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Article

The Strategic Model for Enhancing Internationalization of Graduate Programs: Evidence of Public Universities in Thailand

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the present and desired conditions, analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and establish a strategic model for promoting the internationalization of graduate programs in Thailand's public universities. This study adopted a methodology that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches. The results revealed that the strategies for enhancing the internationalization of graduate programs at public universities in Thailand consisted of 11 strategies under 5 internationalization components: Training, Partnership; Research; Institutional services and extracurricular activities; and Participation by domestic students in international activities. A model is a stakeholder-oriented approach that was established to suit the needs of each major stakeholder, including faculty members, students, staff, and partners, to promote the internationalization of graduate programs in Thailand's public universities.

Keywords

Internationalization, Strategic Model, Graduate Program, Thailand

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Global change, disruptive technology, and innovation force all industries to reimagine and reposition themselves to remain competitive (Kafouros et al., 2022). Policies promoting the internationalisation of higher education have been devised to keep pace with growing difficulties and to integrate higher education institutions and their stakeholders into the evolving global knowledge economy and society (Arregle et al., 2021). Today's rapid globalization and postmodern society hint at a future internationalization mandate for the university as a service to the world's nation-states, according to A. J. Scott (2000). According to research conducted in the higher education industry, "globalization" and "internationalization" are not synonymous. For educational institutions, "internationalization" refers to adjusting to the social and economic changes brought about by globalization (J. B. Scott & de Vitoria, 2000). This theoretical distinction is the foundation of higher education administration (Cantwell & Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009).

The Nobel Peace Prize laureate Rabindranath Tagore was a pioneer in international education. Tagore was emphatic that the purpose of education was to foster a synthesis between the community and the individual, as well as a sense of connection to the rest of humanity (Cenkner, 1976). Tagore believed that the only way to achieve cultural and racial understanding was through global education (Cenkner, 1976). Tagore believed that intercultural understanding could only be achieved via worldwide education (Periaswamy, 1976). As a result, internationalization evolved as a response to diversity and multiculturalism to create global competencies. Problems about diversity have become key issues on a worldwide scale, attracting increased economic and cultural interdependence. Student diversity can be characterized as "the existence of various societal identifications among students, such as gender, race, culture, religion, handicaps, social status, language, citizenship, etc." (Umar & Tumiwa, 2020).

Multiculturalism is the response of educators to diversity from other cultural perspectives (Cantu, 2013). Reflection and learning are ongoing in an education sensitive to cultural differences. Culturally sensitive teachers study their students' cultures and origins and incorporate these perspectives into their lessons, demonstrating that they embrace diversity. In a culture where different groups are not only distinct but also unequal and in conflict with one another, it has been stated that schools and colleges in Thailand must educate students from diverse backgrounds (Friedman et al., 1990). The objectives of these programs included the development of cognitive and personal abilities that would enable college graduates to confront social and economic inequity and identify alternative solutions to global challenges (Cantu, 2013). These global competencies, according to Bresciani (2008), are how well students are prepared to live responsible, productive, and creative lives in a world that is constantly changing and how power and privilege currents shape students' identities, both in a US democracy and a connected but unequal world. On the other hand, Japan and China have import- and export-oriented internationalization of higher education; hence, they must respond differently to competitive pressures by investing in and implementing internationalization programs.

The Japanese government has increased its worldwide competitiveness through structural modifications, an increase in the number of international students on campus, and English-language lectures. On the other hand, China has increased its competitiveness by emphasizing high-quality research and executing the Belt and Road strategy to internationalize its higher education (Darling-Hammond, 2016; Zhang & Chen, 2018). Thailand, which relies largely on exports, has altered its education system to conform to international norms to compete worldwide. Adjacent to Thailand, Malaysia has transformed into a regional education centre (Armstrong & Laksana, 2016). Considering the prior discussion, higher education institutions must ensure survival amid the higher education crisis, when demand for higher education has exceeded supply. The demographic equilibrium has continued to shift rapidly, and enrollment at Thai universities has begun to drop (Sangpikul, 2009).

