VISUALIZING RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL FACULTY MEMBERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CITESPACE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

In the context of the accelerating internationalization process, the focus on international faculty members has garnered considerable attention from researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. This study delves into the examination of 342 journal articles retrieved from the Web of Science (WoS) database spanning the years 2003 to 2023. Employing bibliometrics and CiteSpace software, the analysis aims to discern research hotspots and trends among international faculty members.The study highlights influential authors, research institutions, countries, and identifies keywords through burst detection. Notably, the two predominant research hotspots emerging from the analysis are centered around the themes of "knowledge" and "management" of international faculty. Furthermore, the study pinpoints the top four most frequently cited countries/regions as the USA, England, China, and Australia.This research contributes valuable insights into the global landscape of international faculty, shedding light on key themes, influential contributors, and prominent nations in the field. The findings serve to inform future research directions, policy considerations, and practical implications for the internationalization of faculty in academic settings.

Keywords: international faculty members, bibliometric analysis, Citespace, higher education

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, international faculty members have become an increasingly crucial component of the global academic community. Their presence enriches the academic environment, and they bring diversity and unique perspectives to the global academic workforce(Altbach &

Yudkevich, 2017). International faculty members play an increasingly vital role in the globalization of research collaboration, knowledge dissemination, and innovation. Consequently, international faculty members have become a topic of growing interest among researchers across various fields, ranging from scientometrics and economics to sociology, geography, and psychology in the past decades(Gureyev et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022). This study aims to shed light on the development of research trends in the field of international faculty working in higher education, by utilizing a descriptive research approach and conducting a bibliometric analysis using CiteSpace to examine the volume, characteristics, and capacity of global research publications on this topic.

2. Literature review：An overview of international faculty members in higher education

Since the Middle Ages, international faculty members have flown across borders and travelled extensively for work and nowadays in accordance with globalization and the internationalization of many university agenda, the flow of international faculty members has significantly increased (Altbach et al., 2010; Kim, 2015; Selmer et al., 2017).

International faculty members can be divided into four groups: those with appointments at top research universities like the United States, Canada, and Australia; those working for mid-tier or upper-tier universities in particular nations like Switzerland, Hong Kong, and Singapore; those working in nations with a shortage of local faculty like those from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf nations etc.; and those who have immigrated to a new country and obtained citizenship there. A final category of academics includes those who completed their doctorates overseas and have continued their education there. International faculty members can be found in almost every nation in the world(Yudkevich, 2016).

In the interconnected world of the 21st century, International faculty members are becoming increasingly important for promoting diversity on college and university campuses, which have been increasingly hired by higher education institutions in order to promote diversity, access international expertise, and foster scientific innovation in a global context (Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010), having a substantial impact on the advancement of research and teaching quality in particular (Li & Xue, 2021).

Xu et al. (2022) shows how, in the past years from 2016 to 2021, research on international faculty members in China was mainly concerned with the six major themes；First, many scholars (Huang & Welch, 2021; D. Kim et al., 2011) focus on the definitions of international faculty members, since there is still no agreed-upon definition, study on international academics can produce a range of methodologies, conclusions, and policy suggestions; Second, scholarly investigations concerning international faculty members in China have arisen from various academic domains and areas of study, generating a significant volume of literature on research pertaining to internationalization and the mobility of higher education (L. Cai & Hall, 2016; B. Wang & Chen, 2021),migration research(G. Liu & Ahl, 2018; Zweig et al., 2020), management research on scholarly migration(Froese, 2012; Richardson & Zikic, 2007), the experiences of

international social experts(Heimer, 2006; Klotzbücher, 2014); Third, different methodological methods and definitions of international faculty members in China have resulted in different populations being studied and, as a result, conflicting demographic results (E. C. Kim, 2015b; X. Wu & Huang, 2018); Fourth, research on the motivations of international faculty's mobility to China, the finding is that the main factors driving the international faculty members to China were work-related, specifically professional advancement, long-term academic prospects, and connections to the research community(E. C. Kim, 2015a; X. Wu & Huang, 2018) ; Fifth, studies on the challenges faced by international faculty members in China, e.g., widespread professional and non-professional difficulties(Larbi & Ashraf, 2020; Marini & Xu, 2021; Richter, 2020); Sixth , research on the expected roles of international faculty members, it finds that the expected roles of international faculty members are to improve Chinese universities' international standing and level of research.

Although many scholars have been attracted to the research on the international faculty members, and attain some achievements, insufficient emphasis has been placed on harnessing the potential of international faculty members as a valuable pool of human resources. As a matter of fact, international faculty members serve as effective conduits for enhancing the skills of locals(Fee & Gray, 2020; Riusala & Smale, 2007), there have been calls to carry out more study on knowledge sharing between international faculty members and locals(Aldaheri et al., 2022).

