



Internationalization Of Higher Education In Egypt: Historical Development, Rationales, Levels and Challenges

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Abstract: The Internationalization Of Higher Education is one of the important issues in the higher education sector, and many countries around the world are paying more attention to this issue and making considerable efforts to develop and activate it optimally, as it has many advantages at both the university and the country level. It contributes to the development of the higher education sector, improving its quality, and enhancing the ranking of universities in various international rankings, as well as producing graduates with global specifications capable of keeping pace with the requirements of the global labor market. It also significantly contributes to increasing the soft power of countries. Based on this, the current research aims to identify the historical development of internationalization in Egypt, as well as the most important justifications and levels of internationalization and the most important challenges and obstacles facing internationalization in Egypt. The research concluded by setting a set of recommendations that may help overcome these obstacles and develop the internationalization of higher education in Egypt.

Keywords:

Internationalization of Higher Education, The Historical Development, Rationales, levels of Internationalization in Egypt.

Introduction

The world today is witnessing a set of critical challenges and changes at the national, regional, and global levels, which are affecting various aspects of social, economic, and political life. Some of the manifestations of these changes include the overwhelming effects of globalization, the increasing importance of knowledge as the primary driver of social development, the information and technological revolution, and the trend toward building knowledge societies and cities. Recently, the Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolutions and their multiple applications have had significant impacts on educational institutions of all types, which has imposed on different educational systems a new pattern of education that seeks to be global and international, allowing them to interact with other cultures without assimilating into them.

Globalization is one of the most important challenges facing educational institutions. It has imposed on educational systems the need to create new forms of education, including distance education and training, virtual universities, e-learning, and lifelong learning. It has also required higher education to provide students with the requisite skills to flourish in a world that is defined by market globalization, thereby enabling them to secure employment in an open job market in any country worldwide (Hilal & Nassar, 2012).

The rise of the knowledge society and economy has resulted in significant institutional transformations within university education systems, encompassing both breadth and variety, including shifts in administrative practices and cultures, strategies, and the state's role. The increasing competition for talent and resources both nationally and internationally, alongside the development of quality and accreditation classifications for higher education institutions, has compelled them to prioritize policies and practices aimed at improving their global university rankings (Abdel Hamid, 2016).

The universities have been prompted to seek continuous development and renewal in an era characterized by rapid evolution and change, where challenges and variables are increasing day by day. This is in order to achieve quality in the educational process, market their educational services better globally, and produce graduates with international specifications that keep pace with the requirements of the international job market. This leads to an increase in the competitiveness of universities and an enhancement of their academic standing among the world's universities.

The third millennium is witnessing an intensification of competition between universities globally to capture the largest possible share of profits and attract the largest number of "customers in the global university education market." Since the mid-1990s, there has been a trend towards the formation of a global academic community, in which the interconnectedness between students, researchers, and professors at the global level is increasing, transcending geographical, national, and cultural boundaries (Ali, 2016).

This has led universities in different countries to pay more attention to the issue of internationalization and to apply new and diverse strategies and formulas to further internationalize their educational and community activities, placing it high on their list of priorities to keep pace with the world's leading universities.

Internationalization of higher education is defined as "the process of integrating the international dimension into the university's functions of teaching, research, and service, which is achieved through a variety of strategies, including: encouraging students to study abroad, promoting cooperation with foreign universities, establishing international educational centers, integrating international knowledge into curricula, and promoting the publication of scientific research in international journals" (Lin & Yang, 2015). It is also defined as "the process of change in national university institutions, and the transition to the ranks of internationally distinguished university institutions, in a way that leads to the inclusion of the international dimension in all aspects of their management, in order to improve the quality of education and learning and achieve the required competencies." Internationalization is based on the assumption that it improves the institution's capabilities in terms of education and research, and an attempt to reach globalization to attract well-qualified foreign and local students. (Márquez & Bondar, 2012). One of the most widely recognized definitions of the internationalization of higher education among researchers is provided by Jane Knight who stated that "The process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight, 2003).

The forms and strategies of internationalization are diverse, as it is not done in all university institutions with a single approach or strategy, but rather its approaches, strategies, and justifications are varied, which may differ from one university to another, and even within the same university, depending on the desired goals. However, the common denominator among the various university institutions is that it is based on cooperation, partnership, and coordination at various levels: (nationally, sectorally, and institutionally, internally and externally, regionally and internationally) (Abdel Hamid, 2016).

University internationalization activities have been classified into three successive generations; the first generation represents student and faculty mobility, followed by the second generation, which includes program mobility (twinning, joint degrees, distance education), as well as provider mobility (branch campuses, virtual universities), while the third generation includes education hubs (student hub, talent hub, knowledge and innovation hub). (Knight, 2014).

Many universities around the world have taken the initiative to implement these forms and strategies in their various forms and types, starting from student and faculty mobility, which is one of the most prevalent forms of internationalization, to the transformation of the entire state into an international educational center or into several educational centers; to attract students and talented individuals from all over the world and contribute to the production and marketing of knowledge around the world.

Internationalization is considered a key criterion in most global university rankings. The Shanghai Ranking focuses on international publications and the number of publications in leading international journals, as well as the number of graduates who have won prestigious global awards such as the Nobel Prize and Fields Medal (Shanghai Ranking, 2024). The Webometrics Ranking considers international electronic publishing (RANKING WEB OF UNIVERSITIES, 2024); while the QS Ranking examines international publishing, the ratio of international to local faculty, and the ratio of international to local students (QS Top Universities, 2024). The Times Higher Education Ranking is also concerned with the proportion of international students and faculty, as well as international collaboration activities (THE World University Rankings, 2024).

Internationalization helps to bridge the gaps between different education systems and fosters diversity in educational institutions. It assists students in learning about the cultures of other nations, expressing their own country, culture, and issues, while also gaining an understanding of the host country's culture and policies. This can increase the attractiveness of the host country upon the student's return home. Internationalization is a key indicator of higher education quality and can strengthen a country's soft power. (Bieber & Martens, 2011). Therefore, the focus on internationalizing higher education in Egypt is crucial, as it can significantly improve the rankings of Egyptian universities among the world's leading institutions, while also enhancing and reinforcing Egypt's soft power.