In order to maintain student enrollment, higher education institutions must welcome more target groups. The extra target categories include individuals pursuing a second undergraduate degree or studying beyond the undergraduate level. This includes international students. Therefore higher education institutions must adapt to allow students from around the world to acquire an education (Rodtook & Altinay, 2013). Higher education institutions in the twenty-first century must accordingly adjust to the new environment. They must respond to the requirements of global competition and compete beyond national borders. To become internationally competitive, they must investigate their operations (Jernsittiparsert & Petchchedchoo, 2021), reform themselves to become internationalized and develop their plans. To develop their own strategies, higher education institutions must identify their strengths and opportunities and then use their strengths to optimize and take advantage of them. Because each country perceives and understands the notion of internationalization differently, each country develops its internationalization strategy based on its strengths and opportunities in its unique way.

Thai higher education institutions have had to reposition themselves and improve the quality of education to meet international standards and become internationally competitive in response to these mandates and challenges. Therefore, they must rethink the existing paradigms and create models for boosting internationalization. This study shed light on how Thailand's public universities offering graduate education might respond to global situational changes, attain international standards, obtain international competitiveness, and survive internationalization. In addition, the study was intended to investigate the current and desired situations; explore strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; and utilize strengths and opportunities to develop a strategic model for enhancing the internationalization of public universities in Thailand, with a focus on graduate education, to assist higher education institutions in continuing to fulfil their responsibilities to serve society.

Due to the vast amount of literature on the topic, internationalization in developed colleges and universities continues to interest scholars and researchers (H. De Wit, 2019; H. De Wit & Hunter, 2015). Numerous articles on methods to improve racial and ethnic diversity in higher education have been published, and their conclusions are tied to the development of global competencies (Bresciani, 2008). Concerning knowledge, this entails that higher education institutions must employ these tactics to aid intercultural communication and collaboration. Universities and colleges in the United States must be able to develop programs that bring together international students and professors. For this approach to be effective, it may be necessary for schools and institutions worldwide to collaborate (Bresciani, 2008). On the other side, it was argued that limited data in Thailand makes it difficult to examine its internationalisation impact on Thailand. In addition, the study's description of Thailand is incomplete. Therefore, the present study aims to construct a strategic model for promoting the internationalization of graduate programs: evidence from Thailand's public universities.

Literature Review

Internationalization of Higher Education in Thailand

Universities in Thailand may find it beneficial to build alliances with their international peers to expand their global reach. While studying abroad has historically been connected with globalization, many experts now view it as merely one component of a more comprehensive plan for internationalizing the classroom (McBride, 2012). Numerous universities and colleges have sent academics, employees, and alumni abroad to learn about various cultures and enhance their language skills. Most study abroad programs in Thailand still accept courses taken outside of Thailand. Now, all undergraduates are required to participate in study abroad programs, which are also popular among graduate students. In addition, it increasingly encompasses previously underrepresented professions, including business, health, engineering, and the hard sciences (Brockington & Wiedenhoeft, 2010).

Additionally, an increasing number of foreign colleges are opening branches in Thailand. The popularity of collaborative degree programs has increased significantly. Institutions in the UK have launched collaboration initiatives with universities in Thailand. China, the United States, Germany, Australia, and Canada have established parallel collaborations.

According to Paige et al. (2009), international education significantly impacted global engagement. Moreover, Falavarjani (2017) discovered that living and studying abroad enhances creativity. Recruiting overseas students is an additional successful technique for promoting the internationalization of Thai colleges. Numerous colleges assert their revenue has increased due to the influx of fee-paying international students. This requires a variety of recruitment and promotion tactics (Lavankura, 2013). There are also geographical priorities in internationalisation efforts, such as recruiting more students from Thailand, Asia, and Africa. Several international university rankings (Lavankura, 2013) that analyze various aspects of a university's performance have received increasing attention. International students visit Thailand for various educational and cultural experiences, as well as to improve their English proficiency. Nonetheless, they are a very vulnerable demographic (del Carmen Bas et al., 2017).

A great deal of material describes the difficulties overseas students face in Thailand. Language barriers, financial difficulties, adjusting to new school environments, academic challenges, a lack of technological proficiency, difficulty making and maintaining meaningful personal connections, isolation, prejudice, homesickness, and a lack of cultural understanding are some of the obstacles international students face (Lin & Kingminghae, 2014). In addition, some international students may be exploited. When a university approaches internationalization as a business enterprise to maximize profits at the expense of "foreigners," it risks abusing

the individuals with whom it interacts. Suppose the host institution is displeased with an international student's foreign transcripts. In that case, it may not offer the student a fair chance, may not provide sufficient resources for their studies, may not provide quality education, and may not permit the student to graduate (Li, 2005). Because they are far from home, have few acquaintances, and are immersed in a new language and culture, international students can sometimes feel lonely and alienated (Cantu, 2013). Whether or not international students feel accepted at their university, whether or not they can make friends with Thai students as well as those from other countries, and whether or not the university has a support system for the many difficulties international students face all affect their mental health (Sümer et al., 2008).