3.Research Methodology

3.1Data collection

To study international faculty members in higher education, and conduct a bibliometric analysis on research regarding international faculty members, a sample of 342 journal articles published in the Web of Science (WoS) database between 2003 and 2023 was analyzed using bibliometrics and the CiteSpace software.

The keywords was confined to educational research areas and management as the aim was to explore international faculty members in higher education. The keywords used for searching article titles, abstracts, and keywords included "international facult*" OR "foreign teacher*" OR"expatriate*" OR "overseas academ* "OR"foreign academ* "OR "international mobil*" OR "research mobil*"OR"mobile researcherA"ND "higher education"OR "universit*"OR "college*"OR "research institute" NOT "student*" . This comprehensive search approach yielded an initial total of 470 articles. Subsequent filtering procedures resulted in the retention of 342 articles, all of which were carefully limited to peer-reviewed journal articles and reviews. This exclusionary approach deliberately omitted meetings, editorials, and books. Additionally, publications originating from commercial magazines and conferences were deliberately excluded to maintain a focus exclusively on the investigation of international faculty members in higher education.

It is worth noting that, given the research's specific concentration on international faculty members, references pertaining to international students were systematically excluded. The selected research time frame encompassed the period from 2003 to 20 September 2023. Table 1 presents the summary of data source and parameters.

Table 1: Summary of Data Source and Parameters

Data source	Scopus
Searching period	Jan.2003 to Sep.2023
Searching keywords	"international facult*" OR "foreign teacher*" OR"expatriate*" OR "overseas academ* "OR "foreign academ* "OR "international mobil*" OR "research mobil*"OR"mobile researcher" AND "higher education"OR "universit*"OR "college*"OR "research institute" NOT "student*"
Document type	"Articles"; "Review"
Language	"English"
Sample records	470

3.2 Research Design

In this study, Citespace software is utilized as a scientific literature analysis tool jointly developed by Dr. Chaomei Chen of the School of Information Science and Technology at Redsell University and the WISE Laboratory at Dalian University of Technology. Its primary function is to conduct quantitative analysis of literature within specific domains, with the aim of uncovering key pathways and knowledge turning points in the evolution of academic disciplines. The dataset for this analysis includes essential bibliographic elements such as titles, authors, abstracts, keywords, and citations for each piece of literature. Leveraging Citespace software, a comprehensive analysis is conducted, encompassing tasks such as clustering, co-occurrence mapping of national institutions, tracking citation co-occurrences, generating co-word maps of keywords, and creating outbreak maps of keyword trends. This approach provides valuable insights into the interconnectedness of research in the field of international faculty members and identifies pivotal areas of focus and development in this dynamic and evolving domain.

CiteSpace (6.2.R2.) was utilized to analyze the collected data, following a series of key steps. Firstly, a new project called "international faculty" was created and the data was inputted in plain text format, including full records and citations. The annual publication was calculated for international faculty to gain an overview of the field. Secondly, analysis parameters were established, such as time slicing (from Jan. 2003 to Sep.2023, with 1-year slices), term source (title, abstract, author keywords, and keywords plus), node type (author, institution, country, keyword, category, reference citation, cited author, and cited journal), selection criteria (top 10%), pruning (pathfinder and pruning the merged networks), and visualization (cluster view-static and show merged network). Thirdly, the networks were mapped out to identify productive authors, institutions, and countries, commonly occurring keywords. Additionally, the research hotspots and cutting-edge areas in the international faculty field were highlighted by calculating the frequency of keywords used in journal articles. An increase in certain keywords was used to assess the development of this academic domain and to identify the latest research trends. Lastly, the

visualized knowledge map was adjusted by using the control panel to present clear and corresponding results.Figure 1 presents the methodological research design.
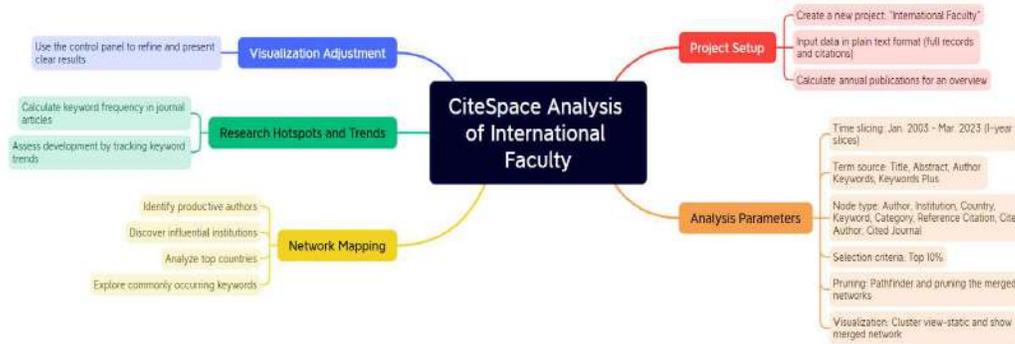