Driven by the importance of internationalizing higher education for the world and the Arab Republic of Egypt in particular, as it plays a crucial role in developing and reforming higher education, improving its quality, marketing educational services, and producing graduates with global specifications to keep pace with the global labor market, as well as its role in exchanging cultures and strengthening the country's soft power, this article aims to explore the historical development of the internationalization of higher education in Egypt, as well as to identify the justifications for internationalization in Egypt, the levels of internationalization of higher education in the Arab Republic of Egypt, and to identify the most important challenges facing internationalization in Egypt.

2.1 The Historical Development of Internationalization of Higher Education in the Arab Republic of Egypt

The history of Egyptian university education and the internationalization of higher education can be traced back over 7,000 years. This evolution can be divided into several key stages.

The earliest stage was the establishment of the University of "On" (Heliopolis or Ain Shams in hieroglyphics) in ancient Egyptian times, over 5,000 years ago (Ain Shams University, 2022). This ancient university was widely renowned and was an important center of knowledge and learning. Notable graduates from this university include "Imhotep," the chief engineer, and "Akhenaten" the proponent of monotheism. Prominent Greek thinkers such as "Plato" and "Euclid" even visited this university during their travels to Egypt and attended lectures by its priestly faculty (Ain Shams University, 2022).

The second stage was the establishment of the Library of Alexandria in 320 BC (Fayiz, 2001). This became a cradle of science and scholarly research, with a library that was the greatest of its era. Alexandria was a global cultural center, attracting scholars and students from all corners of the known world, rivaling the fame of Athens. The Ptolemaic kings enriched the Library of Alexandria with around 700,000 papyrus scrolls of Greek, Egyptian, Hebrew, and other works. Scholars and poets from various nations and ethnicities, including Greeks, Egyptians, Indians, Persians, and Jews, flocked to Alexandria, making it a true intellectual university that deserved to be a beacon on the path of human thought throughout history (Mohamed, 2004).

The third stage in the history of Egyptian university education and the internationalization of higher education was the establishment of Al-Azhar Mosque as a major Islamic university and center of learning over a thousand years ago, during the Islamic era under the Fatimid Caliphate. Al-Azhar became a university for the entire Islamic world and, indeed, the world at large. At that time, Egypt became the sole destination and the

desired place that scholars and students from all regions sought to visit. This era was described by Orientalists as the "Golden Age" (Abul-Ayoun, 1949).

The activities of internationalization up to this point were represented in simple and individual practices, where individuals would travel from one country to another to receive knowledge, with no clear and explicit direction from the government towards internationalization. It was done in a simple and spontaneous manner.

The fourth stage occurred during the reign of Muhammad Ali, the founder of modern Egypt (1770-1849 AD). Egyptians became aware of the scientific and technological gap between Ottoman Egypt and European France during the French occupation of Egypt (1798-1801 AD). Muhammad Ali opened up to the West by sending some of Egypt's elite to study in Europe and bringing in a number of Western scholars to participate in building the modern state through education. During his reign, Egypt adopted the modern Western education system, and he established a number of schools that taught modern Western sciences. The Egyptian scholars showed remarkable interest in translation (Abdel-Karim, 1938).

This step was the beginning of the state's awareness of the process of internationalization and its role in developing Egyptian education, sending students on official missions to receive education abroad, and bringing in scholars from abroad to contribute to the renaissance of Egyptian education.

At the beginning of the 20th century in 1908, the National University was opened and sent scientific missions to Europe, whose members returned to take up the task of teaching there. It also invited a large number of European university professors who, together with a group of Egyptian professors, organized studies in history, Arabic literature, philosophy, and economics (Abdel-Zahir, 2018).

The fifth stage in the history of Egyptian university education and the internationalization of higher education came after the 1952 revolution. Since the July 1952 revolution, the Ministry of Public Education has been concerned with cultural cooperation between Egypt and other Eastern and Western countries. For this purpose, the ministry established the General Administration of Culture to monitor Western cultural cooperation and Eastern cultural cooperation, with the aim of achieving the goals of cultural cooperation between Egypt and other countries of the East and West in terms of the exchange of professors, books, and research, acceptance of students, sending educational missions, participating in international conferences and seminars, and establishing cultural institutes and centers (Abdel-Fattah, 2016). The General Administration of Culture was a positive beginning for the transition to new forms of international cooperation between Egypt and the countries of the East and West, instead of limiting it to student mobility and the mobility of faculty members.

In 1972, the Egyptian University Organization Law was issued, with Article 1 of Law No. (49 of 1972) defining the role of universities in serving the community, advancing thought and scientific progress, developing human values, and providing the country with specialists, technicians, and experts in various fields. Universities were also tasked with reviving Arab civilization, the historical heritage of the Egyptian people, and their original traditions, as well as maintaining a high level of religious, moral, and national education, and strengthening cultural and scientific ties with other universities and Arab and foreign scientific institutions (Bakry, 2006).

In September 1980, an agreement was signed for a project to link Egyptian and American universities, as a model for joint research projects based on international cooperation in Egypt. Under this agreement, an amount of \$27.5 million was allocated to establish scientific and research links between universities in the two countries, with the aim of contributing to the treatment of obstacles to production and development, and the preparation of scientific cadres for Egyptian universities and research institutes (Abdel-Fattah, 2016).

Then, in the 1990s, within the framework of UNESCO's interest in developing the international academic movement in the field of higher education, UNESCO funded the establishment of a visiting professor chair in the field of environment and energy at the Institute of Graduate Studies at the University of Alexandria in 1995 (The Arab Republic of Egypt, 2000).

The sixth stage in the history of the internationalization of higher education in Egypt came during the 21st century up to the present day. In the early 21st century, there were numerous attempts to develop higher education, including the Strategic Plan for the Development of the Higher Education System launched in 2000. This plan included twenty-five projects that crystallized the present and future vision for the university, one of which was the nineteenth project, which focused on how to develop scientific and research exchange and cooperation with foreign higher education institutions and benefit from Egyptian scientists abroad (The Ministry of Higher Education, 2002). This plan was implemented in three phases: a short-term plan from 2000 to 2002, a medium-term plan from 2000 to 2007, and a long-term plan from 2000 to 2017 (the Ministry of Higher Education's website, 2024).