Developing links with universities in other nations is a fantastic way for schools and universities to increase global engagement. Many school collaborations will continue to focus on facilitating student transfer. Changes in emphasis on internationalizing instructors and, by extension, the curriculum may have far-reaching beneficial impacts (Brewer, 2010). To fully achieve their potential for creating significant personal and societal transformation, global learning opportunities require curricular and pedagogical changes (Stohl, 2007). According to several scholars, if a school could only implement one internationalization strategy, it should be instructor training because faculty participation is crucial for internationalization. In addition to "other internationalization initiatives," training instructors will focus a premium on faculty "ownership," "choice," and "support" (Childress, 2009). Participation in Fulbright Commission-sponsored short-term foreign exchanges may prove advantageous for academics. Faculty advisors and program directors can give students and educators a unique global perspective in study abroad programs. Cooperation between countries in a scientific endeavour may prove fruitful. States in Thailand are at the forefront of internationalization since they combine curriculums and permit students to earn credits in multiple countries (Stier et al., 2010).

Conceptual Framework

Specifically, the conceptual framework of the study was based on the concepts of internationalization in terms of both where internationalization occurs and how it is implemented domestically, as described by Knight (1994)'s checkpoints for an internationalization strategy and Knight (2008b)'s approaches to internationalization, to describe a method for implementing internationalization strategies. In addition, the concepts of strategic planning and management based on Kotler and Murphy (1981) and Wheelen and Hunger (2012) were used to develop a strategic model for enhancing the internationalization of graduate programs in public universities in Thailand, while the TOWS Matrix based on Wehrich (1982) was utilized to identify strategic options.

Every program, organization, and nation must establish its internationalization plan based on specific conditions, objectives, and desired outcomes (Schwens et al., 2018). Although internationalization entails infusing a global, multicultural, and international viewpoint into higher education's goals, methods, and outputs, it is, by definition, a dynamic process that must be tailored to each institution's specific needs and concerns (Schwens et al., 2018). Later, a group of academics refined Jane Knight's definition to mean "the deliberate process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the objective, characteristics, and distribution of postsecondary education to improve the quality of teaching and research for all students and teachers and to contribute meaningfully to society" (H. De Wit et al., 2015). Chang and Lin (2018) assert that internationalization has evolved into two interdependent and interconnected concepts: internationalization overseas and at home. Internationalization abroad, which initially centred on student mobility and institutional exchange agreements, has shifted its emphasis from students, faculty, and scholars to programs such as twinning, franchise, and virtual, as well as to providers in the form of branch campuses and education hubs (Chang & Lin, 2018). Cross-border education has evolved from a development cooperation program to a partnership model to competitiveness and profit-driven approach (Chang & Lin, 2018).

Internationalization of the curriculum refers to incorporating an international and intercultural perspective into the course material and teaching and learning strategies. To promote pupils' intercultural competence, the concept of "internationalization at home" has emerged (Guo & Chase, 2011; Mestenhauser, 2007). This is a component of curricular internationalization. It emphasizes the necessity of reaching all students and domestic learning contexts. Internationalization at home has been defined (Beelen & Jones, 2015) as the intentional incorporation of international and intercultural components into formal and informal curricula for all students in domestic learning situations.

Checkpoints for an Internationalization Strategy

Organizational and administrative support; international students; domestic students' participation in international activities; curriculum; international development and technical assistance; research; international academic agreements/links; language study; training and contract education; external partnerships and cooperation; and institutional services and extracurricular activities are the eleven components of a successful internationalization strategy outlined by Knight (1994). Under this, they were developed to aid in advancing university internationalization policies and to assess the qualitative and quantitative amount to which internationalization objectives have been met. Depending on the mission and atmosphere of a particular college or university, some of the criteria may not apply; nevertheless, the criteria can be changed to meet the needs of any institution.