Figure1:Methodological research design

4.Results

4.1 Publications between 2003 and 2023

Figure 2 illustrates the annual publication quantity in the field of international faculty, providing a macro-level view of the developmental trend. The figure demonstrates a general upward trend in the amount of relevant literature produced between 2003 and 2023, with a peak period observed from 2018 to 2020. This trend may be attributed to the impact of globalization and the growing demand in the global labor market for academics with diverse backgrounds, expertise, and networks. (Kuzhabekova & Lee, 2018a; Nevra Seggie & Calikoglu, 2021). After 2020, the COVID-19 outbreak has had a significant impact on both the global economy and the higher education system, travel and immigration policies have imposed restrictions on international faculty, leading to limited mobility(Rashid & Yadav, 2020).
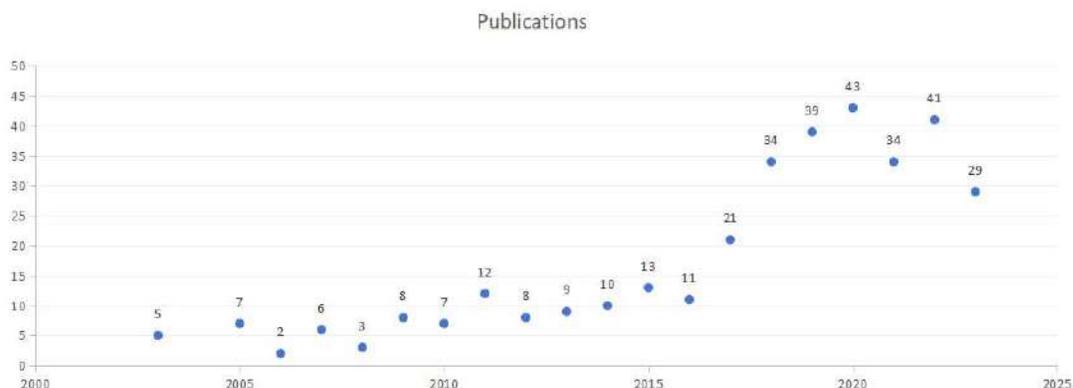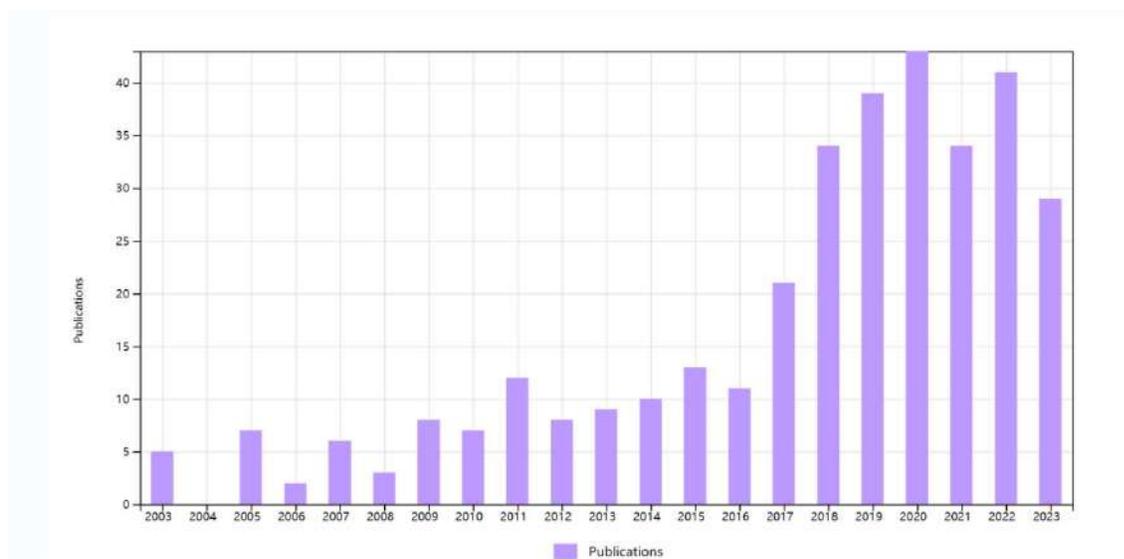
Figure 2 ： Number of publications each year from Jan. 2003 to Sep. 2023.

