

Organizational Preparedness, Practices and Strategies in Internationalization of one State College in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The intercultural aspect of academic practices strengthens institutional identity as an inclusive and globally aware organization. However, the absence of internationalization plan leads to fragmented or reactive changes with underdeveloped organizational strategies. This study aims to evaluate the preparedness, practices and initial strategies in internationalization of one state college in the Philippines anchored in Lewin's Change Theory. The study used mixed-methods explanatory approach to provide an overview of the institution's internationalization status from the total enumeration of 71 respondents who served as key stakeholders to assess the institutional preparedness and practices. Results revealed that there is a high level of preparedness and moderate level of implementation in both practices and strategies in internationalization while leadership and administrative commitment were identified as strong points which reflects proactive planning and policy support for global initiatives. However, there were some gaps and limitations found in the areas of infrastructure, student and faculty mobility and intercultural campus engagement that hindered the implementation of new strategies. Through the integration of these phases of preparedness which reflects the unfreezing stage, practices for change phase, and strategies for refreezing phase into a unified framework given the limited resources, the findings contribute to the development of strategic plan and how the results fill an institutional gap to address the demands of internationalization. This research offers valuable insights for policymakers and administrators who are seeking to enhance institutional capacity for global engagement and competitiveness.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical insights into the preparedness, practices, and strategies of state colleges in implementing internationalization, highlighting management commitment, resource constraints, and contextual challenges, while offering evidence-based guidance for strengthening institutional capacity, policy alignment, and sustainable internationalization in developing higher education contexts.

1. Introduction

The internationalization journey of academic institutions has transformed the changing landscape of education where embracing borderless curriculum and boundless possibilities creates more learning opportunities for academic communities to explore the world without limits. The integration of global perspectives in the curriculum produces learning outcomes gearing towards sustainability. Internationalization is a dynamic process that requires the integration of global and intercultural dimensions into institutional functions (Knight, 2004) that provides benefits for students to enhance their global awareness and intercultural competence; improve communication and collaboration skills across cultures and strengthen employability and global competitiveness. It gives opportunities for faculty members to international research collaboration and professional development through global training and conferences with promotes cross-cultural teaching innovation. For the institution, it provides global visibility and institutional reputation and encourages development of globally relevant curricula and among others. Due to the growing call for internationalization, this becomes a defining challenge for higher education worldwide particularly in developing countries like the Philippines (Francisco et al., 2023; Balagtas & Santarita, 2024; Narbarte & Chan, 2021). Despite the global movement toward integrating international and intercultural dimensions in education, many state colleges continue to face issues related to institutional preparedness (Tanhueco-Nepomuceno, 2019), limited global partnerships (Cheung, 2021), inadequate infrastructure including digital connectivity, and inconsistent implementation of internationalization strategies across institutional units (Lefievre et al., 2022).

Higher education institutions experienced challenges in the implementation of internationalization when it comes to preparedness of management such as limited financial resources and budget constraints (Dimasindel & Salam, 2018; Francisco et al., 2023); insufficient human resources and lack of qualified faculty (Ade Rusman et al., 2019; Chakim et al., 2024); weak institutional policies and unclear strategic vision for internationalization (Sok & Bunry, 2021; Nepomuceno, 2008); and limited infrastructure and technological capacity to support international programs (Sulima, 2024). Several studies also showed that academic services encountered problem on the resistance to change or innovation among staff and stakeholders (Ngo & Tran, 2024); dependence on external partners for resources and collaboration (Alemu et al., 2022); challenges in student and faculty mobility, including affordability and administrative barriers (Sawheny, 2023; Bayudan-Dacuyucuy et al., 2024). There are also difficulties in integrating internationalization into curriculum, research, and teaching practices (Nguyen et al., 2016; Bautista et al., 2021) and limited data or monitoring systems to evaluate internationalization initiatives (Francisco et al., 2023; Sok & Bunry, 2021).

Despite all these challenges, Philippine HEIs still continue to strive particularly the state colleges being supervised by the government need to embrace internationalization as a strategic response to globalization and the increasing demand for globally competent graduates. Having limited budget allocation for this purpose, internationalization at home is the most applicable strategy to ensure other relevant activities are counted as initiatives towards the same goal and direction. Institutions need to evaluate their capacity and resources to ensure alignment with international standards and to enhance academic quality (Jianfeng & Austria, 2024), research collaboration (Oldac et al., 2025; Heiser, 2023), and intercultural engagement (Wang et al., 2025). As education becomes more interconnected, forging academic linkages and partnerships is easier to establish

among ASEAN countries because of different international organizations that promote mutual agreements for academic and cultural exchange, micro-credentials, research fellowships, collaborative research projects and among others.

The Internationalization Process Framework of [Knight \(2004\)](#) served as a guide for this study on “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of postsecondary education.” The framework provides direction on how the level of preparedness, practices and strategies will be assessed using this framework as reference. Meanwhile, Lewin’s Change Theory ([Burnes, 2020](#)) serves as another reference of the study in describing how organizations transition from their current state to a desired future state through three stages namely, Unfreeze, Change and Refreeze. The study identified the gaps from organizational practices and strategies with an end goal of embedding global perspectives in teaching, research, and community engagement. The systemic process involves institutional commitment towards achieving global engagement and intercultural competence.

The findings of this study guide the educational management in strategic planning for internationalization; give support to informed decision-making for policy formulation and institutional priorities; highlight areas for resource allocation, faculty development, and capacity building; strengthen the leadership commitment and institutional readiness for global engagement; and provide basis for curriculum development and integration of international perspectives. In improving the institutional reputation, this study provides emphasis in promoting student and faculty mobility, research collaboration, and academic partnerships; improving institutional reputation and competitiveness at regional and global levels; and providing evidence for pursuing accreditation and achieving international standards. The study has implications to identify gaps and challenges to inform future research and policy interventions that contributes to the body of knowledge on internationalization practices in higher education in offering insights for benchmarking and comparative studies across institutions and countries.

1.1. Research Objectives

This study aims to analyze the preparedness, practices, and strategies of one state college in the Philippines in conducting international related activities for students, teachers and staff. Specifically, it aims to determine the level of preparedness in terms of Management, Human Resources, Infrastructure, Curriculum and Operation; determine the level of practices in terms of Institutional Support, Faculty & Student Mobility, Research, Curriculum and Instruction, Home-Based Internationalization Activities (Curricular and Programs, Teaching/Learning Process, Extra-Curricular Activities, On liaising with local cultural/ethnic groups, and Research and Scholarly Activity); determine the strategies in the implementation of internationalization practices in terms of Institutional Support, Cross-border Education/ Academics, Research and Scholarly Collaboration, External Relations and Services (Domestic and Offshore). Findings of the study served as an input for the development of Strategic Internationalization Plan of the institution.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Preparedness

The process of Internationalization starts with the awareness of the academic community on recognizing the importance of internationalization which is part of the preparation on how members of the organization will become proactive in accepting the challenges of this undertaking. It aims to understand the global trends and challenges in higher education and recognize the need to internationalize to remain relevant. Leaders, faculty and students need to develop certain level of awareness so that they can contribute to the process towards the achievement of the vision and mission of the institution. Cultivating an environment characterized by supportiveness and inclusivity significantly benefits both faculty members and students in an interconnected global landscape (Lemana et al., 2024). Making them aware builds institutional readiness and shared understanding of why internationalization matters.

Management planning involves designing the strategies, structures, and systems to operationalize internationalization. This involves the development of an internationalization roadmap, identification of priorities, assessment of needs and benchmarks, identification of goals, objectives and key performance indicators and development of program design for faculty and student mobility and global curriculum integration. Proactive and committed leadership of management takes essential role towards the successful preparation of plans and roadmaps. Fostering a culture of global engagement enables strategic international partnerships in guiding institutions toward international accreditation, and positions universities as regional and global academic leaders. Senior leaders in Vietnam view internationalizing universities as a top priority for the country wherein its higher education sector, and its people, especially given the shift to a market-oriented economy and increasing globalization. This emphasizes a national readiness to embrace international standards and practices (Nguyen et al., 2016). Leadership and management bring balance in institutional autonomy, cultural and national values, and governmental support to effectively implement internationalization strategies across Vietnam, the Philippines, and other Southeast Asian contexts (Rogayan Jr & Mendoza, 2023; Le, 2018; Laguador et al., 2014; Ade Rusman et al., 2019; Nga, 2023).

