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# ADVANCING INTERNATIONALIZATION: APPRISING PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE, CAPACITY FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT, AND MOTIVATIONAL DRIVERS OF ACADEMICIANS

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## Abstract

The internationalization of higher education has become a strategic imperative in response to globalization, necessitating deeper faculty engagement in global teaching, research, and academic collaboration. While institutional policies and frameworks increasingly prioritize internationalization, the perspectives of individual faculty members - their knowledge, capacity, and motivation - remain underexplored, particularly in developing country contexts. This study critically appraises the internationalization readiness of faculty in Region VI, Philippines, by examining their international knowledge, capacity for global engagement, and motivational drivers. Anchored in a multi-theoretical framework - including Knight's Internationalization Model, Self-Determination Theory, and Organizational Support Theory - this research employed a document-based qualitative design using thematic content analysis of over 40 policy documents, empirical studies, and institutional frameworks from 2010 to 2024. Findings reveal that while faculty demonstrate growing global awareness and intrinsic motivation, significant gaps persist in intercultural competence, technological readiness, and institutional support. Key barriers include heavy teaching loads, limited access to mobility programs, bureaucratic constraints, and uneven policy implementation. Additionally, faculty engagement varies by discipline, academic rank, and prior international exposure, highlighting the need for differentiated strategies. The study concludes that successful internationalization requires not only policy coherence but also localized, faculty-centered frameworks that align individual motivations with institutional and national goals. Recommendations include establishing robust institutional support mechanisms, integrating global competencies into faculty development, and embedding internationalization-at-home (IaH) strategies to democratize global engagement. The findings provide actionable insights for higher education leaders, policymakers, and global partners seeking to strengthen academic internationalization in resource-constrained environments.

**Keywords:** Internationalization of Higher Education, Faculty Readiness, Global Engagement, Intercultural Competence, Motivational Drivers, Philippine Higher Education, Internationalization-at-Home (IaH).

## Introduction

The internationalization of higher education has become an indispensable pillar of academic development in an era marked by rapid globalization and knowledge mobility. No longer limited to the movement of students and faculty across borders, internationalization today encompasses a broad transformation of institutional functions - ranging from curriculum reform and intercultural pedagogy to transnational research collaboration, international policy alignment, and global citizenship education. Leading scholars such as Knight (2004) and de Wit et al. (2015) have framed internationalization as a strategic, intentional process that embeds global and intercultural dimensions into the core missions of teaching, research, and service. In response to such shifts, higher education institutions (HEIs) are under growing pressure to align with global benchmarks and to equip their academic communities - especially faculty members - with the competencies, mindsets, and motivations necessary to thrive in interconnected academic ecosystems.

In the Philippine context, national directives such as the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) CMO No. 55, s.2016, have catalyzed institutional efforts to embrace internationalization. These include mandates for academic mobility programs, global partnerships, international quality assurance, and the adoption of global learning outcomes. Yet, despite these structural advances, significant variation persists in how faculty engage with, understand, and operationalize internationalization in their roles. Faculty members are central to this process; they are the drivers of curriculum internationalization, scholarly exchange, and intercultural learning. However, emerging studies suggest that their preparedness, motivation, and access to support systems remain uneven. While some faculty actively participate in international research or policy dialogue, others struggle with limited exposure, institutional constraints, or unclear expectations - especially in public and resource-constrained institutions in regional areas.

This study responds to the urgent need to examine the lived experiences, perceptions, and readiness of faculty in implementing internationalization initiatives. Specifically, it aims to answer the overarching question: How do academicians perceive their preparedness for engaging in internationalization efforts, particularly in terms of their international knowledge, competencies for global academic collaboration, and motivational

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drivers within diverse institutional and socio-cultural contexts? To address this problem, the study investigates ten interrelated research questions concerning: the extent of faculty members' knowledge of global education policies and international frameworks; the influence of this knowledge on participation in global initiatives; their perceived intercultural and technological competencies; intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors; perceptions of institutional support and policy coherence; existing barriers to engagement; demographic and disciplinary differences in readiness; the impact of prior international experiences; perceived academic benefits of internationalization; and the alignment of their roles with institutional internationalization-at-home (IaH) strategies.

Framing this inquiry is a multi-theoretical lens that integrates the structural, psychological, and institutional dimensions of internationalization. Knight's (2004) process-oriented model and Hudzik's (2011) comprehensive internationalization framework provide a macro-level view of institutional dynamics and policy alignment. Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory foregrounds the interplay of personal agency, behavior, and institutional environment. Meanwhile, Deardorff's (2006) Intercultural Competence Model and the OECD's (2018) Global Competency Framework emphasize the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required for intercultural collaboration and global engagement. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) offers insight into the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational dynamics that drive faculty engagement, while Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 1986) and Academic Capitalism Theory (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) help explain how institutional incentives, recognition systems, and market pressures shape faculty behavior.

