaching as its located in a "very unique territory" that combines "different systems with traditions, missions, and curricula exclusive to each institutional reality" (Nogueira, 2019, p. 17, our translation).

The Macau Special Administrative Region began to quickly develop its HE under the guidance of the Directorate of Higher Education Services, an administrative institution that implements policies, regulates, and supervises HE, adapting "international quality assessment and assurance systems" (Cunha, 2019, p. 67, our translation).

As of 2018, a new law comes into force that follows international trends to seek to "uniform the autonomy of degree, especially scientific and pedagogical, of HEIs," bringing "a reinforcement of the principle of freedom in teaching and research scientific and reinforcement of autonomy" (Cunha, 2019, p. 71, our translation). To the improvement of local HE, the government has been giving special attention through many official documents related to the "Government Lines of Action" (Nogueira, 2019), aiming to develop external cooperation and development strategies (Macau, 2019).

In the search for educational development, Macau "reveals a system that does not have and never had academic rankings at the level of the territory," but uses international rankings to impact its university governance by aligning its indicators with the HEIs that appear or could appear in them and they still use the results to publicize the institution in different ways (Cunha, 2019, p. 81, our translation).

Macau, as a recent region of China, managed to develop quickly, but still discussing the unification to establish a consistent higher education system, with no discussions about a national evaluation system or the publication of evaluation results through public or private rankings. However, it can be consider that there is some comfort due to its close relationship with the Ranking of Top Universities in China promoted by the Shanghai ranking, adopting its results.

Mozambique

Mozambique, an African country whose independence was proclaimed in 1975, has been quickly developing its HEI for more than half of a century, from its first HEI (Eduardo Mondlane University) in 1962 until 2019 with 53 HEIs, reflecting "a policy focus on the expansion of Higher Education in Mozambique" (Santos; Vaz, 2019, p. 86, our translation). The year 1962, as mentioned earlier, in Angola (1962, our translation), marked by the publication of Decree-Law no. 44,530, of 21 August, that "creates General University Studies in the provinces of Angola and Mozambique, integrated into the Portuguese University".

However, it was only in 1983 that the Popular Assembly of Mozambique approved Law no. 4/83, of March 23, about the establishment of the National Education System, followed by "major political, economic and social transformations in Europe," which allowed for the exponential growth of foreign investment in the country from 1996 onwards, even after internal crises (Taimo, 2010).

About the implementation process in Mozambique of the National System of Evaluation, Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (SINAQES) in 2007, it is noted that organizing mechanisms in the pursuit of quality assurance guided and continues to guide the national agenda and even international one in Africa, combining three subsystems: self-assessment, external evaluation and accreditation (Tauchen et al., 2016).

SINAQES is the system that contributed to improving the quality of HEIs, courses, and HE programs in Mozambique and, together with the National Council for the Evaluation of Quality in Higher Education (CNAQ),

four quality assessment instruments were approved: "regulation of self-assessment, evaluation external and accreditation; map of quality indicators; self-evaluation guide and external evaluation guide" (Santos; Vaz, 2019, p. 92, our translation).

According to the authors, the principles of self-assessment involve participation, transparency, regularity, and incrementality, obligation, and diffusion. The external evaluation takes place to validate the initial self-assessment report. Accreditation, in turn, it, depends on the external evaluation report and has these principles: "objectivity, equality, transparency, regularity and periodicity, and independence" (Santos; Vaz, 2019, p. 92, our translation).

Since its implementation in 2007, SINAQES has undergone changes, in order, to implement a quality and accreditation system in Mozambique (Samussone; Silveira; Lauriano, 2022). However, Santos and Vaz (2019) pointed out that SINAQES could be better used if it were also used as an internal ranking tool, where would be posted comparative, measurable results through a digital platform that is easy to consult internationally, which encourages the competitiveness of companies. HEI and will attract more external students, enabling greater mobility and effective implementation in the country.