There is no single model for internationalization or measurement because the methods vary widely based on circumstances within and beyond the university (Trahar et al., 2016). In addition, there is no consensus on a technique to evaluate internationalization due to the complexity of the idea and changes in the worldwide context of institutions (del Carmen Bas et al., 2017). The emphasis of measurement should be on process rather than outcomes or impact, and quantitative and qualitative success indicators, or the professional judgment of those conducting the evaluation, are used to establish how far a project has progressed (B. De Wit & Meyer, 2010). Indicators are quantitative, objective measurements of the performance of a system (B. De Wit & Meyer, 2010; del Carmen Bas et al., 2017). Nevertheless, a single indicator is typically insufficient for investigating complicated processes such as classroom education. Due to the intricacy of the concept of internationalization, a diverse set of indicators is required to represent its various dimensions (del Carmen Bas et al., 2017). Evaluation methods must be sensitive to contextual differences and capable of situating the internationalization process in its right historical and cultural context to be beneficial (B. De Wit & Meyer, 2010).

Approaches to Internationalization

In reality, internationalization techniques outline a strategy for implementing internationalization strategies. Knight (2008a) argues that an institution's approach to internationalization is contingent on its objective, justification, priorities, culture, politics, and resources. During the implementation of an internationalization process, multiple approaches can be utilized concurrently and can be modified. Essentially, four distinct methodologies are used to explain the concept of internationalization. The activity-based approach is grounded in both academic and extracurricular pursuits. The activities include curriculum internationalization, student and faculty exchange, international student recruitment, international partnership, technical support, joint research, and the construction of branch campuses. The ethos method supports a climate or culture that fosters and encourages intercultural and global perspectives and endeavors. The competency model necessitates the internationalization of student, instructor, and staff skill, knowledge, and attitude development. The process approach defines internationalization as integrating an international dimension into an institution's teaching, research, and service through various academic activities, organizational policies, and tactics.

Strategic Planning and Management in Higher Education

Strategic planning entails reconciling the evolving needs of an organization with the evolving opportunities given by the market (Kotler & Murphy, 1981). Strategic management comprises formulating, implementing, and evaluating policies and strategies to advance an organization toward its stated goals. Companies must engage in strategic management, including analysis, judgments, and actions, to build and sustain competitive advantages. This technique consists of analyses and decisions that might increase the possibility that a company will select strategies that generate competitive advantages.

Research Methodology

As illustrated in Figure 1, this study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed method design to link a needs analysis to develop a strategic model. The objective of the first phase was to determine the existing and desired internationalization status of graduate programs in Thailand's public universities. In this phase, the quantitative method population comprised 400 program directors or program committee members of 400 foreign graduate programs who were employed during the 2018 academic year. Based on the sample size table created

by De Vaus (1990), this study's sample size was 277 program directors or program committee members. The sample was selected using simple random sampling from 12 colleges with many overseas programs. The sample was separated into two strata according to the principal category of academic speciality: sciences and technology and social sciences and humanities. This study's total number of participants was 165, representing 60% of the sample size. Adapted upon Knight (1994)'s checkpoints, questionnaires were created for an internationalization approach with 71 items with fewer than 11 components. The returned questionnaire data were analyzed using the modified priority needs index (PNImodified) to rank the need (Phaksunchai et al., 2014). The objective of the second phase was to conduct a SWOT analysis of the management of the internationalization of graduate programs at Thailand's public universities and to establish a strategic model for promoting the internationalization of graduate programs in Thailand's public institutions. The data collected in the first phase served as a basis for developing structured interview questions and conducting a SWOT analysis of the management of internationalization of graduate programs in Thailand's public universities. In this phase, sixteen key informants were the program directors or committee members in overseas graduate programs at Thai public universities. They were separated into two groups based on the principal category of academic speciality in sciences and technology and social sciences and humanities. They were selected using the approach of purposive sampling. To discover the viewpoints of important informants, structured interview questions were designed. The interview data were examined and synthesized using typological analysis based on the SWOT analysis. The TOWS Matrix (Koontz & Weihrich, 2006; Miloloža, 2015) was utilized to discover strategic possibilities. Comparing the external opportunities and threats to the internal strengths and weaknesses helped to identify solutions and develop a strategic model for promoting the internationalization of graduate programs in Thailand's public universities. The strategic model produced in the second phase was then validated and assessed by seven experts with extensive knowledge in either educational administration/management or higher education.