Enhancing global competitiveness is driven by economic transitions and institutional ambitions based on plans as defined in the leadership and management goals as well as the vision and mission of the institution to clarify the purpose and expected outcomes of internationalization. In Vietnam, the shift from a centrally planned to a market-driven economy has prompted universities to adopt systematic, holistic, and globally oriented curricula to meet international standards (Nguyen et al., 2016).

Developing internationalized curricula and fostering research collaborations are necessary initiatives to improve the quality of Vietnamese universities (Nguyen et al., 2016) making the innovations more integrated that complement research and instruction with community development. The institutional preparation towards internationalization is more meaningful if it extends beyond student and faculty mobility to encompass curriculum innovation, joint programs, and capacity-building efforts. Though in many institutions, it is not yet strategically prioritized to achieve broader institutional goals (Sok & Bunry, 2021; Sulima, 2024).

Curriculum innovation gives proper direction to the program offerings that makes it more relevant to the demands of internationalization through integrating interdisciplinary and globally relevant themes (e.g. SDGs and Global Citizenship Education) with the community. Encouraging faculty members to adopt globally informed pedagogies and promoting international research exposure within the course activities are considered added value that provides faculty members for professional development. Similarly, Thai HEIs have implemented strategies such as internationalized curricula, English-medium instruction, foreign university alliances, joint research, and capacity-building initiatives to integrate global perspectives and strengthen their international profile (Lemana et al., 2024). Encouraging collaboration with international industry reviewing curriculum using global benchmarks as part of the academic best practices enhances the program and curricular offerings as well as the human resource requirements.

Institutional readiness for internationalization also gives emphasis to the development and management of human resources as important asset of the organization. Part of the preparation is the adequacy of the Human resources that emerged as a critical driver and enabler of higher education internationalization in Southeast Asia, particularly in Vietnam and Indonesia. Vietnam faces a high demand for qualified human capital, motivating many students to study abroad to enhance employability, with the country ranking second in Southeast Asia for outbound students (Nguyen et al., 2016). Philippine HEIs face challenges that impede global expansion, including unclear strategic visions, limited financial and human resources, and insufficiently supportive institutional cultures (Nepomuceno, 2008). Planning and organizing programs for supporting faculty and staff to prepare graduates with global competencies capable of competing internationally is vital in the delivery of quality learning outcomes (Ade Rusman et al., 2019). However, efforts are sometimes hampered by resistance to innovation and competing stakeholder priorities which emphasize the need for strategic human resource planning in sustaining internationalization initiatives (Ngo & Tran, 2024). There are some organizational cultures that are lacking leadership commitment to HR innovation; lacking clear vision or direction for global HR development; and not supporting creativity, experimentation and risk-taking. Evidence from Indonesian private universities shows that strong human resource management with established faculty development plan is characterized by leadership commitment and international mobility which drives successful internationalization and supports continuous accreditation efforts (Ade Rusman et al., 2019). These qualified personnel can perform best their duties and responsibilities if they will be given adequate physical plant and learning facilities as part of the long-term plan of the institution. The state-of-the-art facilities and internationally aligned curriculum demonstrate the preparedness of the institution for higher responsibilities to accept foreign nationalities and serve the global communities for extension services (ASEAN Secretariat, 2022; Dumanig & Symaco, 2022). However, this readiness of the academic institutions is always being asked as initial data to really assess the status of human resources, physical facilities and curriculum if these are all working together functionally according to the international standards.

Financial support is always necessary to the implementation of the internationalized curricula. This is where the budget preparation takes a huge challenge for the management. Philippine higher education institutions continue to struggle in fully leveraging internationalization opportunities due largely to persistent financial constraints, which limit mobility programs, partnerships, and international initiatives

(Sulima, 2024). Magan (2025) emphasized that the lack of financial and physical resources is consistently identified as a primary challenge for HEIs attempting to internationalize. This constraint directly impacts the ability to upgrade facilities. Philippine HEIs face challenges that impede global expansion, including unclear strategic visions, limited financial and human resources, and insufficiently supportive institutional cultures (Nepomuceno, 2008). The management system for ordinary work units in higher education institutions, like State Islamic Universities, is centralized, limiting their authority in budget management. This contrasts with public service agencies that have more flexibility in non-academic budget governance (Chakim et al., 2024). Overcoming the hurdles related to budget constraints requires greater governmental support and more flexible financial management to achieve world-class university status (Chakim et al., 2024).

2.2. Practices

Historical legacies, cultural orientations, and political priorities deeply shaped the internationalization of higher education across Southeast Asia. These factors greatly contributed to the evolving practices of academic institutions that served as bases for educational policy reforms. The pathways of Indonesia towards internationalization are shaped by economic crises and political resistance to privatization, relies on international partnerships to balance global engagement with the preservation of national interests and cultural identity (Alemu et al., 2022). Collectively, these cases show how regional internationalization evolves not merely from educational goals but from the interplay of historical experience, cultural context, and political strategy.

At present, higher education institutions have different internationalization practices based on their capacity, resources, goals, objectives and priorities involving the collaboration among other universities to generate knowledge through research activities and promote social and cultural diversity. Lemana et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of addressing cultural and linguistic barriers in Thailand to foster collaboration and understanding among faculty members, promoting inclusive practices within academic communities. Robiños and Alcazaren (2023) intensified international linkages and networks involvement and collaboration of students and faculty. The internationalization of higher education represents the highest level of inter-university collaboration and is now viewed not as an end goal, but as a strategy for enhancing the quality of education (Nepomuceno, 2008; Cheung, 2021). Malaysia integrates mobility into institutional strategies, emphasizing student and staff exchanges, curriculum internationalization, and research collaboration, although the intensity and pace differ between public and private universities (Wan & Abdullah, 2021).

Quality assurance and international accreditation place central role in the internationalization efforts across Southeast Asia to achieve world-class university status. Specifically, the ASEAN University Network – Quality Assurance provides program and institutional accreditations to Higher Education Institutions across ASEAN Region. It builds an academic community which aims to uplift the curricular offerings and learning outcomes of the students based on OBE principle. Achieving a culture of quality through internationalization requires string institutional systems, policies and leadership as well as having high-quality teachers, learning and support services aligned with global standards. In Indonesia, the recognition of 13 international accrediting bodies by the Ministry of Education poses both an opportunity and a challenge, particularly for State Religious Universities striving to meet global standards (Chakim et

al., 2024). In Thailand, despite its success in attracting international students, inconsistent government support and gaps in quality assurance frameworks limit the sustainability of its internationalization initiatives (Jampaklay et al., 2022), though participation in global rankings and accreditation processes demonstrates ongoing progress and commitment (Lemana et al., 2024). QS World University Ranking, QS Star Rating, Times Higher Education Impact Ranking and World University Ranking for Innovation (WURI) are some of the well-known performance metrics that provide ranking system for higher education institutions across the globe. As Philippine higher education also aimed for internationalization, many universities were tasked to enhance their quality assurance framework by ensuring sound graduate mobility and strong international linkages (Robiños & Alcazaren, 2023) leading towards global ranking with strong research culture.

Building global partnerships serves as a foundation of internationalization practices in research with focus on creating new knowledge and disseminating information through collaborative publications and joint conferences. Research capacity building is increasingly emphasized in the internationalization of Higher education in Southeast Asia along with global visibility, and strategic collaborations. Faculty members are being encouraged to conduct joint research projects with foreign authors to increase the visibility and reputation of both institutions. Partnership in research has mutual benefits that drive innovation in the curricular programs and teaching pedagogies. Malaysia, for instance, has pursued international recognition through rankings, transnational education, joint publications, and research alliances, while also hosting international conferences to strengthen its research profile (Wan & Abdullah, 2021). Philippines HEIs are conducting hybrid or virtual conferences with foreign institutions as co-hosts. Foreign speakers are invited to deliver keynote and plenary speeches that provides global perspectives. In Vietnam, institutional autonomy has enabled universities to achieve positive outcomes in research and teaching, with leaders prioritizing international collaborations, academic publishing in prestigious journals, and curriculum internationalization to enhance institutional quality (Le, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2016). Similarly, universities in Indonesia engage in regional and global research partnerships, often leveraging external grants, though disparities exist in institutional resources and independent funding (Chakim et al., 2024). Across the region, enhancing international cooperation is seen as critical for producing high-impact scientific research, however, promoting research collaboration should be further improved (Arceo, 2022). The lack of independent research and critical analysis in some programs limits innovation and perpetuates outdated perspectives (Hadiwinata, 2009; Tian, 2022). Collectively, these studies indicate that internationalized research and collaborative initiatives are central to advancing global competitiveness, academic quality, and institutional reputation in Southeast Asian higher education.