Complementing this theoretical foundation is a critical review of both global and Philippine-based literature. International studies (Li & Tu, 2021; Chen & Hsieh, 2024; Clifford & Montgomery, 2018; Zahid & Neary, 2023) underscore the need for differentiated, discipline-sensitive approaches to faculty internationalization, noting that motivations and barriers are shaped by academic culture, leadership style, and policy context. For instance, faculty in the sciences may pursue internationalization through English-language publications and global rankings, while those in the humanities may emphasize regional engagement and multilingualism. Local research (Lauraya et al., 2015; Agustin et al., 2021; Gas-ib & Sannadan, 2023) reveals that despite national policies promoting internationalization, many faculty members in the Philippines - particularly in state colleges and local universities - face constraints such as limited mobility grants, high teaching loads, bureaucratic delays, and a lack of professional development in global teaching strategies or research partnerships.

This body of literature suggests that faculty internationalization is neither uniform nor automatic. Rather, it is shaped by a dynamic intersection of global standards, institutional infrastructure, personal readiness, and motivation. Understanding this intersection is crucial for ensuring that internationalization is not merely a policy objective or compliance measure, but a transformative process that empowers faculty to thrive in a global academic environment. The significance of this study lies in its ability to contribute to multiple levels of educational policy and practice. For HEIs, it offers empirical insights into faculty capacity and constraints, informing strategic planning, performance evaluation, and resource allocation. For national policymakers and international education bodies, it provides grounded evidence to enhance support mechanisms, frameworks, and benchmarking practices. For faculty members themselves, the study presents an opportunity to reflect on their global roles, aspirations, and the institutional enablers or barriers that shape their participation. For researchers and collaborators, the findings contribute to the growing discourse on faculty-centered internationalization in developing contexts.

By integrating diverse theoretical perspectives, systematically reviewing related literature, and foregrounding the perspectives of faculty in Region VI, this study builds a nuanced understanding of academic internationalization as both a global mandate and a locally contingent practice. In doing so, it seeks to bridge the policy-practice gap and to inform the design of inclusive, sustainable, and context-responsive strategies that empower faculty as key agents in international higher education.

## Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative-descriptive, document-based research design to examine faculty perspectives on internationalization in higher education. Through systematic analysis of policy documents, institutional frameworks, and scholarly literature, the research aimed to construct a contextual understanding of faculty international knowledge, global engagement capacity, and motivational drivers within Region VI, Philippines.

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative-descriptive, document-based research design to explore the perspectives and readiness of faculty members in relation to internationalization in higher education.

Rather than collecting data from human participants, the study systematically analyzed existing documents - including internationalization policies, institutional strategic plans, faculty development frameworks, and published scholarly literature- to identify patterns, themes, and insights relevant to faculty engagement in global academic practices. Anchored in interpretivist and constructivist paradigms, the research recognized that meanings around internationalization are socially constructed and context-dependent, varying across institutional settings and regional contexts.

By adopting a document-based approach, the study captured a broad and multifaceted view of internationalization as it relates to faculty knowledge, capacity, and motivation. Primary and secondary data sources were carefully selected based on relevance, credibility, and alignment with the study's core constructs. These sources included CHED policy issuances (e.g., CMO No. 55, s.2016), empirical studies from both local and international contexts, theoretical literature on faculty internationalization, and reports from academic databases such as ERIC, JSTOR, Scopus, and SpringerLink. The design enabled a comprehensive synthesis of existing knowledge, grounded in theory, to support critical insights and future directions for institutional and policy-level action.

### Data Sources

The data for this study were derived from a curated selection of primary and secondary documents relevant to the internationalization of higher education, particularly as it relates to faculty engagement in the Philippine context. Primary sources included national and institutional policy documents such as CHED Memorandum Orders (e.g., CMO No. 55, s.2016), institutional strategic internationalization frameworks, faculty development plans, and publicly accessible reports from higher education institutions in Region VI. These documents provided context-specific insights into institutional commitments, structures, and priorities concerning faculty roles in internationalization.