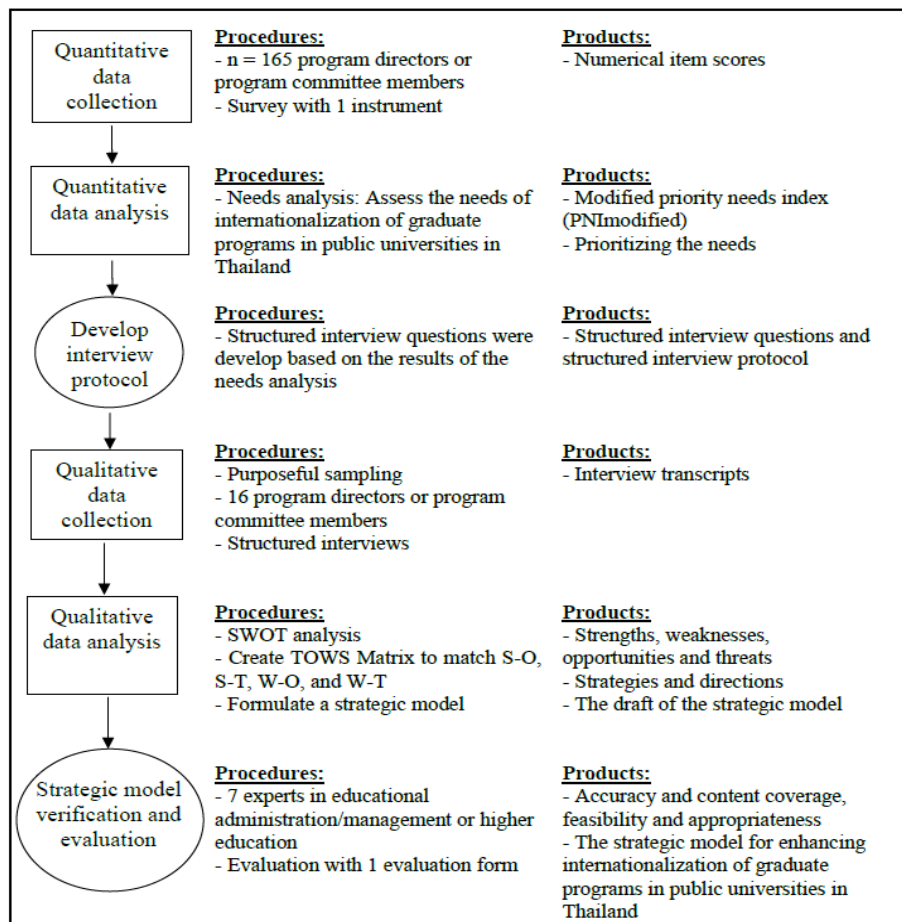


Figure 1: A Procedural Diagram of Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design of the Development of Strategic Model for Enhancing internationalization of Graduate Programs in Public Universities in Thailand

Research Results

The results of the first phase indicated an assessment of the most pressing requirements for internationalization components of graduate programs in Thailand's public universities. The training was the demand with the highest priority (PNImodified=0.415). It was followed by external partnerships and cooperation (PNImodified=0.406), research (PNImodified=0.394), institutional services and extra-curricular activities (PNImodified=0.387), and domestic students with international involvement (PNImodified=0.368). It was discovered that the five internationalization components were high objectives for strategy development.

Interviews were conducted regarding the SWOT analysis of the management of internationalization of graduate programs in Thailand's public universities in terms of training, external partnerships and cooperation, research, institutional services and extracurricular activities, and participation by domestic students in international activities. The following examples depict the obtained data:

Table 1: *Examples of Coded Text to Formulate Strategies for Enhancing Internationalization of Graduate Programs in Public Universities in Thailand*