As pointed out in Samussone, Silveira and Lauriano (2022) study, this research found a limitation in the search for data, which occurred through secondary sources, while primary data would allow a better understanding of the SINAQES process, its results, and applicability. However, it was possible to conclude that Mozambique is on the way to strengthening its national evaluation and accreditation[9] system, with the use of indicators that influence the governance of universities, this is not in the literature or official documents the result published, in the form of public or private rankings, that classify HEIs or courses, even if there are discussions about it.

Portugal

Portugal has a Basic Law of the Educational System currently dealt with by Law nº 49 of August 30, 2005, with its first version dating from 1986, with changes that reported the need for adjustments at the level of HE due to changes in the political scenario and educational world and especially in Europe (Fonseca, 2019). The objective becomes related to university

9 Argument justified by the publication of Decree nº 61/2022, of November 23, which, through the Council of Ministers, decreed the creation of the National Qualifications Framework (QNQ). It aims to guarantee the quality conferred to institutions through this reference and standardization instrument and now has three years to register all qualifications.

governance, which, as could be seen in the legal regulations, becomes part of "a growing intervention and connection with practice and the place, with the business world and with a visible commitment to quickly and high-quality training. technique linked to the world of work" (Fonseca, 2019, p. 127, our translation). The author points out that the new "supranational regulations" interfered with the political-normative discourse regarding the management of HEIs in Portugal, revealing a certain subordination to the economic sphere.

The creation of the National System for the Evaluation and Monitoring of University and Polytechnic HEIs, public and private ones, took place on November 21, 1994, with Law No. of July 1998, which establishes the necessary rules for the implementation of the global evaluation system with the creation of the National Council for Higher Education Evaluation (CNAVES) (Fonseca, 2019). Bernardino and Marques (2019) say that there is criticism about the lack of minimal information on academic performance in HE in Portugal, which was undergoing changes in its organizational system due to national and international pressures from society.

In this context, Portugal requested, in 2005, a completely independent international evaluation of its HE to analyze "the Portuguese higher education system and its policies and current processes of accreditation, evaluation and quality assurance," also including the CNAVES (Bernardino; Marques, 2019, p. 118, our translation). This culminated in the publication of Decree-Law No. 369 of November 5, 2007, which established the Higher Education Assessment and Accreditation Agency (A3ES), an assessment and regulation mechanism that guides the functioning of HEIs and inserts Portugal into the European Higher Education Quality Assurance System (Fonseca, 2019).

The A3ES was established with the objective of guaranteeing the quality of HE in Portugal through the evaluation and accreditation of HEIs, their study cycles, and the performance of their functions to insert the country into the European system (Guerra, 2020). Guerra (2020, p. 02, our translation) still systematizes that the agency is composed of the following structure: "Curator Council; Administrative Council; Fiscal Council; Consulting Council; review Council; and Scientific Council".

The agency consists of a private foundation, totally, independent of the State, having the competence by law to "evaluate and accredited all courses and all institutions in Portugal" through funding from payments by the HEIs themselves so that they can have their courses accredited, or that is, "no new course can start operating without a prior evaluation, and no course can operate without being evaluated" (Guerra, 2020, p. 04, our translation).

The evaluation processes of Portuguese HEIs were influenced by external contexts. Therefore, the growing importance attributed to the ranking of universities worldwide has also had effects in Portugal.

In the context of the relevance of international assessments, Fonseca (2019, p. 139, our translation) warns that Portuguese HEIs, in general, have been revealing "that they are intensifying their publicity processes for their services to 'attract' students and use their positions in the world rankings for this purpose". Perhaps, in order to become the processes more transparent and contextualized, Bernardino and Marques (2019) propose indicators for a possible Portuguese ranking, then complement it with other relevant aspects for its implementation when considering that they already have a national evaluation.

Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste, an Asian country, as presented by Billy (2019), after decades of internal and external conflicts and disputes, in 2002, the year of the country independence, only 10% of the population spoke Portuguese; in 2008 the Basic Law of Education of Timor-Leste was instituted and only in 2009 was the slogan: "Goodbye Conflict, Welcome Development". Was launched, followed by a National Strategic Development Plan for 2011-2030. According to Martins (2010), HE in the country is not new, considering that its first university was Universitas Timor Timur, created in 1986, today known as Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e – UNTL.

Until 2006, HEIs offered education with "reasonable quality", but it had few resources and lacked of "regulation and accreditation" that would make their quality recognized, leading the Timor-Leste government to develop "regulations and statutes to establish the standards for technical and higher education" (Martins, 2010, p. 41, our translation).

In 2010, the National Agency for Academic Assessment and Accreditation (ANAAA) established as a quality assurance system currently under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Culture (Billy, 2019; Martins, 2010). ANAAA is considered by Billy (2019, p. 62, our translation) as: "a public institute endowed with administrative, technical, scientific and pedagogical autonomy, and its own heritage that promotes quality assessment and accreditation of higher education establishments".

The current accreditation process is carried out in two stages, involving an internal assessment (self-assessment) by completing a form and an external assessment carried out in two phases (Billy, 2019). For the author, the entire process of documental and practical evaluation of ANAAA

in HEIs contributes to improving the quality of higher education, as well as helping formulators of public policies in the country by allowing them to have direct contact with those who apply them on a daily basis and those who benefit from them.

> It is concluded that ANAAA accreditation influences academic quality in a positive way and contributes to the improvement of processes and teaching practices within the scope of academic quality: institutional and programmatic. [...] Today we can say that in Timor-Leste there is a culture of quality in HEIs and of quality improvement, since teachers are more aware of the need to prepare their classes and monitor their students (Billy, 2019, p. 135, our translation).

The country's evaluation process is carried out so that HEIs have their licensing validated for two years (Billy, 2019). In conclusion, the author suggestes for the evaluation process: strengthening continuing teacher education; promoting better training of evaluators; adopting only one language throughout the assessment; recurrently publishing the statistical results of the evaluation; developing skills and increasing the employability rate of students. For the researcher, it is necessary to take measures that increase the information transparency about the evaluation process and apply the publication of statistical results.

Finally, it added that the specific literature about ANAAA and the accreditation of HE in Timor-Leste reduced to legislative documents and the only localized study by the aforementioned author used here, which presented the entire context of the assessment of national HE (Billy, 2019).

Conclusions

It concluded that the recent process of internationalisation of HEIs enabled the formation of more solid partnerships and with constant dialogue in general, benefiting the Portuguese-speaking countries with events/ meetings, partnerships, exchanges, policies, transparency of government information, among others.

Both FORGES and CPLP proved be fundamental for the countries, considering the magnitude and involvement in their meetings, events, scientific publications about the countries and even direct dialogues between the respective governments. In addition, many of its universities and legislation address the CPLP and Portuguese-speaking countries as importants partners in their international collaboration and development

strategies, showing that relations are stronger in dialogue, in the exchange of information/data and in migrations and exchanges, not excluding legislative cooperation through educational policies.

That way, it was found that only Brazil has a ranking process or publication of results through rankintacs, approaching the country closer to transnational competitiveness through the academic excellence. The rest of the analyzed group, although they do not present rankintacs, demonstrate recent solid efforts to build their SNAES, already having accreditation through their States. Only Macau does not have these aspects, being closely related to Shanghai's ranking. The recognition and suggestion of the use of national rankintacs was present in the opinion of most Portuguese-speaking countries authors, confirming the influence of the ideological discourse around UCM in the management of HEIs, as well as the demand for transparent published results regarding academic quality.

It expect that the study will contribute to discussions about the theme, predominantly that countries become aware of other evaluation systems so that it is possible to incorporate new tools that may be useful, as well as the use of national rankintacs. As a suggestion, there is the possibility of a study that deepens this search through broader bibliographic research, questionnaires or interviews, in addition to research that analyzes the relationship between the forms of national external evaluation presented here, involving rankintacs.

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