In February 2016, Egypt's Vision 2030 was developed, which included several main axes, including education. Based on this, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research developed the National Strategy for the Development of Higher Education 2030, which identified 16 main tracks for the development of higher education, including internationalization. The plan set a set of strategic objectives in the field of internationalization, including expanding partnership programs with distinguished foreign universities, encouraging the exchange of faculty members with foreign universities, and attracting foreign students to study in Egypt (The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2016).

Currently, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is seeking to achieve a distinguished leap in the field of higher education internationalization within seven years. This includes establishing branches of prestigious foreign universities in the New Administrative Capital, such as the branch of the British University of Coventry and the branch of the Canadian Prince Edward Island University. The ministry is also working to establish branches of Egyptian universities abroad, such as resuming studies at the branch of Cairo University in Sudan, completing the construction of two branches of Alexandria University in Juba, South Sudan, and establishing another branch of Alexandria University in N'Djamena, Chad. Additionally, the ministry has opened an information center for the United Institute for Nuclear Sciences in Russia at the headquarters of the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology as the first Arab African center. The ministry is also interested in concluding international partnerships and agreements between Egyptian public and private universities and major foreign universities and aims to increase the number of foreign students coming to Egyptian universities by developing a service system for them and providing professional marketing programs to introduce Egyptian universities and educational programs through social media, as well as establishing the "Study in Egypt" platform to facilitate the registration procedures for incoming students wishing to study at Egyptian universities and institutes, and providing transportation and tourism services for them (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2024).

Based on the provided historical overview The internationalization of higher education in Egypt has a long history, dating back to the ancient Egyptian civilization. However, this process was initially quite simple and took place on an individual basis, with students traveling to Egypt. It was not a result of deliberate planning by the state and government, The process evolved over time, witnessing significant developments during

the Fatimid Caliphate and a major expansion under Muhammad Ali's era. The latter's emphasis on scientific missions and the modernization of the Egyptian education system, coupled with the utilization of foreign expertise, marked a turning point. This stage represented the beginning of the state's strategic planning for internationalization and recognition of its importance. Internationalization of higher education in Egypt has continued to develop up to the present day. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has now formulated several strategic objectives for internationalizing Egyptian higher education, which it aims to achieve within the next seven years.

Since its inception, the Egyptian university system has been characterized by its ability to accommodate diverse cultures, hosting researchers and students from various nationalities, and establishing international cooperation agreements with countries worldwide.

3.1 Rationales for the Internationalization of Higher Education in Egypt

Egypt seeks to develop and activate diverse activities and formulas for the internationalization process within its public and private universities. This is due to several justifications, which are presented as follows.

According to (Abdel Wahab, 2012), a set of rationales for the internationalization of higher education in Egypt were identified, including:

- The increasing demand for higher education in Egypt compared to the gradual decline in the government's allocated funding.
- Egypt's lack of a specific strategy for research, development, and innovation, and the weakness of its capabilities in the field of basic sciences, as well as the insufficient investment in the field of research and development. Internationalization may contribute to the development of higher education and the implementation of a higher education strategy.
- Egypt's transition from a stage of receiving foreign aid to reform higher education institutions, to a stage of participation and international cooperation.
- Contribution to the establishment of a knowledge society; the process of knowledge production, utilization, and marketing has become the focus of interest for the scientific and academic environments globally, and the establishment of a knowledge society requires readiness for partnership and cooperation between different countries.

It is clear from the previous statement that Egypt is in urgent need of developing and activating the activities and practices of internationalization within universities. This is due to several rationales, the most important of which is the economic justification, which is the decline in government funding allocated to higher education and the need for Egyptian universities to find new sources of funding and generate income. Additionally, the Egyptian higher education system needs to establish partnerships and international cooperation with advanced global universities to help in finding new ways and means for the development and reform of higher education institutions.

IV . Levels of internationalization of higher education in Egypt

Internationalization of higher education is a process that involves a set of interconnected and intertwined processes, the overall impact of which leads to the integration and development of the international dimension of any country. However, it does not occur at a single level, but rather at several interrelated levels that complement each other. From the researcher's point of view, it can be divided into three main levels in Egypt: Internationalization at the state level; includes the legislation and laws established by the state in the field of internationalizing higher education, which emanate from the law regulating Egyptian universities. Internationalization at the level of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research; is represented in the strategic plan, ministerial decisions, and activities carried out by the ministry in the field of internationalizing higher education, as well as the bodies responsible for internationalization within the ministry. Internationalization at the university level; is represented in the strategic plan of each Egyptian university and the policies or steps it includes to develop internationalization activities and create new activities at the university. The following will explain each of these levels.

4.1 Internationalization at the State Level

Internationalization at the state level is the primary and central level, emanating from the Law on the Organization of Egyptian Universities (Bakry, 2006). Although the concepts and terminologies related to internationalization and academic mobility in all its variations are not explicitly mentioned in the provisions of the University Organization Law, it is possible to derive from some of its main articles the main frameworks that govern many forms and strategies of internationalization, including student and faculty mobility, partnership and agreements with other universities, and the establishment of branches of foreign universities. The following is an analytical presentation of these provisions.

4.1.1 Student Mobility under the University Organization Law

Student mobility is considered one of the most important indicators of the level of internationalization in universities and one of the most common forms of internationalization of higher education in Egypt and around the world. In the face of intense competition among global universities, universities in all countries, including Egyptian universities, have sought to market themselves to attract international students through their programs, global rankings, and the advantages of studying at their institutions.

The University Organization Law clarified the policy for admitting international students in Article 74, which states: "The Supreme Council of Universities shall determine the number of students to be admitted from outside the Arab Republic of Egypt and a decision on their admission shall be issued by the Minister of Higher Education. Their transfer and transfer of their registration shall be by a decision from him. In all cases, the number of those admitted or transferred in each college shall not exceed 10% of the number of students admitted from the Arab Republic of Egypt."

The law also set the tuition fees for foreign students in Article 271, stating: "They shall be estimated at a registration fee of 1,000 sterling pounds in the Faculties of Arts, Law, Commerce, Economics, Political Science, Dar Al-Ulum, and Arab Studies and Education, and 1,500 sterling pounds in the other faculties and institutes, as well as an annual tuition fee of 1,000 sterling pounds in the specified literary colleges, and 1,500 sterling pounds for the other colleges."