Secondary sources comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, empirical research studies, literature reviews, and global reports obtained from reputable academic databases such as Scopus, JSTOR, ERIC, SpringerLink, and Google Scholar. The literature selected spanned publications from 2010 to 2024 to ensure both historical grounding and contemporary relevance. These sources were chosen based on their direct focus on faculty internationalization, theoretical or empirical rigor, and applicability to Southeast Asian or comparable higher education systems. Theoretical literature covering key models—such as Knight's internationalization framework, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, Deardorff's Intercultural Competence Model, and Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory - was also reviewed to establish conceptual depth and guide thematic interpretation.

### Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process employed a rigorous document-based strategy grounded in systematic literature search techniques. Advanced Boolean search operators were used across multiple academic databases - including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, JSTOR, SpringerLink, and Google Scholar - to identify relevant documents. Targeted keywords included "faculty internationalization," "academic global engagement," "motivation for international collaboration," and "international capacity building in higher education." To ensure the currency and relevance of the data, the search was limited to publications from 2010 to 2024.

Strict inclusion criteria were applied to refine the selection of documents. Eligible sources were required to (1) address internationalization within higher education, (2) focus explicitly on faculty perspectives or roles, and (3) demonstrate theoretical or empirical rigor. Both peer-reviewed journal articles and high-quality institutional or policy documents were considered, provided they met these standards. Through this process, an initial pool of approximately 30 to 50 documents was curated and cataloged for in-depth analysis. These sources formed the foundation for the study's thematic synthesis and were selected to reflect a balance of global, national, and institutional perspectives on faculty internationalization.

### Data Analysis Procedure

The data were analyzed using thematic content analysis following the six-phase methodology outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis began with familiarization, where documents were read repeatedly to gain an in-depth understanding of the content. This was followed by the generation of initial codes representing key ideas, practices, and recurring patterns related to faculty engagement in internationalization. Coding focused on the study's three central constructs: international knowledge and awareness, capacity for global engagement, and motivational drivers.

In the third phase, conceptually related codes were grouped into broader thematic categories, which were then reviewed and refined to ensure internal coherence, distinctiveness, and relevance to the research objectives. In the final phase, the emergent themes were synthesized and interpreted in light of the study's guiding theoretical frameworks, including Knight's Internationalization Model, Bandura's Theory of Reciprocal Determinism, and

Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT). This process allowed for a deeper understanding of how faculty perspectives are shaped by individual, institutional, and structural dimensions of internationalization.

To enhance analytical rigor, qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo and MAXQDA was considered for coding validation and data management. A sample coding matrix was developed to illustrate theme construction, with codes such as "Understanding of SDG 4" and "Familiarity with UNESCO frameworks" categorized under International Knowledge and Awareness, while "Intercultural competence" and "Academic networks" were classified under Capacity for Global Engagement. Motivational factors such as "Professional growth" and "Institutional incentives" were grouped under Motivational Drivers, and barriers such as "Language proficiency," "Workload constraints," and "Limited database access" were coded under Barriers and Constraints.

To ensure the trustworthiness of findings, the study adhered to the qualitative rigor criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), including credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was achieved through triangulation of diverse literature types - policy documents, theoretical articles, and empirical studies - which helped establish a balanced and well-substantiated interpretation of the data. Dependability was supported by thorough documentation of the data collection, coding, and analysis procedures, allowing for transparency and potential replication.

Confirmability was reinforced by grounding all interpretations in established theoretical models and maintaining a clear audit trail of how codes and themes were developed. Although the findings are contextually situated within the Philippine and Southeast Asian higher education environment, they hold relevance and potential transferability for institutions in similarly situated regions navigating comparable internationalization challenges.

### Ethical Considerations

As this study did not involve human participants, ethical clearance from an institutional review board was not required. All data sources were publicly accessible or obtained through academic databases subscribed to by the researcher's institution. Throughout the research process, strict adherence to ethical standards was maintained. Proper citation practices were observed, and all sources were acknowledged to ensure compliance with intellectual property rights and uphold scholarly integrity.

## Results and Discussion

The findings of this document-based study reveal a complex picture of faculty engagement in the internationalization of higher education within Region VI. With regard to international knowledge and global awareness, many faculty members demonstrate a basic familiarity with global educational trends. However, there remains a significant gap in their understanding of formal international frameworks, such as UNESCO's Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications and SDG 4. Their knowledge of comparative education systems is often superficial, shaped largely by anecdotal exposure or brief mobility experiences. This limited conceptual grounding diminishes their potential to meaningfully contribute to the strategic goals of institutional internationalization. As Qiang (2003) aptly noted, "awareness without structural understanding hinders transformation."