4.2 Distribution and Characteristics of Research Institutions

Figure 3 shows a comprehensive analysis of the distribution of institutions engaged in research on international faculty members from 2003 to 2023, shedding light on the dynamics of this field. Notably, it identifies institutions that have demonstrated exceptional productivity, defined as those garnering four or more citations in the realm of international faculty research.

The investigation into international faculty members in higher education reveals a collaborative effort involving researchers from seven prominent institutions, the majority of which are universities. These institutions have played a pivotal role in advancing our understanding of this crucial subject. It is noteworthy that universities from Japan, Kazakhstan, Denmark have emerged as the primary contributors, accounting for 23%, 17%, 14%, and respective percentages of the research output. Following closely are the University of Hong Kong in China, the University of Nottingham in Britain, and Beijing Normal University in China. The global perspective and diverse representation of these institutions underscore the significance of international faculty research as a global concern.

A closer examination of the publication timeline reveals a concentrated surge in research productivity between 2018 and 2019. This specific period signifies a pivotal phase in the academic exploration of international faculty members in higher education. During this time, Japanese universities, in particular, made substantial contributions to this field, reinforcing the notion that these institutions have been at the forefront of scholarly endeavors in this area.

The findings showcased in Figure 3 offer valuable insights into the institutional landscape of international faculty research, highlighting both the collaborative and temporal aspects of this research domain. This analysis reinforces the significance of these institutions in shaping the discourse on international faculty members and their contributions to higher education.
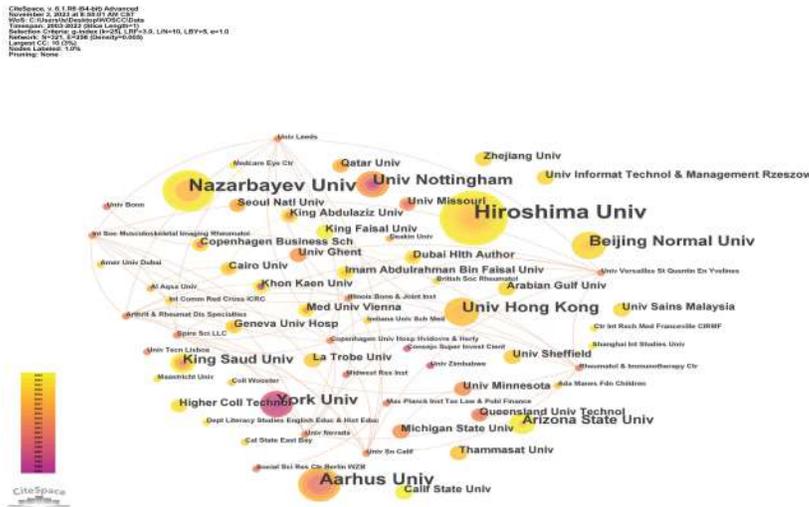
Figure 3: Institution distribution map of publications on international faculty

Table 2 provides a comprehensive breakdown of the top seven productive institutions. Clearly, Hiroshima University, Nazarbayev University, Aarhus University, and York University dominate the rankings in terms of overall productivity. Notably, it is worth mentioning that these high-producing research institutions have not established any cooperation.

Table 2: Top 7 Productive Institutions (Frequency ≥ 4).

No.	Frequency	Centrality	Year	Institutions
1	8	0	2018	Hiroshima Univ
2	6	0	2018	Nazarbayev Univ
3	5	0	2011	Aarhus Univ
4	4	0	2003	York Univ
5	4	0	2018	Univ Hong Kong
6	4	0	2005	Univ Nottingham
7	4	0	2019	Beijing Normal Univ

4.3 Distribution of major countries& regions studying the international faculty

The visualization map for countries where international faculty research has occurred was produced with the aid of the pruning parameter, specifically based on the Pathfinder method for pruning the merged networks. After running the software, the network included 79 nodes representing different countries and 121 links, which indicate the connections between these countries. The density of this network was calculated to be 0.023, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Expanding on this, the network analysis reveals valuable insights into the landscape of international faculty research. The 79 nodes signify the countries where this research has taken place, with the number of links indicating the degree of collaboration and information flow between these nations. The density value of 0.023 suggests that the network is not overly dense, signifying that while collaboration is prevalent, there is still room for further research connections and opportunities for cross-border cooperation.