Concerning the equivalence of academic degrees conferred to Egyptian students abroad, Article 6 of the Executive Regulations of the University Organization Law No. 49 of 1972 mandates that "the Supreme Council of Universities shall establish a committee for the equivalence of academic

degrees, which shall be responsible for examining the university degrees and diplomas awarded by universities and institutes not governed by University Organization Law No. 49 of 1972 and its executive regulations or others, across various levels of study, and for equating them with the academic degrees conferred by Egyptian universities subject to this law and its executive regulations."

Based on the information presented, it is clear that the regulations governing student activism in Egyptian universities, as outlined in Law No. 94 of 1972, address several key policies related to admissions and tuition fees for foreign students. However, the researcher has identified some potential drawbacks to these regulations:

1. The stipulation that the number of admitted foreign students should not exceed 10% of the accepted Egyptian students is considered a very low proportion.
2. Designating the Supreme Council of Universities as the sole authority responsible for the equivalence of academic degrees and the processing of applications from international students on behalf of all universities reflects a high degree of centralization and bureaucracy. This deprives universities of the right to determine their own admission criteria for their students.
3. The standardization of tuition fees for foreign students at 1,000 British pounds for theoretical faculties and 1,500 British pounds for practical faculties may not adequately account for the varying capabilities and the quality of educational services provided by different universities. This could be seen as a generalization that may infringe on the right of each university to set tuition fees commensurate with its own resources and the quality of education it offers.

4.1.2 Staff Mobility under the University Organization Law

The Arab Republic of Egypt has, throughout its various historical eras, shown a consistent interest in encouraging and regulating the mobility of faculty members. This is evident from the provisions of the Law on the Organization of Universities, which dedicates its second chapter to the regulations governing teaching and research personnel in universities.

The law outlines the rules for appointment, secondment, leaves of absence, and academic missions for university faculty. It also includes a section on the appointment of foreign faculty members. These articles are binding on all teaching staff and their assistants across all governmental universities, regardless of their level or objectives.

4.1.2.1 Secondment, Lending, and Academic Missions for Faculty Members

The articles from (Article 84) to (Article 91) regulate the rules of secondment, lending, and academic missions for faculty members, which express the internal and external mobility of faculty members, and will be presented in detail.

Article 84 allows "the secondment of faculty members for a specified period from one university to another or to perform another job function by a decision of the University President based on the approval of the competent Faculty Council after taking the opinion of the competent Department Council, and the secondment for the entire time is considered a lending subject to the provisions of lending." This enables the activation of the internal mobility process and the exchange of experiences among faculty members in Egyptian universities.

Regarding external mobility, Article 85 of the law allows "the lending of faculty members to a foreign university or a foreign scientific institute at the level of colleges or to work in government ministries in their specialization, provided that the mission is at the level of the position they hold at the university. The lending shall be for a period of two years, renewable once by a decision of the competent University President, and the University Council may determine the lending once again. The lent member shall receive his salary from the entity to which he is lent, but in special cases, the university may pay his salary, and the period of lending shall be calculated in the reward or pension, provided that the lent faculty member pays the reserve for it. He shall be treated with regard to his seniority and the entitlements due to him as if he were in the university, and he shall generally retain all the privileges of his job." (Bakry, 2006)

(Article 87) of the law stipulates that "the secondment of faculty members on temporary scientific missions outside the university shall be approved by a decision of the university president, after the approval of the Council of the Postgraduate Studies and Research Department, based on a proposal from the College or Institute Council after taking the opinion of the relevant department council. The scientific mission shall be for a period of one year, renewable once if necessary. The seconded member shall receive their full salary throughout the duration of the mission, and the faculty member shall submit a report on the work carried out and copies of the research they have conducted, to be presented to the College Council and the Postgraduate Studies and Research Council at the university." The specification of the duration of the scientific mission as one year, renewable once, is considered a short period, especially in scientific specializations that may require a longer timeframe to complete the scientific mission.

As for (Article 90), states that "the authorization for the secondment of a faculty member or their assignment to a scientific mission or a sabbatical leave or a leave to accompany a spouse or a childcare leave shall not be granted until the expiration of a period equivalent to the period that they previously spent in secondment or a scientific mission or a leave to accompany a spouse. Moreover, the authorization for secondment shall not be granted before the expiration of three years from the beginning of the service of the person granted the authorization in the faculty."

This article in the Egyptian Universities Organization Law is a positive step to mitigate the risks of the internationalization process, which are mainly represented in the brain drain of Egyptian minds and the lack of willingness to return to the country except after a long period.

(Article 91) comes as a complement to the previous article, stipulating that "in all cases, the total duration of secondments, scientific missions, sabbatical leaves, leave to accompany a spouse, and childcare leave shall not exceed ten years throughout the service of the faculty member. However, in cases where the national interest requires it, this period may be exceeded by a decision of the Prime Minister, based on a proposal from the Minister of Higher Education, after taking the opinion of the President of the relevant university."

4.1.2.2 Scholarships, Study Leaves, and Grants

Since academic scholarships have been an integral part of the Egyptian University since its inception, numerous decrees, regulations, and bylaws governing the process of external academic delegation were issued during the 20th century. The Egyptian Scholarship Bylaw was issued in 1924, followed by the Bylaw for the Administration of Academic Scholarships in 1944. Later, the Legislative Decree No. 31 was issued in May 1952,

which included the Academic Scholarship System, and its executive regulations were issued in September 1954. This law has remained in effect, with only minor amendments made to accommodate changes in titles and positions (Bakry, 2006)

The key articles regarding scholarships and academic grants are as follows:

Article 1 outlines "the purpose of the scholarship, whether within the United Arab Republic or abroad, which is to undertake scientific, technical, or practical studies, or to obtain an academic degree or practical experience, in order to address a shortage or need that serves the public interest".

Article 2 clarifies "the types of scholarships, which include: an academic scholarship to obtain a degree, diploma, or certificate, or to conduct scientific research; an academic scholarship to gain experience or expertise; a combined scholarship that encompasses both the previous purposes; and a short-term scholarship to follow the latest developments in a theoretical or applied field of knowledge, or to attend specific seasonal study courses".