Research practices support the curriculum and instruction which must be aligned with current policies and global demands to support educational improvement. Internationalization priorities differ between Malaysia's public and private higher education institutions. Public institutions emphasize improving teaching and research, while private institutions focus more on attracting international students and expanding their global presence. Private HEIs offer more double degree and international credit transfer programs, whereas public HEIs lead in international research collaboration and funding. Overall, private institutions are more adaptive and responsive to internationalization trends than their public counterparts (Wan & Abdullah, 2021). However, alternative learning modes like blended, online, and modular delivery remain

underutilized. Meeting the challenges of globalization requires significant reform and transformation in higher education institutions, pushing them to innovate and provide quality education that prepares students for global competitiveness (Sulima, 2024). Lecturers are considered key initiators of internationalization in Indonesia, especially those who have studied abroad. There is an expectation that more lecturers will study abroad to adopt and apply knowledge and science from overseas universities within the institution. The university encourages lecturers to improve their knowledge sharing and exchange to foster creative and innovative thinking skills (Ade Rusman et al., 2019).

The status of internationalization practices across the Southeast Asian (ASEAN) region is characterized by a high degree of variation, driven largely by national policies and institutional capacity, with a collective commitment toward regional integration (Atherton et al., 2020; Lefievre et al., 2022). While some established institutions pursue comprehensive strategies focusing on student and faculty mobility, transnational education, and research collaboration to enhance global standing, many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) struggle with effective implementation due to systemic impediments. Several studies showed internationalization of curriculum, the use of English as a medium of instruction, and the establishment of international linkages are the common initiatives of the academic institutions; however, these efforts are frequently constrained by the absence of clearly articulated internationalization visions and limited internal resources such as financial investment and English competence among faculty (Killingley & Ilieva, 2015; Nepomuceno, 2008). The International Program (IP) manages undergraduate and postgraduate programs where teaching and learning are conducted in English, and it also handles student exchanges. The use of English in learning is expected to improve students' self-confidence and abilities, which is beneficial for student exchange programs (Ade Rusman et al., 2019). Likewise, a major challenge for many higher education institutions is moving from aspirational rhetoric to practical, fully integrated policies that promote a supportive and globally engaged culture, which is essential for maximizing global opportunities for non-mobile students and staff (Lefievre et al., 2022, Killingley & Ilieva, 2015).

2.3. Strategies

The expressed commitment for internationalization by school leaders and administrators strengthens the strategic direction of the organization with the presence of a long-term strategic internationalization plan and functional external relations and services. Education policy and strategic governance play a critical role in shaping higher education internationalization across Southeast Asia, yet inconsistencies and misalignment often hinder progress. In Malaysia, policy is central to internationalization, but variation in stakeholder perspectives and organizational levels highlights the need for harmonization and coherent implementation (Suo, 2023; Nurhaeni et al., 2021). Similarly, universities have begun implementing practices and preparations for internationalization, but strategic directions and integration into academic and administrative processes require further enhancement (Rogayan Jr & Mendoza, 2023). In Vietnam, successful adoption of internationalization and institutional autonomy depends on leaders acknowledging long-standing cultural and political contexts during global integration (Le, 2018). Likewise, Thailand's lack of coherent and consistently applied government policy has impeded sustainable internationalization, leaving institutions largely responsible for attracting and retaining international students (Jampaklay et al., 2022). Collectively, these studies underscore that effective, consistent, and context-sensitive policy frameworks are essential for the successful

institutionalization of internationalization. The study by [Thu \(2018\)](#) reveals that Vietnamese academics hold diverse views on the conceptualization of internationalization, with motivations spanning academic, economic, social, cultural, and political objectives, while institutional efforts face challenges such as insufficient strategies, funding, qualified staff, and infrastructure, yet academics converge on similar future strategic priorities.

Meanwhile, most academic institutions have prepared their strategic plans including programs for internationalization with adequate budget requirements and human resources to achieve the goals and targets as well as their vision and mission. However, not all HEIs have enough resources to support their strategic plans to materialize their programs for internationalization. Most especially on how they can improve their school facilities to meet the international standard for dormitories, instructional facilities, and laboratories [Magan \(2025\)](#). [Nguyen et al. \(2016\)](#) recommended that universities should align their mission statements and strategic objectives to enhance the internationalization process.

Faculty and student mobility are central to internationalization strategies across Southeast Asian higher education, though the scope and support mechanisms vary by country. Internationalization activities include the mobility of students and scholars abroad, student and staff exchanges, and collaborative international education and research programs. The university obligates young lecturers to study abroad as part of its commitment to human resource management ([Ade Rusman et al., 2019](#)). Foreign faculty members in Thailand significantly contribute to advance institutional internationalization through providing practical expertise and fostering collaborative partnerships ([Lemana et al., 2024](#)). Faculty exchange programs facilitate different learning engagement among institutions the opens for research collaborations and academic mentorships in highly specialized disciplines in sciences, engineering and technology. However, problems exist when institutions have inadequate financial resources. In Cambodia, faculty mobility largely depends on external funding, with no national scholarship scheme to strategically support higher education development or national objectives, though overseas returnees positively impact institutional growth and career trajectories ([Sok & Bunry, 2024](#)). The institutions have established re-entry action plans to ensure that the learning experiences gained from the faculty mobility will also be shared to the academic community as part of the return of investment. In the Philippines, student and faculty mobility programs are facilitated through partnerships and institutional offices, enhancing intercultural competencies and providing research networking opportunities; innovative approaches like Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) allow students to gain international exposure even without physical travel ([Bayudan-Dacuycuy et al., 2024](#)). The University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP), Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific (AUAP) and SEAMEO are consistently assisting the Philippine Higher Education Institutions to facilitate the academic and cultural immersions of the students. Collectively, these experiences highlight that mobility both inbound and outbound is a critical mechanism for fostering international collaboration, skills development, and institutional growth in the region.

Maintaining collaborative partnerships between governments, institutions, and international stakeholder helps in advancing internationalization in Southeast Asian higher education. Most institutions are trying to maintain a good image in local, national and international communities through having active networks and functional linkages. This is one way of facilitating collaborative grant proposals with international partners;

participating in global research networks and consortia; and providing opportunities for visiting scholar programs abroad. In Thailand and Vietnam, coordinated government action and strong policy commitment have been key drivers for regional integration and international engagement (Jampaklay et al., 2022; Ngan et al., 2024). Providing expertise is one of the reasons for visiting professors while fostering collaborations among members of the organization and supporting professional development based on the level of agreements (Lemana et al., 2024). The sustainability of partnerships depends on mutual understanding continuous monitoring and evaluation, robust infrastructure, and capacity-building initiatives, including virtual programs (Francisco et al., 2023), as well as mechanisms to reduce vulnerability to leadership changes or resource fluctuations (Wan & Abdullah, 2021). However, there are some challenges encountered along way including unequal agreements with more affluent institutions that can create dependency for staff training and resources (Alemu et al., 2022) and limited industry linkages for graduate employment (Sulima, 2024).