In the national co-occurrence network, a total of 79 countries and regions were identified. Among these, 11 countries had more than 10 publications, indicating their significant presence in

international research. According to Table 4, the United States led the pack with 68 publications, followed closely by the United Kingdom with 38 publications. China was the third most prolific country with 32 publications, followed by Australia with 28 publications, and Saudi Arabia with 21 publications. Notably, Italy and Japan contributed 15 publications each, while Arab countries collectively produced 14 publications. Canada, Germany, and Spain also made substantial contributions with 13 and 12 publications, respectively.
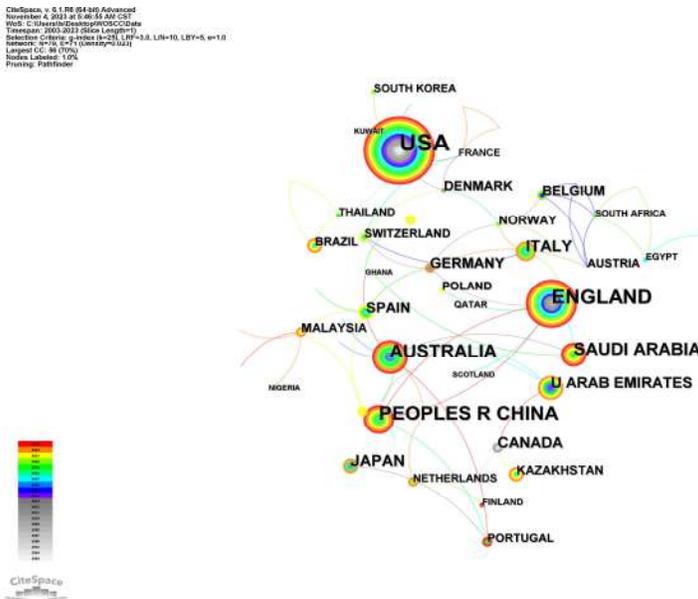

Figure 4 : Map of countries'/regions' distribution of publications, circles symbolize publication frequency, and the circle size is directly proportional to the frequency count. Connecting lines between different nodes indicate that these nodes co-occur in the same literature simultaneously.

Table 3: Top 10 Productive Regions/Countries in International Faculty Field.

No.	Frequency	Centrality	Year	Country&Region
1	68	0.2	2003	USA
2	38	0.52	2003	ENGLAND
3	32	0.08	2012	PEOPLES R CHINA
4	28	0.44	2006	AUSTRALIA
5	21	0.39	2011	SAUDI ARABIA
6	15	0.04	2007	ITALY
7	15	0	2012	JAPAN
8	14	0.1	2014	U ARAB EMIRATES
9	13	0.07	2003	CANADA
10	12	0.64	2007	GERMANY
11	12	0.2	2008	SPAIN

The data provided above reveals that advanced nations such as England and the United States play a prominent role in the realm of international faculty research. Nevertheless, it's worth noting that the list also includes three emerging nations: China, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. The participation of these countries can be attributed to various factors.

England and the United States stand out due to their strong presence in recruiting academic staff from around the world. Their well-established academic institutions and robust research infrastructure make them prime hubs for international faculty research. Additionally, a strong emphasis on transnational academic mobility, as highlighted by Marini et al. (2019), further contributes to their prominence in this field.

China's presence in this list is the result of a dedicated effort by the Chinese government to attract talented international scholars. This commitment is reinforced by a combination of attractive economic incentives and government policies, as pointed out by Xu et al. (2022).

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have also made substantial strides in international faculty research. These countries have invested significantly in their higher education systems and are committed to promoting academic excellence.

Within the realm of network analysis, the concept of "betweenness centrality" holds particular importance. It serves as a valuable metric to gauge a node's ability to connect with other nodes and serve as a bridge between different groups within a network. Nodes with high betweenness centrality scores, typically ranging from 0 to 1, are especially critical in facilitating the flow of information and identifying key themes and topics within the network. Chen et al. (2010) provide a comprehensive description of this concept and its application.

It's worth to note that while China ranked third in terms of the number of publications, its centrality within the network of these 11 countries was positioned eighth. This suggests that while China is actively contributing to research outputs, its level of influence and interconnectedness within the collaborative network may have room for improvement.

4.4 Keyword Distribution of Publications

Keyword emergence refers to a sudden upsurge of relevant terms within a specified timeframe, while keyword co-occurrence analysis, rooted in bibliometric coupling, allows for the identification of prominent drivers—such as technologies, theories, and methodologies—and the evolution of research hotspots within a given field (Chen, 2015). The present study employs

Citespace software (version 6.2.R2.) in conjunction with the Burst Detection Algorithm(Kleinberg,2002). This methodology facilitates the clustering of professional terminology exhibiting sudden increases in frequency across diverse literature components, including titles, keywords, abstracts, and other identifiers.