This limited understanding has important implications for participation in international initiatives. Faculty members with a more robust grasp of global academic systems are more inclined to engage in mobility programs, research exchanges, and transnational curriculum development. In contrast, those with weaker global awareness often view internationalization as peripheral to their roles. These findings reinforce Knight's (2004) assertion that internationalization is both a process and a mindset - one that is grounded in knowledge and requires institutional cultivation. Thus, efforts to expand faculty engagement must begin with improving their foundational understanding of global education.

Capacity for global engagement also emerges as a determining factor in participation. While many faculty members express confidence in their intercultural competence and multilingual skills, there is widespread concern over their technological readiness and access to professional academic networks - especially among those in rural or non-metropolitan institutions. These self-perceived limitations mirror the structural constraints identified in previous studies by Leask (2015) and Marginson (2011), which stress the importance of institutional support in building global engagement capacity. The lack of infrastructure, insufficient access to international databases, and minimal training opportunities reduce faculty members' ability to initiate or sustain international collaborations.

Motivational drivers play a pivotal role in shaping internationalization engagement. Drawing on Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, this study found that both intrinsic motivations - such as academic curiosity, pursuit of global citizenship,

and professional identity development - and extrinsic incentives - such as recognition, promotion criteria, and access to grants - significantly influence faculty involvement. However, inconsistent reward systems and unclear institutional policies often blunt these motivations. When institutional structures fail to reinforce faculty aspirations, motivation wanes. Institutions must align their incentive systems with the values and goals of faculty to foster meaningful and sustained engagement in internationalization.

In relation to institutional structures and support mechanisms, faculty perceptions vary widely. Some institutions maintain International Affairs Offices and participate in CHED-supported programs, but many lack coherent policy frameworks, administrative coordination, and sufficient funding to support internationalization. This discrepancy between institutional rhetoric and operational capacity reflects Hudzik's (2015) model of comprehensive internationalization, which emphasizes the need for alignment across institutional mission, governance, and resource allocation. Faculty members often report the absence of travel grants, sabbatical opportunities, and support services—highlighting the disconnect between institutional ambitions and actual faculty support.

Barriers to internationalization remain significant. Faculty identify a range of systemic and personal challenges that impede their engagement, including bureaucratic delays, language proficiency gaps, heavy teaching loads, and lack of mobility opportunities. These findings are consistent with the experiences of faculty across Southeast Asia, as documented by Tran and Nguyen (2020), and indicate that these barriers are not isolated but structural and widespread. Overcoming these obstacles will require both policy reform and the implementation of support mechanisms such as administrative streamlining, language training programs, and equitable access to international platforms.

Importantly, the study reveals that faculty engagement in internationalization is not uniform. There are significant differences across disciplines, academic rank, and institutional types. Faculty in STEM fields typically have greater access to international research opportunities, while those in humanities or teacher education report fewer platforms for engagement. Younger faculty tend to show greater enthusiasm for global initiatives, though they often lack the professional capital or institutional support to take full advantage of them. These variations suggest that internationalization strategies should be differentiated and inclusive, recognizing the unique contexts and capacities of different faculty demographics.

Prior international experiences also play a transformative role in shaping current engagement levels. Faculty who have participated in international mobility programs, such as Fulbright, Erasmus+, or AIMS, report higher levels of global awareness, confidence, and initiative in forming cross-border collaborations. These experiences deepen understanding and reinforce the importance of international partnerships, affirming the findings of de Wit and Hunter (2017), who argue that academic mobility fosters long-term cultural and professional shifts. Institutions should thus invest in both physical and virtual mobility programs to broaden faculty exposure to global academic environments.

From the perspective of faculty members, internationalization offers substantial academic and professional benefits. It enriches teaching practices by integrating global perspectives and enhancing cultural responsiveness in the classroom. It fosters research innovation by facilitating interdisciplinary and cross-cultural collaborations and improves career trajectories through enhanced credentials, access to leadership opportunities, and increased visibility in global networks. These benefits confirm internationalization's role as a driver of excellence and professional development, consistent with the global literature (Knight & de Wit, 2015).

Finally, while faculty awareness of Internationalization-at-Home (IaH) strategies is on the rise - evident in virtual exchanges, global case studies, and foreign language instruction - the institutional alignment necessary for comprehensive implementation is often lacking. Some colleges have begun embedding global learning outcomes into curricula, but many lack clearly defined objectives, policy direction, or performance benchmarks. Beelen and Jones (2016) emphasize that successful IaH requires deliberate planning, supportive leadership, and dedicated resources. Without these, faculty-driven initiatives risk becoming fragmented or unsustainable. Alignment between faculty engagement and institutional strategy must be strengthened if IaH is to fulfill its potential as a transformative element of internationalization in local institutions.