State universities and colleges in the Philippines are gradually developing the structures, connections, and strategic plans necessary to achieve international standards, though readiness in terms of mission, goals, and understanding of internationalization remains moderate, with certain areas facing notable constraints (Dimasindel & Salam, 2018). According to the study conducted by Nepomuceno (2008), the author pointed out that although the scientific mission of universities is international in nature, it does not imply that a given institution can be considered “internationalizing” or already “internationalized.” Either case, the primary functions of a university must also have an international orientation. All the internal processes of the university must be structured to consider the international dimension. In the study of Khalid et al. (2017), internationalization practices for HEIs discussed in four dimensions; internationalization at home, international students and faculty, expanding ventures and strategic alliances and institutional networks. Having internationalization programs and initiatives in institutional level at home is considered very useful for students and faculty members who could not be able to travel across countries due to financial constraints and other limitations of the institution such as lacking institutional policies and support. A core challenge in higher education internationalization is the inability to effectively implement strategies because of vague policies and the failure to integrate a clear international vision into the institution's fundamental organizational structure and culture (Lefievre et al., 2022; Magan, 2025). Internationalization efforts across Thailand and Cambodia reflect both government priorities and the growing influence of globally trained individuals, yet their overall impact on higher education quality remains uneven. Similarly, Malaysian higher education institutions are rapidly pursuing internationalization despite inherent risks, recognizing that careful implementation can yield significant benefits for institutional development (Wan & Abdullah, 2021). Across contexts, successful internationalization depends on leaders' strong commitment, particularly in human resource management, and the institution's willingness to enhance the quality of knowledge, academic programs, and institutional practices to meet global standards (Ade Rusman et al., 2019). Collectively, these findings suggest that strategic planning, leadership commitment, and gradual capacity-building are central to effectively embedding internationalization in higher education institutions.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Research Design

The study employed mixed-methods explanatory approach to determine the status of a State College's internationalization efforts, encompassing its Preparedness, Practices, and Strategies. A mixed-methods explanatory approach is defined as a research design in which quantitative data are collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This is appropriate for this study because the quantitative survey results provide a broad assessment of institutional preparedness, practices, and strategies in internationalization, while the qualitative interviews offer deeper explanations for the observed patterns and variations. Integrating both methods strengthens the validity of the findings by allowing numerical trends to be contextualized through participants' lived experiences and institutional realities.

3.2. Respondents

The respondents of this survey include the total population of 41 or 100% of school officials and academic designees of one state college in Naga City, Camarines Sur, Philippines from the top and middle management including vice-presidents, deans, directors, and program chairpersons together with the total population of 30 or 100 percent of student-leaders or representatives from recognized student organizations with a total enumeration of 71 qualified stakeholders who assessed the existing internal practices of the institution. The study utilized purposive sampling technique in selecting the participants of the study. Those school officials and designees who are involved in internationalization process with at least five (5) years working experience in the institution are considered in the study who can provide substantial data, share information regarding the internationalization journey of the college and provide insights gearing towards the development of strategic plan.

From the total of 71 survey respondents who indicated willingness to participate in the interview phase, 15 participants were selected based on the principle of data saturation. Initial interviews were conducted with purposively chosen participants who had direct involvement and sufficient experience with internationalization initiatives. As the interviews progressed, recurring themes, patterns, and explanations began to emerge consistently across participants. By the 12th interview, no substantially new codes, perspectives, or insights were identified, indicating that the data had reached thematic redundancy. Three additional interviews were conducted to confirm saturation and ensure robustness of the findings. After the 15th interview, the research team determined that further data collection would not yield new information relevant to the research questions. Thus, the interview process was concluded at 15 participants, consistent with established qualitative research standards that prioritize depth, credibility, and saturation over sample size.

Table 1: Profile of the Participants Interviewed

Participants	Sex	Length of Service/ Year Level
Participants 1 & 2	Male	6 to 10 years
Participants 3 & 4	Female	6 to 10 years
Participants 5 & 6	Male	11 to 15 years
Participants 7 & 8	Female	11 to 15 years

Participant 9	Male	16 to 20 years
Participant 10	Female	16 to 20 years
Participants 11, 12 & 13	Female	3 rd Year Students
Participants 14 and 15	Male	4 th Year Students

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the participants involved in the interview with 10 officials and designees. They have length of service in the institution ranging from six (6) years until 20 years. Meanwhile, five (5) student leaders were identified from 3rd and 4th year levels. Higher year levels were considered as participants because they have witnessed already for several years the academic programs and services of the institution and they can contribute already to the establishment of the strategic internationalization plan.

3.3. Instrument

The instrument is based on the study of [Dacut \(2022\)](#) entitled: “*Internationalization Initiatives, Practices, Strategies and Challenges of Selected Higher Education Institutions in Region IV-A Calabarzon: As Input to Internationalization Framework*”. In addition, CMO 55, s. 2016, Policy Framework and Strategies on the Internationalization of Philippine Higher Education was also considered as reference in the formulation of this instrument. The instrument was tested its reliability with the following Cronbach’s alpha values:

Table 2 presents the result of the reliability test using Cronbach’s Alpha Value. The instruments used to assess the study demonstrate excellent internal consistency across all three constructs. Specifically, the Preparedness scale (15 items) yielded a Cronbach’s Alpha of .915, the Practices scale (32 items) scored .903, and the Strategies scale (25 items) achieved the highest reliability at .954. Since all three values are well above the generally acceptable threshold of .70 and exceed the .90 level, the results indicate that the items within each scale are highly reliable and measure their respective constructs consistently, confirming the overall quality and dependability of the instrument for this study

Table 2: Cronbach’s Alpha Value

Reliability Statistics	Cronbach’s Alpha	N of Items	Remarks
Preparedness	.915	15	Excellent
Practices	.903	32	Excellent
Strategies	.954	25	Excellent

3.4. Procedure

The questionnaire was administered through google form for three months upon approval of the request. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents through google form as part of the questionnaire prior to actual data collection. The form also clearly explained the purpose of the study, procedures involved, and their rights as respondents. They were assured of voluntary participation, confidentiality, and their freedom to withdraw at any time without any consequences. The google form link was sent to the respective email addresses of the respondents. The respondents are informed regarding the purpose of the survey and only those respondents who are willing to answer the survey were considered as part of the study.

The researcher also conducted a face-to-face semi-structured, one-on-one interview using audio-recording within five (5) to ten (10) minutes for ten (10) selected school officials and designees who are directly involved previously in the internationalization activities of the institution and who were also being sent to international conferences and school representatives in meetings and symposia. Meanwhile, five (5) students were also interviewed to validate the result of the survey. They were asked to shortly explain the reasons for some indicators with low mean scores and what are their suggestions for continuous improvement.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that the participants are fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and expected duration of the study and their participation is purely voluntary and they withdraw at any time without penalty. They were given informed consent and they understand how their data and responses will be used for the sole purpose of academic research. During the conduct of the study, personal and sensitive information is kept confidential where data is anonymized or pseudonymized to protect participant identity. Access to the collected data is restricted to authorized personnel only. Potential risks like physical, psychological, and social are identified prior to data collection and the measures are taken to minimize risk or discomfort during the interview and survey. The respectful interaction is also ensured where participants are treated with respect and dignity and the cultural norms and individual differences are acknowledged and respected; while maintaining clear communication, courteous, and free of coercion or pressure. The data gathering procedure also ensures the transparency and honesty in clearly explaining the purpose and nature of the data collection while answering the participants' questions truthfully during data gathering.

3.6. Data Analysis

The survey data were collected, coded, and encoded into statistical software (SPSS) for analysis. The data were cleaned and screened for completeness, followed by the computation of descriptive statistics using frequency count, weighted mean, percentage and rank were used to analyze the gathered quantitative data. The 4-point Likert scale was used to interpret the result of the data gathered for the level of preparedness and practices: Very low (1.00-1.50); Low (1.51-2.50); High (2.51-3.50); and Very High (3.51-4.00). This scale is appropriate to eliminate neutral or indecisive responses that provides the respondents to make a clear judgement whether the institution being evaluated is prepared or unprepared. It also reduces social desirability bias (Kwak et al., 2021) since the respondents cannot choose a "safe" middle option. Meanwhile, when measuring the strategies implemented in internationalization, the given 6-point Likert scale was used: Not Implemented (1:00-1.50); Less Implemented (1.51-2.50); Slightly Implemented (2.51-3.50); Moderately Implemented (3.51-4.50); Highly Implemented (4.51-5.50); and Very Highly Implemented (5.51-6.00). The results were interpreted and presented in tables and narratives aligned with the research objectives. The results of the interview were also integrated as part of the discussion to validate the result of the study. Findings were also compared with previous studies and added supporting literature.

Thematic analysis was conducted through a systematic and iterative manual process to ensure rigor and credibility of the qualitative findings. All interview responses were first transcribed verbatim and read repeatedly to achieve familiarity with the data. The

researcher then manually generated initial codes by identifying meaningful segments of text related to the study's objectives, such as preparedness, practices, strategies, and challenges in internationalization. These codes were compared across transcripts and grouped into broader categories based on similarities and recurring patterns. The emerging categories were continuously reviewed, refined, and consolidated into coherent themes through constant comparison. Throughout the process, the researcher repeatedly returned to the original transcripts to verify the accuracy of interpretations and ensure trustworthiness. Findings of the qualitative data analysis were integrated in the discussion of quantitative results and used as inputs in the development of the proposed Strategic Internationalization Plan. The study utilized manual coding without any qualitative software application.