The integrated approach enhances the ability to discern emerging trends and offers a comprehensive understanding of dynamic shifts in research focus over time. The precision afforded by Citespace and the Burst Detection Algorithm enables the identification of key terms experiencing significant frequency bursts. By scrutinizing these bursts across various literature components, insights emerge regarding the evolving landscape of research themes, pinpointing noteworthy developments and focal points within the scholarly discourse. This nuanced exploration contributes to a more informed discussion on the trajectory of research in the studied field.

To preserve generality, this article exclusively focuses on 342 English-language papers from the WOS core database for keyword extraction and analysis. Synonymous keyword nodes were merged, with a minimum time span set at 2 years, a state transition value of 0.5, and a state difference ratio of 2. As a result, the top 24 keywords with the highest highlighting intensity were identified. The temporal distribution of these top 24 highlighted keywords (from 2008 to 2023) is illustrated in Figure 6, depicting the emergence time and duration of these keywords. The co-occurrence network of the first 13 highlighted keywords (from 2003 to 2023) is presented in Figure 5, where font size represents highlighting intensity, and node circle size represents word frequency. According to the highlighting results, keywords with an intensity exceeding 4 include "knowledge" (4.34) and "management" (4.04).

By reading the relevant literature, it is found that the keyword "knowledge" holds a prominent position in the research on international faculty, with an intensity surpassing 4. This research primarily focuses on various aspects, including how international faculty generate new knowledge in cross-cultural environments, the transfer of knowledge through academic mobility across different locations and institutions, and how early career choices shape their development in the realm of knowledge. Additionally, the study delves into how international faculty effectively manage and share knowledge, as well as the impact of this knowledge within the international education domain on societal and economic development(Gao&Liu, 2021; A. et al. 2023; E. et al. 2019).

When researching international faculty, about the keyword "management", scholars focus on how to effectively manage this group, with some studies specifically addressing the challenges and issues associated with managing expatriate academics in the context of international branch campuses. For instance, the research conducted by Wilkins and Neri (2019) concentrates on identifying the challenges faced by the management of expatriate academics in international branch campuses. Studies in this field typically encompass various aspects, including cultural adaptation, leadership and management styles, social support and networks, career development opportunities, and cross-cultural communication.

Keywords with a highlighting duration of over 5 years include "model" (2008 to 2013), "foreign-born" (2011 to 2018), and "internationalization" (2013 to 2018). The keyword "model" spanning from 2008 to 2013 suggests a period during which significant attention was given to the development and application of various models. Researchers during this timeframe explored and refined theoretical frameworks or practical models for understanding and improving aspects related to international faculty(Selmer & Lauring, 2011).The keyword "foreign-born" from 2011 to 2018 points to an extended period of interest in individuals born in a country other than the one they are currently residing in. This duration suggests a focus on the experiences, challenges, and contributions of foreign-born individuals, potentially including international faculty in the context of higher education. Research during this timeframe delved into the impact of being foreign-born on career trajectories, cross-cultural interactions, and overall integration into academic settings, e.g. Kim, Wolf-Wendel, & Twombly(2011)investigates the impact of foreign-born status on the productivity of faculty members. The key findings indicate that foreign-born, foreign-educated faculty exhibit significantly higher levels of productivity compared to their U.S. counterparts. Besides,internationalization also is a keyword when researching on international faculty. The presence and quantity of international faculty members are often regarded as crucial indicators in assessing the degree of internationalization at universities(Tight, 2022).

Figure 5: Top 13 keywords network (from 2003 to 2023)

Table 4：Top 13 keywords in International Faculty Field.

Frequency	Centrality	Year	Keywords
58	0. 1	2003	higher education
44	0. 03	2005	international mobility
27	0	2017	impact
26	0. 06	2012	science
25	0. 04	2015	migration
24	0. 01	2016	university
23	0. 21	2013	performance
22	0. 09	2003	knowledge
21	0. 45	2006	adjustment
21	0. 06	2011	experience
21	0	2009	international faculty
20	0. 21	2008	brain drain
20	0. 02	2017	work

