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Fostering Belonging: Addressing the Challenges of Social Inclusion Among International Students

Social inclusion during studies plays a key role in the academic success and personal development of students. This dimension is particularly important in the context of international students who, in addition to academic decisions, also face a number of additional demands related to preparing for and adapting to life in a new country. Studying abroad involves a number of complex processes, including finding accommodation, learning the language, adapting to cultural specificities, and building social networks. These challenges often cause stress and can lead to feelings of isolation, especially at the beginning of their studies. This research aimed to gain a deeper understanding of what prevents the social inclusion of international students through a systematic review of scientific literature indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database over the past decade. After applying the PRISMA method and eliminating papers that did not fully align with the topic, a total of 46 scientific papers published in peer-reviewed journals and proceedings were selected from the initial corpus of 1,781 papers. The analysis identified key research trends related to the social inclusion of international students, including: curricular approaches to acclimatization, the role of social networks in the socialization process, the main social barriers, and the importance of developing intercultural competences.

Keywords: social inclusion, international students, systematic literature review