4. Results

Table 3 presents the level of preparedness for internationalization based on the experience of the respondents. They believed that the management has high level of preparedness in which the institution has concrete plans for internationalization ($WM=2.94, SD=0.77$) and the institutional leaders have developed plans aligned with the vision and mission for internationalization ($WM=2.90, SD=0.91$). However, the relatively modest ratings in budget allocation and structural readiness suggest constraints in resource mobilization ($WM=2.87, SD=0.81$). Leadership commitment and resource allocation are essential drivers of successful internationalization efforts (Knight, 2003). However, there are identified gaps on budget allocations for international activities due to lack of submitted proposals because there are no dedicated office or personnel who are responsible for this task. This finding is reinforced by interview data regarding the absence of the dedicated office.

Table 3: Preparedness for Internationalization

PREPAREDNESS	WM	SD	Interpretation
Management			
1. The institution has concrete plans for internationalization in achieving its institutional vision & mission	2.94	0.77	High
2. The institution has allocated sufficient budget for internationalization activities	2.87	0.81	High
3. The institution has organizational structure that includes office for internationalization	2.90	0.91	High
Composite Mean	2.90	0.69	High
Human Resources			
4. The institution has competent employees with effective communication skills	3.55	0.51	Very High
5. The institution has qualified teachers to deliver quality instructions	3.52	0.57	Very High
6. The institution has academic community with clear understanding of cultural diversity	3.10	0.75	High
Composite Mean	3.39	0.51	High
Infrastructure & Technology			
7. The institution has available dormitory where foreign students or visitors can be accommodated safely.	2.1	1.04	Low
8. The institution has adequate facilities to be utilized for sports and recreation.	2.68	0.65	High
9. The institution has reliable internet connectivity for	2.48	0.63	Low

online academic activities			
10. The institution has appropriate educational technology to support the quality of instruction	2.68	0.70	High
Composite Mean	2.48	0.58	Low
Curriculum			
11. The institution has curricular offerings which are aligned with the international context of education.	2.77	0.8	High
12. The institution has established adequate number of local & international linkages to support the industry and outcome-based education	2.74	0.73	High
Composite Mean	2.76	0.63	High
Operation			
13. The institution has formulated and approved policies related to faculty & student exchange program	2.35	0.91	Low
14. The institution has mechanisms to encourage international exposure of faculty and students	2.39	0.8	Low
15. The institution is prepared to accept international students	2.35	0.95	Low
Composite Mean	2.37	0.80	Low
Overall Composite Mean	2.74	0.53	High

“The tasks of international affairs are just given to another office whose function is somewhat related to external activities of the school but being neglected due to other duties.” (P8)

From the historical point of view of the institution, it only existed 13 years ago as an independent state college and the main focus is to provide quality applied sciences and technology education in the Bicol Region with existing international partner in Germany for Urban Nexus project. This is a very good initiative from the management to deliver Climate Change Resilient Pilot Housing (CCRPH) for the residence of Naga City. This is where the internationalization activity of the institution started and continuing efforts are still being made to make this project active. The people in the organization know what to do in principle but due to absence of long-term plan for the dedicated office to operate properly, the tendency is to conduct activities as need arises. But the support of the management is always in place. Because the school officials believed that exercising proactive and committed leadership is essential for the successful internationalization as it fosters a culture of global engagement (Rogayan Jr & Mendoza, 2023; Le, 2018; Laguador et al., 2014; Ade Rusman et al., 2019; Nga, 2023). Similarly, de Wit et al. (2015) emphasized that strategic planning without sufficient institutional investment may result in fragmented or symbolic initiatives. To further explain these quantitative findings, insights from the interviews indicate the importance of strategic plan for the office.

“There is a need to develop Strategic Internationalization Plan because the Commission on Higher Education requires institutions to have that approved by the Governing Board that will serve as the basis of CHED for the approval of future foreign travels of the personnel.”(P5)

In addition, Table 3 shows the human resources dimension was rated high ($CM=3.39$, $SD=0.51$), approaching the “very high” range which signifies that the respondents believed on the competence of employees with effective communication skills ($WM=3.55$, $SD=0.51$) and qualified teachers to deliver quality instructions ($WM=3.52$, $SD=0.57$). Communication and teaching skills are essential for employees in academic institution

to provide quality services to the stakeholders, most especially to the clients from other nationalities. Further examination through interviews suggests that the employees are competent in other skills but not in the aspect of intercultural.

“The school personnel are competent in terms of communication skills but they still need to develop their intercultural competence in order for them to be aware of one’s own cultural values, biases, and assumptions.”(P1)

Developing or enhancing the intercultural competence of faculty members and staff provides better ability to teach and serve diverse students, enhances classroom management and climate for teachers while inclusive educational services for frontliners. This result aligns with the findings of [Altbach and Knight \(2007\)](#), who noted that faculty competence and intercultural awareness are core components of sustainable internationalization. Interview with the participants revealed that teachers are doing well inside the classroom conducting lectures but the variation of the teaching strategies still needs to be taken into consideration not only the communication skills. Furthermore, [Leask \(2015\)](#) asserts that the ability of educators in integrating intercultural perspectives into pedagogy enhances students’ global competencies and institutional readiness. The survey results are complemented by qualitative evidence regarding the delivery of instruction.

“Teachers still need to be aware of the challenges of students in cultural stereotypes during class activities. They need to engage the students in reflective tasks about cultural diversity and global issues.” (P6)

In terms of curriculum from [Table 3](#), the mean score of 2.76 implies that there is high level of alignment of curricular offerings with international education standards like ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework and existing partnerships with other national and international education institutions. However, the curriculum or program offering is not being subjected to international accreditation like AUN-QA or ABET.

In addition, the presence of technology-enabled learning tools also rated “high,” though the reliability of internet connectivity obtained a low rating ($WM=2.48$, $SD=0.63$) which indicates inconsistencies in digital readiness. The institution is maximizing the use of Google classroom as Learning Management System and e-learning content from online library resources accessible to all students. However, only few teachers are utilizing interactive tools such as quizzes, polling apps, and digital collaboration spaces due to poor internet connectivity. The survey results are complemented by qualitative evidence indicating that need for improvement in connectivity.

“There are teachers opted not to utilize some available online educational technologies that supposedly useful during classroom activity because of low internet connection. Using mobile data of the students and teachers would not be enough to sustain the activity.” (P14)

Meanwhile, the teachers use video conferencing tools during online synchronous classes but the problem exists for some of the students who could not be able to access the internet due to their location in rural areas without reliable connection. The same problem is also experienced by college students in the study of [Espiritu et al. \(2022\)](#) those living in rural areas reported difficulty accessing synchronous online classes due to poor or no internet at all. Internationalization of curriculum and robust ICT

infrastructure are central to fostering global learning experiences (Beelen & Jones, 2015). Institutions struggle to sustain international collaborations and online academic programs without reliable technology like unstable internet connectivity that hinders real-time communication with international partners; and lack of access to modern hardware like computers, servers, video conferencing equipment that limits program delivery.

The institution has low preparedness in terms infrastructure dimension ($CM=2.48$, $SD=0.58$) specifically on the availability of dormitory for foreign students and visitors ($WM=2.10$, $SD=1.04$) which implies inadequate accommodation facilities for international engagement. The institution has limited number of rooms to accommodate large participants because the available dormitory is just being used for visitors and guests who will be staying for a short period of time. However, in case the institution will be accepting foreign students who will staying in the entire duration of the program, those facilities would not be enough. Adequate physical infrastructure is a prerequisite for supporting student and faculty mobility programs (Huang, 2015). As Soomro et al. (2020) argue, limited physical and technological resources can significantly hinder an institution's capacity to host international students and implement exchange initiatives effectively.

Operational preparedness yielded a low mean score of 2.37 ($SD=0.80$), indicating gaps in implementing faculty and student exchange programs and in accepting international students. The institution joined student exchange program for teacher education but not yet being implemented for other degree programs. Virtual student exchange is also evident among technology students. However, no established policies dedicated for student and faculty exchange programs which serves as weaknesses of most academic institutions. These findings point to the absence of established policies and mechanisms to facilitate mobility and international exposure. Knight and de Wit (1995) highlight that effective operational systems such as clear exchange protocols and support structures are critical for institutionalizing internationalization. Similarly, Brandenburg and de Wit (2011) underscore that operational challenges often impede the translation of internationalization strategies into practice.