This study reveals that faculty internationalization in Region VI is shaped by the interplay of global knowledge, institutional and individual capacity, motivation, and systemic support. While promising practices and strong intentions exist, disparities in resources, policy coherence, and institutional readiness limit full engagement. A localized, inclusive approach - grounded in differentiated faculty needs and aligned with national and institutional goals - will be crucial in achieving

sustainable and meaningful internationalization in Philippine higher education.

## Conclusion

Internationalization in higher education is not a linear initiative but a complex, multidimensional process that converges international knowledge, institutional capacity, motivational drivers, and systemic support. This study, Advancing Internationalization: Apprising Perspectives on International Knowledge, Capacity for Global Engagement, and Motivational Drivers of Academicians, affirms that successful faculty internationalization depends on more than policy - it requires an academic and cultural transformation across all institutional levels.

The findings reveal that international knowledge serves as a foundational enabler. Faculty members who are well-versed in global frameworks such as UNESCO guidelines, Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), and comparative education systems are more proactive in implementing internationalized teaching, research, and service. However, knowledge alone is insufficient. Disparities in access to technological infrastructure, global networks, and intercultural training hinder equitable engagement across institutions - particularly in resource-limited and geographically isolated contexts.

Motivational drivers, grounded in Self-Determination Theory, further illuminate faculty behavior. Engagement increases when faculty experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness, especially when institutional incentives align with their personal and professional aspirations. Yet, structural inconsistencies and top-down mandates without grassroots participation limit the potential impact of internationalization efforts. Faculty empowerment through inclusive leadership, transparent decision-making, and targeted professional development is therefore critical.

Moreover, the research underscores the importance of contextual responsiveness. Effective strategies must account for disciplinary differences, regional constraints, and institutional diversity. A one-size-fits-all approach is inadequate; rather, tailored support systems, strategic alignment, and culturally relevant programming are essential for meaningful engagement. A proposed framework emerging from this study emphasizes the interdependence of knowledge, capacity, motivation, and institutional vision. Ultimately, internationalization must be recognized not merely as a strategic directive but as an evolving institutional ethos - one that empowers faculty to actively shape globally connected, socially responsive higher education.

Based on these findings, the following strategic recommendations are proposed to help higher education institutions (HEIs), academic leaders, and policymakers foster inclusive, faculty-centered internationalization:

First, HEIs must institutionalize faculty development in internationalization. This includes structured training on global pedagogies, intercultural communication, research ethics, and digital collaboration. Faculty should be supported in participating in global conferences, MOOCs, leadership programs, and academic networks. Mentorship or twinning arrangements with foreign institutions can deepen experiential engagement.

Second, institutions must build robust support mechanisms. Dedicated internationalization coordinators at college or departmental levels should oversee partnerships, exchanges, and cross-border collaborations. Sustainable funding must be allocated for joint research and global engagement activities, while internationalization indicators should be embedded in planning, accreditation, and quality assurance systems.

Third, faculty motivations must be aligned with institutional goals. Integrating international accomplishments - such as collaborative research and mobility - into promotion and performance systems, alongside offering grants, awards, or sabbaticals, can enhance engagement. Regular interdisciplinary consultations can ensure that internationalization policies remain inclusive and responsive to faculty realities.

Fourth, HEIs should design a context-responsive, faculty-centered framework. Existing models, such as those proposed by Knight or Hudzik, should be adapted to reflect local academic cultures while staying aligned with global benchmarks. These frameworks must remain dynamic, capable of evolving alongside emerging priorities like digital internationalization, sustainability, and cross-sectoral partnerships.

Fifth, systemic barriers must be addressed. Institutions should rebalance faculty workloads to allow time for global participation, provide language and intercultural training, and streamline travel, procurement, and administrative processes. Reducing bureaucratic constraints is essential to sustaining long-term faculty engagement.

Finally, a broader cultural shift is necessary to sustain internationalization. Institutions must embed global perspectives into curricula, mission statements, and institutional values. Internationalization-at-Home (IaH) strategies - including virtual exchanges, COIL programs, and

global content integration - can democratize access to international experiences. Encouraging interdisciplinary and cross-cultural collaboration will foster global citizenship and shared responsibility for both local and global challenges.

In sum, internationalization must evolve into a transformative institutional culture - one that empowers faculty, promotes inclusive global engagement, and aligns with the broader mission of higher education. Through sustained investment in faculty development, strategic alignment, and institutional support, Philippine HEIs can cultivate a generation of globally competent scholars who contribute meaningfully to the global knowledge society.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this manuscript.

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