Articles 3 and 4 "establish a supreme committee, composed of the Minister of Higher Education and university presidents, that is responsible for formulating the policy of delegations, planning them, and determining their purpose."

Articles 5 and 6 stipulate that "an executive committee, chaired by the Minister of Higher Education and including representatives from the Ministries of Higher Education and Culture, is tasked with investigating the country's needs for delegations, determining the specializations and numbers of delegates, and drafting the necessary budget, which is then submitted to the Supreme Committee for Delegations for approval."

Article 7 "gives universities the authority to grant their members study leaves, but only with the approval of the executive committee of the Supreme Committee for Delegations".

Article 14 "centralizes the authority to accept or reject foreign scholarships and grants under the president of the Supreme Committee for Delegations, stating that "no individual, ministry, agency, or public institution may accept scholarships or other grants from a foreign state, university, or institution without the approval of the president of the Supreme Committee for Delegations."

The previous points from the law indicate that the process of scientific delegation in all its forms is carried out within a highly centralized framework, whether in planning and coordination, selection and nomination, or supervision and implementation. It might have been more appropriate for the law to regulate the process of scientific delegation in a decentralized manner, leaving each university to organize its share of missions according to its own vision of its academic needs and social responsibilities. This would have made the process of external delegation more efficient and flexible in its management, and more consistent and impactful in its implications.

4.1.2.3 Appointment of Foreign and Visiting Professors

The law regulating Egyptian universities has several articles that organize the appointment of foreign professors within Egyptian universities. The following is a presentation of the most important of these articles.

Article 118 of the law allows "the appointment of foreigners with the necessary qualifications to the faculty, by a decision of the university president after consulting the relevant councils (the University Council and the Faculty Council), for a period not exceeding two years, renewable". This article defines the entity responsible for appointing the foreign faculty member, which is the university, but it does not specify the qualifications or conditions that must be met by the foreign faculty member.

Article 119 explains that "the university bears the expenses of the foreign faculty member and their family's travel to their workplace, as well as their return travel at the end of their contract. If the duration of their service exceeds two years, the university will bear the expenses of their travel to and from their home country for the annual regular vacations at the end of every two academic years".

Article 120 states that "the foreign faculty member shall be granted a bonus upon the termination of their service at the university, equivalent to one month's salary for each year of service, and if they pass away during their service, their heirs shall be granted the aforementioned bonuses.

From the above presentation of the most important articles regulating the mobility of faculty members based on the law organizing universities, it is clear that it lacks awareness of the importance of academic mobility for faculty members and its role in developing the Egyptian higher education system. There are several articles that need to be reconsidered and may not be in line with the 21st century. Additionally, many forms of faculty mobility are determined in a highly centralized manner according to what the Supreme Council of Universities specifies, without giving universities the opportunity to determine their needs for academic missions and scholarships more than others.

4.1.3 Movement of Institutions and Academic Programs under the Law on the Organization of Universities

The Law on the Organization of Universities in Egypt includes several articles that regulate the movement of institutions and academic programs within Egyptian universities. Here is an overview of these provisions:

Article 2 of the law stipulates that "the creation of new universities or the establishment of new branches of existing universities necessitates a decision from the President of the Republic, predicated on a proposal from the Minister of Higher Education and the endorsement of the Supreme Council of Universities."

Regarding academic programs, an amendment was made to the Law on the Organization of Universities in 2009, which made a significant difference in the management and marketing of university programs. Law No. 13 of 2009 amended Article 189 of the Law on the Organization of Universities No. 49 of 1972, which now states: "The university shall dispose of and manage its funds itself, including contributing to the establishment and support of private universities, or undertaking educational, research, or innovative projects, and other service projects, in order to provide self-generated resources for the university..."

This amended article has given universities a great deal of autonomy and flexibility in developing new, non-free educational programs, adding an international dimension to traditional university programs. It has also allowed universities to enter into profitable international academic partnerships and market their research services.

4.1.4 Regulation of International Academic Relations and Partnerships between Egyptian and Foreign Universities under the Law on the Organization of Universities

The seventh article of the Executive Regulations of the Law on the Organization of Universities has enshrined the principle of centralization in the management of international relations for public universities. It stipulates that "the Supreme Council of Universities shall form a committee

specialized in the affairs of cultural relations of universities, which shall be responsible for, in particular, developing plans to fully benefit from external cultural agreements and their executive programs, and coordinating between them."

Accordingly, the Cultural Relations Committee of the Supreme Council of Universities has been entrusted with the responsibility of reviewing all academic agreements and partnerships that public universities conclude with foreign universities. In addition to reviewing all the terms of the executive programs contained in these associations in detail, it submits its recommendations about them to the Supreme Council for approval or rejection. This centralized hierarchical organization greatly limits the ability of public universities and their autonomy in managing their international academic relations. No international partnership agreement concluded by a university or college with a foreign party is activated unless it is presented to the central Cultural Relations Committee and the approval of the Council is obtained.

This regulatory framework reflects a centralized approach to the management of international academic relations and partnerships in the Egyptian higher education system. While it aims to ensure coherence and coordination, it can also limit the flexibility and autonomy of individual universities in developing global connections and initiatives. The role of the Supreme Council and its specialized committee in this process highlights the significant degree of state oversight and control over the international engagement of public universities in Egypt.

In summary, the Law on the Organization of Egyptian Universities needs to be reconsidered in terms of the importance of the internationalization of higher education and its role in developing the Egyptian higher education system. The majority of the provisions that regulate and govern some forms and models of internationalization are characterized by a high degree of centralization, as top-down decisions are numerous and extensive, which is not in line with the age of information and competitive challenges. Moreover, they do not keep pace with the continuous changes and developments of the 21st century, as several modern models have emerged in the field of internationalization of education, such as the internationalization of academic programs and scientific research, for which no legal or legislative framework has been established at the state level to govern them.

This regulatory framework reflects a centralized approach to the management of international academic relations and partnerships in the Egyptian higher education system. While it aims to ensure coherence and coordination, it can also limit the flexibility and autonomy of individual universities in developing global connections and initiatives. The role of the Supreme Council and its specialized committee in this process highlights the significant degree of state oversight and control over the international engagement of public universities in Egypt.