The overall composite mean of 2.74 ($SD=0.53$) in Table 3 indicates that the state college has a high level of preparedness for internationalization. However, based on the findings, the respondents reported with low level of preparedness is on the area of operation in terms of formulation and approval of policies related to faculty and students exchange program that is already work in progress. Another area that needs attention is the preparedness to accept international students as well as having mechanism to encourage international exposure of faculty members and students. The findings suggest while fundamental structures and practices are already in place at the level of the institution, there are certain critical areas particularly in infrastructure and operations which still require further development to achieve full readiness for global engagement. Findings from the interviews also revealed as emerging theme the need for learning spaces and recreational facilities in the campus.

"Before accepting foreign students, let us ensure first that there are adequate recreational and instructional facilities to be used not only by the guests but also for the use of local students." (P3)

“The learning spaces inside the campus is not enough to accommodate simultaneous student activities and other Physical Education (PE) Classes. Whenever there are activities in the Student Pavilion, some PE classes are already displaced.” (P11)

The findings reveal a pattern of strong human capital readiness and strategic intent that contrasts sharply with identified weaknesses in operational capacity and physical infrastructure in terms of preparedness of the institution for internationalization. The respondents believed on the readiness of the employees; however, the intercultural competence of the administrative staff still needs to be developed.

Essential steps were already considered for continuous improvement on strengthening the infrastructure and facilities, enhancing internet reliability, and institutionalizing exchange mechanisms with approved policies among various stakeholders. Achieving comprehensive internationalization requires a balanced approach that integrates policy, people, and infrastructure in a coherent institutional framework according to [Marginson \(2007\)](#). However, financial constraints hinder the institution to fully implement some plans without budget allocation. This is part of the Lewin’s Change Theory that there is a need on how budget is being allocated for internationalization activities to be implemented.

[Table 4](#) presents the practices of the institution in Internationalization. The institutional support obtained a high mean score of 2.79 ($SD=0.63$) which suggests that the institution has initiated foundational mechanisms for internationalization, such as membership in global organizations like AUAP and UMAP through its strategic planning efforts. There is a very high mean score of 3.61 ($SD=0.67$) for maintaining a quality assurance mechanism such as ISO certification highlights institutional commitment to global standards. Institutional commitment and quality assurance frameworks serve as essential enablers for sustainable internationalization, fostering transparency and credibility according to [Knight \(2004\)](#) in which clear direction and long-term vision also serve as guiding path of strong leadership commitment. Likewise, enhancing competitiveness and promoting international trust among partner institutions are also mechanisms out of accreditation and quality processes ([De Wit et al., 2015](#)).

Table 4: Practices in Internationalization

PRACTICES			
Institutional Support	WM	SD	Interpretation
1. Initiate membership to international organizations (<i>AUAP, IAU, UMAP, etc.</i>)	2.61	0.76	High
2. Quality Assurance Mechanism like ISO Certification	3.61	0.67	Very High
3. Develop and design of strategic plan for internationalization that is subject for periodic review and enrichment.	2.77	0.88	High
4. Presence of offshore alumni chapter	2.16	1.00	Low
Composite Mean	2.79	.63	High
Faculty & Student Mobility			
5. Facilitate student mobility abroad for short-term study and academic exchange programs.	1.81	0.75	Low
6. Support international faculty exchange programs between institutions.	1.52	0.72	Low

7. Research fellowships and collaborations that involve scholars visiting partner institutions abroad.	1.84	0.86	Low
8. Build international perspective through attending conferences and networks involving travel learners, faculty and researchers	2.84	0.97	High
Composite Mean	2.00	.70	Low
Research			
9. Joint research projects with foreign researchers and/or scientists.	2.00	0.86	Low
10. Publish articles and papers in international journals.	3.58	0.56	Very High
11. Establish international research agreements either memorandum of agreement or memorandum of understanding.	2.68	0.91	High
12. Secure international research partners from academic and other sectors	2.58	0.89	High
13. Provide connection between research and instruction	3.1	0.79	High
14. Participate in international research networking activities	3.19	0.7	High
Composite Mean	2.85	.61	High
Curriculum and Instruction			
15. Integrate Foreign language studies in the curriculum	1.97	0.95	Low
16. Participate actively in international fora, symposia and academic conferences	3.52	0.63	Very High
17. Link between development projects and training activities with instruction and research	3.13	0.81	High
18. Establish community service or engagements and intercultural projects.	2.52	0.85	High
19. Invite foreign speakers or lecturers for academic purposes	3.06	0.81	High
Composite Mean	2.84	.58	High
Home-Based Internationalization Activities			
Curricular and Programs			
20. Incorporate international perspectives into the curriculum, teaching programs, and learning materials.	2.55	0.81	High
Teaching/Learning Process			
21. Involvement of returned study-abroad students	1.55	0.68	Low
22. Use of international scholars and teachers	1.61	0.72	Low
23. Integration of international and intercultural materials	2.10	0.79	Low
24. Virtual student mobility through distance learning	2.55	0.99	High
Composite Mean	1.95	0.64	Low
Extra-Curricular Activities			
25. Establishment of student clubs and organizations connected with counterparts in other countries.	1.68	0.83	Low
26. Holding of intercultural campus events	1.81	0.79	Low
27. Establishing connections with cultural and ethnic groups	1.84	0.78	Low
Composite Mean	1.77	0.72	Low
On liaising with local cultural/ethnic groups			
28. Engagement of local cultural and ethnic groups via experiential learning, field placements, and research projects.	1.94	0.73	Low
29. Involvement representatives of local cultural and ethnic groups in educational, research, and extracurricular initiatives.	1.84	0.69	Low
Composite Mean	1.89	0.65	Low
Research and Scholarly Activity			

30. Establishment of specialized centers and joint research initiatives incorporating global perspectives.	2.13	0.88	Low
31. Holding of international conferences, seminars and workshops	3.48	0.68	High
32. Establishment of linkages with international research partners	3.06	0.85	High
Composite Mean	2.89	0.66	High
Overall Composite Mean (Practices)	2.46	0.52	Low

The institution is observed to have minimal participation in international exchanges, visiting professorships, or academic fellowship programs. Establishing external linkages for cross-border collaboration requires full commitment from both parties for mutual benefits. The institution under study has already established External Linkages and International Affairs Office as a response to the growing demands for partnerships. However, some foreign institutions with high level of university ranking chose to partner with institutions also included in the QS Rank, THE impact ranking and other quality measures that will prove the standard being followed by the institutions. The findings serve as a challenge for small schools who are just starting internationalization efforts. Insights drawn from the interviews illuminate the institutional realities behind these findings.

“Maintaining international partnership is not an easy task. It requires constant communication with on-going research projects or academic activities to remain active and sustainable.” (P4)

“The institution needs to develop a research culture that encourages collaborative and interdisciplinary research teams with local and foreign authors to increase the school’s visibility.” (P7)

Furthermore, the respondents rated the research dimension from [Table 4](#) with a high mean score of 2.85 ($SD=0.61$) which highlights the strength of the institution in research productivity, particularly in publishing in international journals ($WM = 3.58, SD=0.56$). However, the low scores obtained in establishing international research collaborations with foreign researchers ($WM = 2.00, SD=0.86$) which suggest that while publication outputs are commendable, joint international projects remain limited. As small size institution in the country, finding the right partners entails hard work and dedication not only of the designated International Relations Officers but also among the faculty members to do their part of partnering with foreign authors in completing research projects or conducting any academic undertakings. The institution is already hosting different international conferences in partnership with various international organizations as part of its initiative to maintain the active partnership. Based on the observations of [Huang \(2015\)](#) who stated that emerging higher education institutions often focus more on publication counts than on developing meaningful international research partnerships. [Beelen and Jones \(2015\)](#) further suggest that integrating international perspectives into research projects leads to stronger interdisciplinary innovation and global visibility.