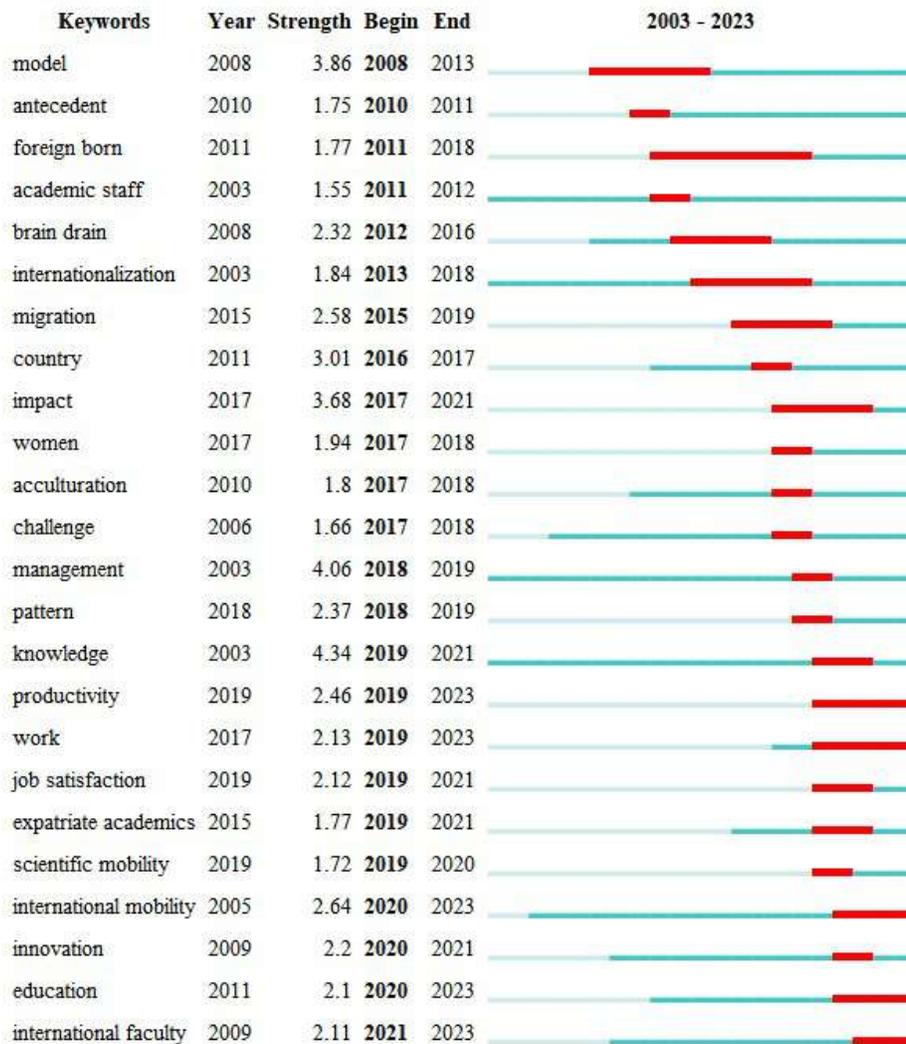## Top 24 Keywords with the Strongest Citation Bursts

Keywords	Year	Strength	Begin	End	2003 – 2023
model	2008	3.86	2008	2013	
antecedent	2010	1.75	2010	2011	
foreign born	2011	1.77	2011	2018	
academic staff	2003	1.55	2011	2012	
brain drain	2008	2.32	2012	2016	
internationalization	2003	1.84	2013	2018	
migration	2015	2.58	2015	2019	
country	2011	3.01	2016	2017	
impact	2017	3.68	2017	2021	
women	2017	1.94	2017	2018	
acculturation	2010	1.8	2017	2018	
challenge	2006	1.66	2017	2018	
management	2003	4.06	2018	2019	
pattern	2018	2.37	2018	2019	
knowledge	2003	4.34	2019	2021	
productivity	2019	2.46	2019	2023	
work	2017	2.13	2019	2023	
job satisfaction	2019	2.12	2019	2021	
expatriate academics	2015	1.77	2019	2021	
scientific mobility	2019	1.72	2019	2020	
international mobility	2005	2.64	2020	2023	
innovation	2009	2.2	2020	2021	
education	2011	2.1	2020	2023	
international faculty	2009	2.11	2021	2023	

Figure 6：Top 24 keywords with the strongest citation bursts (from 2003 to 2023)