The law should be revised to provide a more flexible and decentralized structure that better enables universities to proactively pursue international partnerships and initiatives in line with their individual strengths and strategic priorities. This would allow Egyptian higher education institutions to more effectively leverage internationalization as a means of enhancing the quality, relevance and global competitiveness of their academic programs and research activities.

4.2 Internationalization at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research Level

Internationalization at the level of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (The Higher Education Sector) is reflected in the strategic plan of the Ministry, which includes plans to develop and activate the internationalization process, ministerial decisions, and activities carried out in the field of internationalizing higher education, as well as the bodies responsible for internationalization within the Ministry.

4.2.1 The National Strategic Plan for the Development of Higher Education 2030

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research developed a national strategic plan for the development of higher education in February 2016, based on Egypt's Vision 2030, as well as a diagnosis of the current situation and the most significant challenges facing higher education, and the most important opportunities that can be invested in its development.

The strategic plan identified a set of 11 main pathways for the development of higher education, branching into 16 strategic issues, 26 strategic objectives, and 47 development projects and initiatives in Egypt (The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2016).

The plan included internationalization as a main pathway, and the internationalization of higher education services was the strategic issue for this pathway. The strategic plan set a number of strategic objectives for the internationalization pathway, which were: expanding partnership programs with distinguished foreign universities, encouraging the exchange of faculty members with foreign universities, and attracting foreign students to study in Egypt (The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2016).

The strategic plan also identified a number of projects and initiatives in the internationalization pathway, which are Egypt (The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2016): (1) establishing partnerships between Egyptian universities and their foreign counterparts, (2) establishing protocols for academic exchange and international mobility of faculty members and students, (3) establishing some joint Egyptian-foreign universities and opening branches of Egyptian universities abroad, (4) attracting and supporting incoming students, (5) joint research projects funded internationally with foreign universities and with national beneficiaries, (6) preparing requirements for regional and international rankings and highlighting the unique character of Egyptian universities, and (7) developing the cultural representation of Egypt abroad and the secondment systems through government scholarships.

4.2.2 The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research activities

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is focused on the internationalization of higher education and undertakes various activities in this domain. The aim is to achieve the measures related to the development of the internationalization path, as outlined in the 2030 National Strategic Plan for the Development of Higher Education.

The ministry has announced its latest achievements in the internationalization of education. These include the establishment of foreign academic institutions in Egypt and Egyptian institutions abroad, as well as the creation of international academic institutions on Egyptian soil, such as the second phase of the Japanese-Egyptian University of Science and Technology and the German International University.

Additionally, the ministry is working towards activating the operations of branches of Egyptian universities abroad, including the branch of Cairo University in Khartoum (which has already resumed studies), the branch of Alexandria University in Juba, South Sudan (where construction and preparation procedures are underway to commence studies), and the branch of Alexandria University in Angamina (where studies are ongoing, and joint committees have been recently formed to complete the necessary works).

Regarding international students, the ministry has announced the development of the incoming student system through several measures. These include the launch of the "Study in Egypt" mobile application, the development of the "Study in Egypt" platform to facilitate the admission of international students to Egyptian universities, the renovation of the Central Administration building for international students and the Arabic Language Center for non-native speakers, the activation of a fast mail and electronic payment service for student file submissions, the provision of study visas for international students, the launch of a hotline for international students (19064), the establishment of five social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and TikTok), and the launch of the "Study in Egypt" YouTube channel (Ministry of Higher Education, 2024).

Regarding scientific research and international innovation, the Ministry has announced a series of achievements in this trajectory, which (Ministry of Higher Education, 2024).

- Increased international cooperation in joint research with countries around the world, reaching a rate of 53.1%.
- The number of internationally published research papers reached 21,000 in 2020, with an expected increase to over 31,000 by the end of this year.
- Egypt has advanced nine positions in the Global Innovation Index since 2017, rising from rank 105 to 96 in 2020.
- There has been an improvement in the quality of Egyptian scientific journals, with three Egyptian scientific journals advancing in the Clarivate International ranking, and the number of Egyptian journals with an impact factor included in the Clarivate International Journals ranking reaching eight.

Regarding the establishment of branches of foreign universities within Egypt, a decision was issued by the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research (No. 4200) in 2018, forming a specialized committee to examine and study requests for the establishment of branches of foreign universities and university institutions within the Arab Republic of Egypt, and to organize their work and determine the necessary conditions and requirements for their establishment, including requests for the establishment of the university institution, requests for the establishment of the branch hosted by the university institution, and requests for the establishment of a branch of a foreign university (Ministry of Higher Education, 2024).

Regarding international and regional scientific representation, Egypt has witnessed significant progress in this field. In December 2021, Egypt hosted the 14th General Conference of ISESCO (Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). It also organized the Pan-African Conference on Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development in December 2021. Additionally, Egypt won the bid to host and sponsor the 2022 International Conference of the World Federation for Medical Education, among 25 global applicants. Egypt has also assumed the presidency and membership of several international and regional organizations, including the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, and membership in the UNESCO Executive Board from 2017-2021. Egypt has also organized numerous international conferences and seminars, such as the First Global Forum for Higher Education and Scientific Research in 2019, and the 17th Conference of Ministers Responsible for Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Arab World in 2019 (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2024).

Regarding international partnerships and agreements, the Ministry has signed (265) bilateral agreements for government universities, and (93) bilateral agreements for private universities. It has also established a partnership agreement for twinning between Ain Shams University and the University of East London in England for engineering programs. Additionally, a cooperation protocol has been signed between the Electronics Research Institute and the Shanghai Institute of Microelectronics Systems and Information Technology in China. Furthermore, a framework agreement for cooperation has been concluded between the Supreme Council of University Hospitals in Egypt and the General Administration of Hospitals in Paris, as well as a framework agreement between the Ministry of Higher Education and the Francophone Agency (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2024).

The ministry has launched a platform for all Egyptian universities for distance education, which is a unified portal for Egyptian universities to facilitate communication between faculty members and students during the educational process. This platform aims to expand the dissemination of interactive content, activate communication between faculty, researchers, and students, and provide electronic services to the university community (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2024).