Likewise, the respondents believed that the institution has high level of practices in terms of publishing articles and papers in international journals as shown in [Table 4](#); participating actively in international fora, symposia and academic conferences; and having Quality Assurance Mechanism like ISO Certification. Meanwhile, the respondents perceived that the institution demonstrates a low level of implementation in student

mobility for short-term study and academic exchanges, faculty exchanges with foreign institutions, research fellowships or collaborative scholar visits abroad, and the establishment of offshore alumni chapters. Moreover, [Brandenburg and de Wit \(2011\)](#) argued that mobility without adequate institutional support mechanisms such as scholarships or bilateral agreements which tends to remain symbolic rather than transformative. On the other hand, the institution has also low level of practices on faculty and student mobility in general while having higher level of practices in the area of research and curriculum and instruction. Lewin's Change Theory suggests based on the findings that the institution has already emerging practices and initiatives for internationalization that need to be implemented from the point of view of the management, down to the employees as implementers while the students will serve as beneficiaries or receivers of the changes in the process.

The high mean score of 2.84 in curriculum and instruction from [Table 4](#) indicates progress toward embedding international dimensions in teaching and learning. The delivery of the curriculum has inclusion of global content, case studies, or multicultural perspectives. Teachers incorporates comparative examples from different countries to broaden the perspectives of the students and utilizes internationally relevant case studies that highlight diverse contexts. Interview data provide contextual explanations for the patterns observed in the survey results on how the delivery of instruction may be improved to become culture sensitive.

"Teachers must ensure the representation of marginalized, minority and indigenous groups in the curriculum content; and there should be utilization of learning materials that are free from stereotypes and cultural bias."(P12)

They also embed multicultural themes across lessons rather than limiting them to isolated topics. They also apply inclusive teaching strategies that respect diverse cultural backgrounds in the classroom. However, integrating foreign language studies ($WM = 1.97$, $SD=0.95$) obtained low score which reveals a gap in preparing students for linguistic and cultural adaptability. There are some concerns raised during the conduct of study that there is a limited availability of qualified foreign language instructors within the institution; foreign language is only offered in the curriculum of Graduate School and it is not available in the undergraduate studies; there is an insufficient faculty training on integrating foreign language elements into existing courses; and lacking policy on multilingual education. The curriculum requires embedding intercultural competencies and multilingual education in the learning process so that the internationalization can be extended beyond participation in various events ([Leask, 2015](#)). Similarly, inclusive international curricula strengthens both student engagement and institutional global reputation according to [Brandenburg et al. \(2019\)](#).

The institution has low level of implementation in extracurricular activities ($WM = 1.77$), including forming student clubs linked to international counterparts, organizing intercultural campus events, and establishing connections with local cultural and ethnic groups. Likewise, the institution has low level of practices on liaising with local cultural/ethnic groups in terms of having engagement with local cultural and ethnic groups through internships, placement and applied research; and having involvement of members of local cultural and ethnic groups in teaching and learning, research and other extracurricular activities. At the same time, the institution has low level of practices in the teaching and learning process ($WM= 1.95$), particularly regarding the involvement of

returned study-abroad students, engagement of international scholars and teachers, integration of international and intercultural content, and facilitation of virtual student mobility through distance learning.

The institution has no program yet for study-abroad students in academic, but there are students already attended for cultural immersion. Students who returned after being served as delegates in international mobility, they were also given the chance to share their experiences in a platform prepared by the International Affairs Office. However, these activities must be known to the community through sending reports and social media postings. The result also suggests the need for the establishment of student clubs and organizations connected with counterparts in other countries so that the awareness and motivation of the students to participate in virtual mobility programs may also be strengthened. Although there is a high level of virtual student mobility through distance learning ($WM = 2.55$, $SD=0.99$). There are some invitations from foreign academic institutions calling for online participation, however, due to conflict of their class schedules, they could not be able to commit themselves.

"I am interested to participate in virtual activities sponsored by one of our partners in Indonesia, but since the schedule of that activity falls within the major examination week, I missed the opportunity. I will just be waiting for another chance." (P15)

Having international lecturers, scholars and teachers either online or onsite provides the students with exposure to diverse teaching methods and academic perspectives and enrichment of curriculum with global and intercultural content (Kelly et al., 2023). Online platforms increasingly facilitate international academic experiences of students which enhances digital literacy and ability to navigate virtual learning environments (Getenet et al., 2024); increases awareness of global trends and best practices in their field of study and prepares them for international career opportunities and global employability.

In addition, the respondents evaluated research and scholarly activity dimension in Table 4 with a high rating score of 2.89, indicating ongoing efforts to hold international conferences and establish linkages with international research partners. The institution's capacity to organize global academic events demonstrates initiative in knowledge dissemination and academic networking. This finding aligns with Marginson (2007), who emphasized that participation in global scholarly activities contributes to the visibility and reputation of higher education institutions in developing countries.

The overall composite mean of 2.46 ($SD = 0.52$) from Table 4 indicates a low level of internationalization practices in the state college. While some domains show promising initiatives particularly in institutional support, research, and curriculum being most practiced, such as faculty and student mobility, home-based internationalization, and engagement with local cultural groups, remain underdeveloped. This finding reflects a fragmented approach where structural and strategic efforts are present but have not yet been operationalized at a broader institutional scale.

Given the institution demonstrates strong academic intent and engagement in research and institutional initiatives, it remains at an early stage of internationalization. The institution has encountered imbalance between policy development and implementation of internationalization. The respondents considered several reasons for

this imbalance which include: internationalization policies and strategies are still in development stage; limited institutional capacity to support cross-border academic partnerships and mobility; inadequate infrastructure ICT, laboratories and dormitories to host international programs or scholars; few established international collaborations or formal agreements with foreign institutions; and limited experience of faculty and staff in global engagement or international project management.

Table 5 presents the strategies of the institution under study in the implementation of internationalization. The institution demonstrates strong commitment at the leadership and administrative levels. Indicators such as integration of internationalization into planning systems ($WM = 5.16, SD = 0.93$) and expressed commitment from senior administrators ($WM = 5.03, SD = 1.14$) reveal proactive leadership engagement. The leadership of the institution recognizes the strategic importance of internationalization for institutional reputation and global competitiveness. Participants emphasized as one of the emerging themes on leadership commitment of the top management in ensuring school policies are grounded from the needs of the community

Table 5: Strategies in the Implementation of Internationalization

Institutional Support	WM	SD	Interpretation
1. Expressed commitment by senior leaders/administrator or top management for internationalization	5.03	1.14	High
2. Embedding international priorities in the institution's mission and policy documents	4.68	1.08	High
3. Integration of institution- wide and departmental planning, budgeting, and quality review system	5.16	0.93	High
4. Appropriate organizational structure	4.81	1.01	High
5. Adequate financial support and resource allocation system	4.52	1.00	High
6. Support from other offices involved in the internationalization programs in the university	4.45	1.15	Moderate
7. Partnership with other higher education institution is based on the niche programs of the institution.	4.74	1.09	High
<i>Cross-border Education/ Academics</i>			
8. Improvement of infrastructure to promote "internal internationalization"	4.16	1.21	Moderate
9. Presence of a long-term strategic internationalization plan	4.35	1.33	Moderate
10. Updating textbooks and course content to reflect global knowledge and international issues.	3.61	1.43	Moderate
11. Provision of an internationally at par high standard of education.	4.10	1.19	Moderate
12. Preparation of facilities to use new technologies	3.90	1.16	Moderate
13. Provisions of a system for credit transfer.	3.39	1.38	Slight
<i>Research and Scholarly Collaboration</i>			
14. Enhancing academic environments for teaching and research to meet global standards.	3.94	1.15	Moderate
15. Enhanced cooperation in the design, execution, and assessment of global research initiatives.	3.97	1.3	Moderate
16. Strong international research networks through enhancement of research activities	4.10	1.3	Moderate
17. Offering incentives to all the faculty members and staff who conduct research	5.71	0.59	Very High
18. Having a clear university policy in research or	5.23	0.92	High

University's Research Agenda			
<i>External Relations and Services (Domestic and Offshore)</i>			
19. Promote cooperation with international society	4.16	1.29	High
20. Build human resources capable of addressing the social, economic, and cultural impacts of university internationalization.	3.97	1.2	High
21. Promote cultural collaboration through student unions and university academic boards.	3.77	1.33	High
22. Develop academic programs aligned with needed timeframes in partnership with regional and global universities.	3.97	1.33	High
23. Accept a higher number of international students in the university	2.19	1.3	Low
24. Foster cooperation at regional and international levels	3.77	1.54	Moderate
25. Establish mechanisms for international and regional collaboration to enhance educational program quality.	3.84	1.49	Moderate

"The management has shown its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion to all stakeholders by engaging the community from diverse cultural backgrounds to be involved in the formulation of school policies and other academic related activities". (13)

This is the commitment of educational leaders to ensure alignment of institutional policies with global quality assurance frameworks with the desire to optimize resource allocation (budget, human capital, infrastructure) for international programs; and increase awareness of the need for institutional readiness to meet accreditation or benchmarking requirements. Based on the interviews conducted, the institution has an intention to foster a culture of global engagement among faculty, staff, and students as a response to the national or regional policies promoting higher education internationalization with the effort to establish formal international partnerships and collaborations and strong support for faculty development and research initiatives that meet international standards. There is also a strong drive from the top management to implement monitoring and evaluation systems for continuous improvement in internationalization efforts with the vision to integrate global perspectives into curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional practices, consistent with [Knight's \(2004\)](#) assertion that leadership commitment is fundamental to successful internationalization as well as [De Wit's et al. \(2015\)](#) idea when governance structures and resource allocation systems are aligned with global priorities, institutions are more likely to succeed in embedding international dimensions into their core functions.