Training		
SWOT	Examples of S/W/O/T	Excerpts from data sources
Strength	Faculty members are involved in international training projects.	“Our faculty members receive training and attend Asian regional and international conferences. Training in internationalization is a part of school's strategies.”
Weakness	Training seems very ad hoc and does not follow a master plan to achieve internationalization.	“Also, training seems very ad hoc and not following a master plan to achieve internationalization, rather it seems to fix a small problem or a request by a higher authority.”
Opportunity	Telecommunications allow international programs to conduct online courses and engage with international community.	“The coronavirus pandemic has brought rapid changes. It has forced us to adopt technology. Communication technology allows us to access international community without leaving the country.”
Threat	Financial support for training is insufficient	“Public universities do not provide large funds to subsidize international training projects, both for faculty members and students, when compared to private sectors or organizations. Public universities have not invested much money in international training projects.”
Partnership		
SWOT	Examples of S/W/O/T	Excerpts from data sources
Strength	Individual departments and faculty members have their own international partners.	“Our school policy and strategic plan encourage each program to establish international partnership. The Thai language department has a plan to establish partnership with universities in Vietnam or Laos at University of Luang Prabang.”
Weakness	Partnerships are often established without clear expected outputs that are tangible.	“Our program has several overseas networks from faculty members who graduated from foreign universities.” “Partnerships are often established without clear expected outputs that are tangible. This affects the internationalization process.”
Opportunity	Many countries invest in cross-border education in ASEAN member states and in Thailand.	“Chiba University and Macquarie University, foreign universities, are offering off-shore programs on our campus that enables international academic collaborations.”
Threat	Western educational system is more internationally competitive.	“Thai educational quality cannot compare with those of Europe or America.”

Research		
SWOT	Examples of S/W/O/T	Excerpts from data sources
Strength	International research is prioritized	“Research is one of the most significant internationalization element and superior to institutional services and participation of domestic students in international activities. Programs need to survive by means of research.”
Weakness	Research goals of both partners are not in alignment.	“The research goals of both partners are not in alignment, and it is the expectation of the 'western' partner to be the main. This leads internationalization attempts to be lopsided and makes the process of internationalization to develop unexpected barriers.”
Opportunity	Universities are sustainable communities and capable of providing resources and services, including database services.	“Our University is a sustainable community and capable of providing resources and services, including database services.”
Threat	International publication is a requirement for international graduate programs	“International graduate programs require students to publish research paper in international journal so faculty members must engage in international networks in order to provide students with publishing opportunities.”
Extracurricular Activities and Institutional Services		
SWOT	Examples of S/W/O/T	Excerpts from data sources
Strength	Extracurricular activities and institutional services are integrated with other internationalization strategies	“Extracurricular activities are connected and integrated with other internationalization strategies.”
Weakness	Few staff members are proficient in English and able to manage institutional services and organize international extracurricular activities.	“Few local staff are proficient in the English Language to truly be able to manage the demands of students in institutional services such as counseling, housing and bureaucracy.”
Opportunity	International students create social and cultural diversity on campuses, enriching international environment.	“International students create international environment on campuses.”
Threat	Employment opportunities are limited for international students.	“International students and graduates expect to work in Thailand. However, job opportunities and opportunities to be prepared for job markets are not enough for them.”
Domestic Students with Participation in International Activities		
SWOT	Examples of S/W/O/T	Excerpts from data sources
Strength	Programs provide domestic students with opportunities to participate in international activities.	“Program has provided students with opportunities to participate in field trips and semester abroad programs.”
Weakness	Domestic students are not proficient in English and foreign languages.	“Thai students as well as staff are weak in English and foreign languages.”
Opportunity	Universities encourage and support domestic students to participate in international activities.	“We build connections with universities where our faculty members are alumni to provide our students with student exchange opportunities.”
Threat	Financial support for students is insufficient.	“Financial support for students to participate in international activities is insufficient.”

A strategic model for enhancing the internationalization of graduate programs in public universities in Thailand was developed from the proposed strategies and directions. The model is based on the involvement of the stakeholders consisting of 11 strategies under 5 internationalization components as follows:



Figure 2: The Strategies and Directions for Enhancing Internationalization of Graduate Programs in Public Universities in Thailand

The stakeholder-oriented model was established to address the needs of each major stakeholder to increase the internationalization of graduate programs in Thailand's public universities. The participation of faculty members facilitates the incorporation of internationalization efforts into the institutional operations of higher education. In addition to being obliged to participate in teaching development, faculty members are encouraged to perform research. Students at the graduate level are also required to produce work and contribute through research. Participation in research by students generates new knowledge, whereas participation in international and extracurricular activities generates experiences, skills, and attitudes.

To increase internationalization, higher education institutions require staff personnel trained to serve in multinational communities with a concentration on specialized functions. In addition, for higher education institutions to become internationalized, they require international and external partners who act as agents of internationalization within the institutions. The offered methods and orientations might be prioritized according to the demands and situations of organizations. The contexts and sizes of various institutions determine their varying emphasis on particular tactics and orientations. Small universities should pursue internationalization strategies at the organizational level. International programs at small universities require institutional services and extracurricular activities from their campuses.