Furthermore, the "Idris" platform's experimental launch in Egypt for the academic year 2021/2022 was conducted in order to get applications from foreign students hoping to study at Egyptian institutions and universities. This follows Egypt's 2030 plan and executes the state's directions to improve the system of international students and make Egypt the biggest outstanding educational center in the Middle East. It also seeks to improve the service system given to overseas students and ease their registration processes at Egyptian universities and higher institutes (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 2024).

In the same framework, the ministry's eagerness for a broad international engagement, the Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO, which acts as a link between UNESCO and the relevant state agencies in the domains of education, science, and culture, performs a set of activities.

Based on the previous presentation of the ministry's most important activities in the field of internationalization, it is clear that the ministry is engaged in several agreements and partnerships with some advanced global universities, organizing international conferences, and focusing on the care of international students and providing them with means of comfort. The ministry has taken many positive steps towards developing the system of international students and increasing their numbers in Egyptian universities. It is also interested in establishing branches of foreign universities within Egypt, as well as establishing branches of Egyptian universities abroad. Furthermore, the ministry has launched the "Adras in Egypt" platform and a platform for Egyptian universities for distance learning, which reflects its keenness to keep pace with technological development in the 21st century and to create new forms and patterns of internationalization in Egypt.

4.3 Internationalization at the level of the University of Minia:

Internationalization at the university level is represented in the strategic plan of each Egyptian university and the policies or steps it includes to develop internationalization activities and create new activities at the university. The following is a presentation of what the strategic plan of the University of Minia includes in terms of specific steps and procedures for activating and developing the activities and forms of internationalization of education.

The University of Minia is one of the public universities located in Minia Governorate, which is known as the "Bride of Upper Egypt" in Egypt. Minia Governorate is one of the southern provinces of Egypt, to which the researcher belongs.

At the University of Minia, to which the researcher belongs, we find that the university's strategic plans (2019/2020) and (2024/2025) have identified a set of strategic goals related to internationalization and the objectives derived from them. The seventh goal, which is to achieve an international standing for the university, has set a set of objectives to achieve that goal, represented in supporting the institutional capacity of the university for internationalization, supporting the educational effectiveness of the university's internationalization, and defining the criteria that ensure the achievement of international standing for the university (University of Minia, 2016,2020).

The plan also identified the most important gaps in the field of internationalization and the strategies used to bridge those gaps. Regarding the axis of the needs of scientific research, the plan identified the gaps as follows: undertaking a research product of global level, commitment to global publishing standards, commitment to global rules and foundations regarding theses and research, more participation of faculty members in global research projects and international conferences, exchange of professors and recruitment of global professors, especially Egyptians, and concluding partnership agreements between universities with an international reputation, and activating the current agreements (University of Minia, 2016).

Regarding the axis of postgraduate study needs, the plan identified the following gaps:

- Continuing to provide more support in the field of foreign languages, to enable students to apply for doctoral scholarships to conduct research abroad, which requires rare and unavailable modern tools in Egypt.
- Providing a system for contracting and hosting foreign and Egyptian professors in modern specializations to supervise doctoral students, teach, and train.

The strategic plan set the following strategies to bridge these gaps in the axis of scientific research, faculty members, and postgraduate studies (University of Minia, 2016).

- 1) The first strategy is to provide the requirements for world-class research productivity that can be published in the most reputable international scientific journals, contributing to the addition to human knowledge. This will be achieved through partnership agreements with internationally renowned universities, and hosting global scientific icons, as well as Egyptian scientists residing abroad, for joint supervision of doctoral dissertations, and forming research teams that integrate the experiences of researchers to produce the necessary research to achieve development in Minia Governorate.
- 2) The third strategy includes relying on self-financing of scientific research through a mechanism based on scientific foundations for marketing research locally, nationally, and globally, providing scientific consultations, and supporting researchers by equipping them with skills to compete for global grants.

There is a set of strategic activities that contribute to achieving the previous strategies, which are represented in:

- 1) Developing a program for marketing the research university's products by capitalizing on traditional and electronic communication channels.
- 2) Expanding joint supervision programs by hosting the best global and Egyptian professors, especially graduates of Minia University.
- 3) Supporting excellence in scientific research by rewarding distinguished researchers, and providing researchers with the necessary tools and equipment to produce world-class research.
- 4) Providing the necessary technical support to conduct world-class research by offering scientific missions that enable researchers to use modern equipment and tools not available in Egypt, and benefiting from technicians capable of designing experiments and designing devices according to the requirements of some research.
- 5) Adhering to the standards of evaluating world-class research.
- 6) Identifying the research activities on which the university can focus, which can give the university a global reputation, and in which it can invest the specificity of Minia Governorate.
- 7) Taking the necessary measures and means to benefit from the scholarship programs offered by global institutions, universities, and research centers.
- 8) Taking the necessary measures to make Minia University the preferred destination for Arab and other foreign students for study and training by providing excellent infrastructure and the necessary academic support to meet their academic and professional needs.

The prior presentation of Minia University's strategic plan distinctly indicates that it encompasses numerous measures and protocols to enhance the internationalization of higher education. It aims to produce research suitable for publication in the most esteemed international scientific journals, establish partnerships with leading global universities, augment the enrollment of international students, particularly Arabs, and invite various global and Egyptian scholars for collaborative thesis supervision to leverage their extensive expertise. The strategic plan illustrates a deliberate endeavor to globalize Minia University's educational and research pursuits via multiple strategic objectives.

The above overview distinctly delineates that the internationalization of higher education in Egypt may be categorized into three primary tiers: the state tier, the tier of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and the tier of the institutions. A pronounced centralization is seen at these levels, with the laws and regulations established by the Egyptian government, exemplified by the Universities Organization Law, functioning as the principal framework and reference for the internationalization process in Egypt. The Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education periodically develops strategic plans, with the internationalization of higher education as a fundamental component of these plans. The ministry thereafter engages in diverse activities and projects pertaining to internationalization. The third level pertains to the institutions themselves, each of which possesses a distinct strategic plan, with internationalization as a fundamental element. The universities function under the legal framework set by the state and formulate their strategic plans based on the comprehensive strategic plan of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, thereby acting as the executing bodies for internationalization initiatives. The hierarchical framework, wherein the state establishes the legal and regulatory basis, the ministry devises the strategic direction, and the universities implement the internationalization programs, exemplifies the highly centralized nature of the process in Egypt. The universities, as the ultimate executing entities, are responsible for harmonizing their initiatives with the overarching goals and directives established by the state and the ministry, thus guaranteeing a cohesive and synchronized strategy for the internationalization of higher education in the nation.