4.5 Co-authorship network

The co-authorship network graph for Figure 7 depicts 428 nodes and 541 edges, signifying the presence of 428 authors and 541 collaborative relationships. Node and font sizes are positively correlated with the authors' level of activity and publication output. The edges represent collaborative relationships between authors. By examining node size, node rings, edges, and edge thickness, one can visually discern the total publication output of each author, their annual publication rates, as well as the strength of collaborative relationships and the years of collaboration with other authors.From Figure 4, it can be observed that in recent years, scholars, with Kuzhabekova Aliya at the core, have been notably active and productive. The overall network structure appears relatively scattered, with few connections between authors. Only a limited number of simple closed or linear structures are evident, making it challenging to form intricate network patterns. Most authors engage in independent research, and a widespread, stable mechanism for academic research collaboration has yet to be established in the academic community. Kuzhabekova, A. (2018) concluded that International faculty contribute to local research capacity building by expanding knowledge, conducting relevant research, broadening dissemination, and integrating the university into global research networks. But also she found out that there is a lack of collaboration between international faculty and local faculty, which is problematic for the research capacity of most of the research cadre in Kazakhstan(Kuzhabekova, A.,2020)
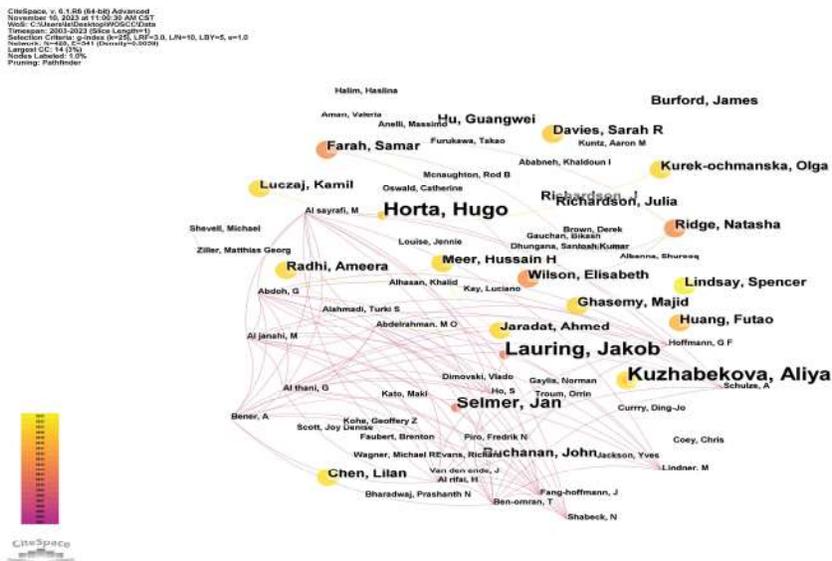

Figure 7: Co-authorship network

Table5:Top 4 Productive authors (Frequency ≥ 3).

No.	Frequency	Year	Author
1	4	2013	Horta, Hugo
2	4	2011	Lauring, Jakob
3	4	2018	Kuzhabekova, Aliya
4	3	2011	Selmer, Jan

5.Conclusions

In this research, CiteSpace was used to examine the current state and emerging trends in international faculty studies. A total of 342 papers published between 2003 and 2023 were collected from WoSCC. Temporal distribution, institution, country, keywords and author networks were created to identify the most productive institutions , countries/regions. In addition, keywords network was generated to identify research hotspots and frontiers, based on the bibliometric analysis of literature on international faculty members, findings are observed in the following:

First, in the area of research on international faculty members, the figure illustrates an overall increasing trend in the volume of relevant literature produced from 2003 to 2023, with a peak period observed between 2018 and 2020. Since 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the global economy and higher education system. Travel and immigration policies have imposed restrictions on international faculty members, resulting in limited academic mobility(Rashid & Yadav, 2020).

Second, Hiroshima University was identified as the most productive institution, while the top four most frequently cited countries/regions were the USA, England, China, and Australia, which indicates their significant research productivity in the field of international faculty.

Third, the top two research hotspots identified were "knowledge," "management " of international faculty. This reflects the increasing interest in international faculty's management, and knowledge transfer. Moreover, the top 24 keywords with the strongest citation bursts indicate that international faculty members in education has been receiving more attention in recent years.

Four, In recent years, there has been a surge in scholarly activity, particularly exemplified by the notable and productive contributions of scholars such as Kuzhabekova Aliya. It is worth mentioning that a significant portion of authors is actively engaged in independent research endeavors. Notably, despite this individual focus, there appears to be a lack of a widely established and stable mechanism for fostering academic research collaboration within the scholarly community.

In light of the aforementioned findings, it is evident that international faculty is poised to continue as a focal point in future academic discourse. This is attributed to the escalating cultural, economic, and political interconnectedness on a global scale. Consequently, there is a discernible imperative for additional research on international faculty members, a call that extends to researchers and scholars in the realm of higher education.

Specifically, given the expanding scope of internationalization within higher education and the pivotal role played by academics in generating and disseminating systematic knowledge globally, there exists a critical need to address the current dearth of studies focusing on researchers,

scholars, and academics within higher education institutions. As the landscape of academia evolves amidst increasing globalization, understanding the dynamics and challenges faced by international faculty becomes instrumental not only for academic institutions but also for policymakers and practitioners navigating the intricacies of higher education on a global scale. This imperative underscores the importance of fostering a robust body of research to inform practices, policies, and collaborative initiatives that can enhance the experiences and contributions of international faculty in the evolving academic landscape.

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