On the other hand, large colleges can employ both organizational and program initiatives. Internationalization components of training and research are appropriate for large universities where foreign programs are sufficiently developed to implement the strategy.

Nonetheless, both large and small colleges require internationalization components about foreign collaborations and cooperation and domestic students participating in international activities. Small universities must build a cooperation strategy to become internationalized. Furthermore, it is essential to establish cooperation skills to improve the internationalization of programs at large universities.

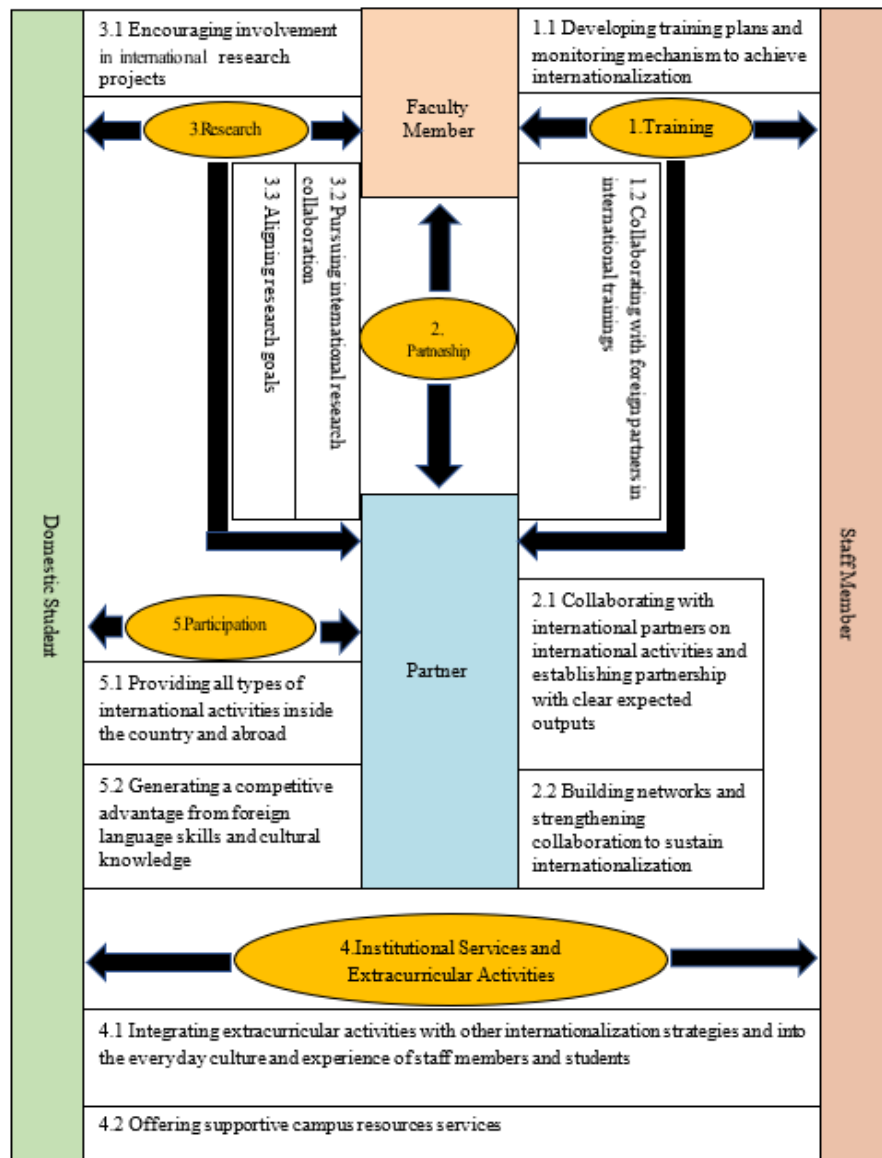


Figure 3: The Strategic Model for Enhancing Internationalization of Graduate Programs in Public Universities in Thailand