V. Challenges and Obstacles to The Internationalization of Higher Education in Egypt

The internationalization of higher education in Egypt encounters numerous hurdles and barriers that hinder its advancement and the prospective advantages it could offer to the Egyptian higher education system. Aisha (2016) asserts that Egypt's endeavors to attract international students and professors remain comparatively inadequate, falling short of the initiatives undertaken by wealthy nations and certain Arab countries. Although crucial for improving Egypt's global competitiveness, these initiatives are frequently regarded as mere policies that the state's budget or educational system cannot easily accommodate.

Moreover, Egyptian universities are deficient in the requisite infrastructure and an appealing environment to support the growing influx of overseas students (Aisha, 2016). The administrative processes and procedures inside the university system and the Ministry of Higher Education are stated to be intricate, presenting further obstacles.

Mohamed (2017) noted that Egyptian universities lack the necessary components to compete with sophisticated and multinational institutions. This is mainly attributable to their lack of participation in international research excellence, the scarcity of resources, and their limited involvement in knowledge generation and sharing. As a result, a disparity is emerging between the competencies of graduates and the demands of both local and international markets, since Egyptian higher education mostly concentrates on local issues, with inadequate progression into the global arena.

Additionally, Ghobour (2018) highlighted various other obstacles, including poor coordination with the relevant authorities to facilitate the procedures for hosting visiting students, a scarcity of financial incentives for faculty members participating in internationalization efforts, a lack of specialized short-term programs for visiting students, the absence of study programs that attract international students, the brain drain of distinguished human capital and scientific competencies to developed countries, the weak utilization of funding opportunities and international partnership prospects, and the lack of a binding mechanism to monitor the research performance of the universities.

Shahin (2020) underscored that the initiatives for internationalization in Egyptian higher education need a comprehensive plan at both governmental and institutional levels. Numerous higher education institutions in Egypt are deficient in the requisite infrastructure to recruit and support international students, and there is insufficient outbound mobility for students, researchers, and faculty members. The acquisition of foreign languages in Egyptian higher education institutions is inadequate, and there is no national framework established by the ministry to enhance the international relevance and global competitiveness of the higher education system.

The internationalization of higher education in Egypt encounters some significant challenges. The issues encompass the absence of a definitive and thorough strategy, inadequate finance and resources, a non-appealing environment for international students and staff, and the restricted involvement of Egyptian universities in global knowledge production and exchange. Moreover, substantial legal, regulatory, and financial obstacles impede the mobility of students and faculty, including restrictive legislation, insufficient incentives for faculty participation in outbound mobility programs, and the Egyptian government's minimal focus on this vital area of development. Although the government has incorporated the internationalization of higher education into its strategic plans and Egypt's Vision 2030, there is an absence of tangible measures and efficient execution to promote the advancement and realization of these objectives. The interplay of these interrelated issues, notably the lack of a coherent and well implemented strategy, significantly hinders the progress of higher education internationalization in Egypt. Holistically addressing these challenges will be essential for realizing the significant advantages that the internationalization of higher education may offer to the Egyptian higher education industry.

VI. Conclusion And Recommendations

The offered overview summarizes the following major topics concerning the internationalization of higher education in Egypt: The internationalization of higher education in Egypt has a lengthy history, originating in ancient times, however it has undergone considerable evolution over the years. A significant transformation transpired under Muhammad Ali's leadership, who prioritized scientific initiatives and the modernization of the Egyptian education system by using international experience.

The Egyptian government, via the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, has established strategic objectives to enhance the internationalization of the higher education sector. This mechanism functions at three primary tiers: the state, the ministry, and the individual universities, indicating a highly centralized methodology.

has numerous substantial problems. The issues encompass an absence of a definitive and all-encompassing plan, inadequate money and resources, an unappealing atmosphere for international students and teachers, and restricted participation in global knowledge creation and exchange. Regulatory, legal, and financial obstacles impede the movement of students and teachers, while the government's focus and effective execution of internationalization measures have been insufficient. Holistically addressing these interconnected challenges will be essential for realizing the significant advantages that the internationalization of higher education may offer to the Egyptian higher education industry.

The internationalization of higher education in Egypt has a lengthy history; nonetheless, it necessitates a more strategic, adequately funded, and efficiently executed approach to achieve its full potential and establish the nation's higher education institutions as globally competitive and involved entities.

Given the several obstacles preventing the Internationalization of higher education in Egypt, a thorough collection of ideas can be offered to propel development in this vital field:

First, the Egyptian government ought to create and carry out a well-funded, comprehensive national policy for the internationalization of higher education. This approach should specify particular objectives, doable actions, and committed financing to remove legal, regulatory, and financial obstacles hindering faculty and student mobility as well as to provide an appealing surrounding for foreign students and researchers.

Second, Egyptian institutions should be given additional authority and incentives to participate actively in worldwide knowledge generation and sharing. Funding and support for cooperative research initiatives, international alliances and exchange programs, and improved international visibility and reputation of Egyptian higher education institutions help one to do this.

Thirdly, the legal and regulatory systems controlling the internationalization of higher education should be examined and changed to simplify administrative procedures, eliminate limiting restrictions, and give incentives for faculty and students to participate in outbound and inbound mobility programs. Along with the legal and regulatory overhaul, enough financial resources should be allocated to enable the execution of these projects of internationalization.

Finally, the Egyptian government should give the creation of a thorough system of scholarships, grants, and other financial support tools top priority in order to draw and keep faculty members and foreign students. This will thus help to create a more varied and dynamic academic environment, so strengthening the globalization of the higher education industry in Egypt. Through addressing these linked recommendations, the Egyptian government and higher education institutions can jointly release the great potential benefits that the internationalization of higher education can bring to the nation, including strengthened global competitiveness, enhanced knowledge exchange, and the development of a more diverse and internationally-oriented academic environment.

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