However, there is moderate support from other offices involved in the internationalization programs in the university ($WM = 4.45, SD=1.15$) which implies that while leadership is committed, coordination among various departments may not yet be fully institutionalized. This result is attributed to the limited awareness or understanding of the internationalization objectives among some offices; and competing priorities or workload pressures reduce active engagement in international initiatives. Some offices are not directly involved in the operation of internationalization which is consistent with [Altbach and Knight \(2007\)](#), who note that decentralization of international initiatives can hinder coherence and institutional synergy unless supported by a clear framework and coordination mechanism.

Results showed in [Table 5](#) that there is a moderate implementation of cross-border education/academics ($WM= 3.92; SD=1.10$) in terms of having long-term strategic

internationalization plan; having revised instructional materials which correspond to the content of global community knowledge and international problems and preparing of facilities to use new technologies. The school administration believed on the importance of cross-border education in terms of its benefit for expanding access to global knowledge, expertise, and diverse academic perspectives; enhancing students' intercultural competence and readiness for participation in a global workforce; strengthening institutional partnerships, fostering collaborative research and joint academic programs; supporting international benchmarking and quality improvement of academic offerings; and increasing the institution's visibility, competitiveness, and reputation in the international higher education landscape. These activities are already considered in the establishment of strategic internationalization plan. The credit recognition frameworks often limit students' participation in cross-border education as well as the absence of structured academic mobility systems (Beelen & Jones, 2015).

The area of research and scholarly collaboration obtained a high mean score of 4.59 ($SD = 0.82$), showing that the institution places strong emphasis on international research initiatives. There is a very high rating ($WM = 5.71$) for providing incentives for faculty conducting research and the high rating ($WM = 5.23$) for having a clear university research agenda demonstrate institutional prioritization of scholarly productivity. The school directors and administrators believed on international research as essential for global visibility and competitiveness in which providing research incentives motivates faculty to produce high-quality, internationally recognized outputs and incentives help attract and retain productive researchers who contribute to the institution's academic reputation. The institution is intentionally using extrinsic motivators to increase faculty engagement in international research initiatives. Financial and structural incentives for research enhance institutional visibility and international competitiveness according to Marginson and Eijkman (2007) on their observation. Financial incentives are good extrinsic motivators that fulfill the goal of the institution (Mazher, 2022) specifically on research targets which is a strategy of most institutions to encourage faculty to co-authors with foreign researchers. However, there is a moderate implementation of international research cooperation and network enhancement which suggests growing engagement but limited global partnerships. Huang (2015) noted that while many Asian higher education institutions prioritize research output, they often face barriers in establishing sustainable international collaborations due to funding and administrative challenges. Having research consortia and strengthening inter-university networks are the practices of other institutions to overcome their limitations.

The institution has a moderate overall implementation of external and offshore engagement strategies ($WM=3.67$, $SD = 1.18$) as shown in Table 5 while obtaining High ratings in promoting cooperation with international society ($WM = 4.16$) and developing humanistic resources to support socio-cultural impacts of internationalization ($WM = 3.97$). However, there is a low mean score ($WM = 2.19$) for accepting more international students highlights a critical gap in the institution's external outreach and global attractiveness. Brandenburg and De Wit (2011) noted that many developing institutions struggle to attract international students due to infrastructure constraints, limited international recognition, and the absence of comprehensive support services. Furthermore, universities must foster an inclusive intercultural environment beyond recruitment, to ensure meaningful learning experiences for both local and international students according to Beelen and Jones (2015). The institution believed on the importance of institutional policies and structures in fostering an inclusive intercultural environment through establishing clear policies promoting diversity, equity, and

inclusion, integrating intercultural competence into the institution's mission and strategic plan, ensuring representation of diverse cultural groups in committees and decision-making bodies and providing training for faculty and staff on intercultural sensitivity and inclusive practices

Overall, Lewin's Change Theory suggests based on the findings that the institution has reported with high level of strategies about institutional support based on the responses of the participants the way they observed it in terms of expressing commitment by senior leaders/administrator or top management for internationalization; embedding international priorities in the institution's mission and policy documents; having integration of institution- wide and departmental planning, budgeting, and quality review system; and having appropriate organizational structure for internationalization.

The proposed Strategic Internationalization Plan was developed based on the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study and [Knight's \(2004\)](#) Internationalization Process Framework on planning that serve as the roadmap for enhancing global engagement, academic excellence, and institutional development. It is also aligned with the institution's Internationalization Development Framework that integrates key strategies to foster intercultural competence, internationalization of curriculum and instruction, advancement of global research collaborations; strengthening human resource and community development and incorporation of sustainable practices for quality management. This plan aims to promote of global awareness and cross-cultural communication; student and faculty participation in exchange programs and language training; implementation of multicultural initiatives and adoption of globally aligned curricula and collaborative learning strategies. The plan is designed to encourage joint research publications and knowledge exchange; enhance faculty and staff capabilities through international training, scholarships, and partnerships; foster inclusive community engagement and integrate sustainability practices in institutional growth.

5. Conclusion

The internationalization of higher education enhances global competitiveness, promotes academic and cultural exchange and advances research and innovation. These are some of the reasons why academic institutions put greater emphasis on its preparedness to level up their educational and intercultural practices, programs and services in order to build more strategies on how to achieve the goal of internationalization in terms of pursuing academic excellence, and global competence of graduates through maintaining strategic partnerships. Findings revealed that institutional preparedness reflects the unfreezing process of Lewin's Change Theory through identifying some gaps on the implementation of internationalization activities with limited financial resources and defined responsibilities for the dedicated office to perform the duties on linkages and partnerships. This demonstrates that while institutional commitment and leadership support are evident as one of the emerging themes, the operational execution, intercultural competence manifestation, and global engagement mechanisms remain limited. The observed practices represent change phase for the institution to have strong management commitment through having clear vision and strategic direction and developing competent human resources which indicate its readiness for internationalization; however, gaps in infrastructure, student and faculty mobility, and intercultural initiatives constrain full integration of global perspectives across the institution. The strategies and the long-term plan represent the refreezing phase that

encapsulates the institutional support that ensures the sustainability of internationalization programs through identified mechanisms (policies, Quality Assurance and evaluation and monitoring system) that help maintain the consistency of outcomes. The internationalization efforts of the institution are at a developmental stage that need more resource allocation and financial support as well as promoting research and academic collaboration which marked by strategic intent but requiring more comprehensive implementation across academic, research, and administrative domains.

This study has limited generalizability due to its focus on one specific state college in the Philippines with 71 survey respondents. There is a potential bias in participants' perceptions or observations of internationalization readiness and practices of the institution but this has been addressed as much as possible that only qualified and credible participants were considered during the survey and interview. The cross-sectional design limits the analysis of longitudinal changes. Future research may add more respondents using longitudinal study to capture the experiences of students, faculty and international partners every year for a more holistic understanding on continuous improvement of the institution's internationalization progress.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

This research has no formal institutional ethics approval because the study used anonymized secondary data with no personal identifiers, it involves non-sensitive, non-identifiable survey responses for testing instruments, and the study has minimal risk to participants and does not collect personal or sensitive information. The participants are well informed about the purpose of the study through google form and verbal consent. The researcher also sought the approval of the school authority before conducting the study.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest for this work.

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