Discussions And Conclusion

Academe is currently regaining its prior global significance and emphasis. Internationalization is propelled by advances in information technology, the expansion of the knowledge economy, the ease with which students, teachers, and program and service providers may travel, and the global consolidation of economies. Internationalization in higher education's future is uncertain, although it will continue to be an important factor. Therefore, the strategy model for promoting the internationalization of graduate programs in Thailand's public universities consists of 11 strategies categorized under 5 internationalization components. Training is the highest priority requirement for promoting the globalization of Thai higher education. It is a vital and effective tool in the United States' endeavor to globalize its higher education system (Özturgut et al., 2014). The focus of training should be on positioning and value proposition. In an era of disruptive technology and innovation, online learning enables higher education institutions to rethink their traditional model; training should be offered in collaboration with international partners; and specific functions must be emphasized to develop work performance, internationally competitive perspectives, and specific competitiveness. The emphasis of partnership and cooperation must be on enhancing collaboration to sustain internationalization with measurable outcomes. In addition, colleges in Thailand miss out on the internationalization experience and prospects that ASEAN nations would provide if they pursued collaborations with ASEAN nations instead of western ones. Numerous studies have shown that differences between nations contribute to unequal research partnerships, with the wealthier partner having a greater say in partner selection, research agenda development, decision-making, budget management, and publication (Dodson, 2017). The research strategy must account for aligning research objectives and selecting strategic partners that support strategic positioning. Rather than relying on research partners who stand out in international rankings, research objectives could be contingent on well-suited partners. In addition, universities should establish diverse international surroundings and communities on campus, and extracurricular activities should build learning communities and foster an intercultural mentality. Extracurricular programs allow students to apply their knowledge of globalization and cultures acquired in academic courses to social networking (Dang, 2015). In addition, employment options for overseas students and alumni should be incorporated into university resource services. Participation of domestic students in international activities in the United States and abroad produces a competitive advantage in the form of foreign language proficiency and cultural awareness. According to Kanjananiyot and Chaitiamwong (2018), several higher education institutions develop tactics based on setting and intercultural awareness. Each institution of higher education must decide the most effective methods for providing students with international opportunities and involving them in international activities. However, internationalization that goes beyond the superficial level would inspire more domestic students to experience and be prepared to be global citizens.

Higher education institutions must develop their internationalization strategies and expertise based on their strengths and opportunities, as differences between universities, particularly in their contexts, determine their differing emphasis on specific strategies and directions. This study proposes to shed light on how public universities in Thailand that offer graduate education can respond to global situation changes, attain international standards, and gain international competitiveness through internationalization by exploring and bringing opportunities to develop a strategic model for enhancing the internationalization of graduate programs at public universities in Thailand.

Implications and Recommendations

There are several practical and theoretical consequences of the current research. First, the current study contributed to the existing body of literature. Second, this research might be considered a pioneering study in terms of its contribution to the strategic model for improving internationalization in Thailand, enhancing the current study's reliability and validity. Thirdly, the research could, in the future, become a new field that helps future researchers. Fourthly, this research could aid higher education institutions in Thailand and other nations in emphasizing the significance of strategic models to boost internationalization in their respective nations. Understanding the significance of internationalization, which might increase Thailand's economic contributions, could also prove useful for international education policy.

It is suggested that these tactics be enhanced by employing more specific evaluations of the unique learning outcomes of Thai students who studied abroad. When comparing study abroad programs, it is beneficial to apply valid and accurate assessment instruments to monitor the success and development of students across programs. Working in a specialized office, a Dean of International Students can improve services for international students. A proposal for better accommodating foreigners is to increase campus-wide knowledge of international students and related cultures through events such as international student week and editorial promotion in newspapers and universities. An example of a plan that would explicitly target the needs of international students would be to boost financial aid support, provide scholarships, reduce tuition, assist them in obtaining work permits and part-time employment, and provide information on affordable health insurance choices. International students were proposed to enhance their English skills by participating in conversation groups and writing centres. Students are encouraged to boost their likelihood of social participation by joining an organization dedicated to fostering international ties.

Limitations and Future Directions

In addition to having both practical and theoretical consequences, this study has several drawbacks. This research was conducted in Thailand, a developing country with limited applicability to wealthy nations. Future research could be undertaken in wealthy nations to broaden its applicability. Second, the research was conducted using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods; in the future, quantitative and qualitative approaches could be used individually to determine the variability of the findings. Thirdly, the study of higher education programs was restricted. Therefore, future studies could be undertaken on various programs to determine the variability of research results. Fourthly, the research was conducted using a particular model. Future research could be undertaken on more frameworks and particular variables.

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