

Managing Global Partnerships: Influence of International Collaborations in Higher Education Institutions in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the influence of international collaboration practices among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Thailand, focusing on engagement, implementation, and institutional profile variables. It examined the relationship between profile variables and the implementation of international collaboration practices and identified significant predictors of successful internationalization. A quantitative research design utilizing a descriptive-correlational approach was employed, and data were collected from HEIs through survey questionnaires. Findings revealed that HEIs in Thailand demonstrated a high level of engagement in international collaboration practices, including research collaboration, mobility programs, international curricula, visiting professors, and joint and dual-degree programs. The study also found that institutional profile variables such as the type of institution, years of operation, number of foreign students, faculty members, and international partnerships were not significantly related to the implementation of international collaboration practices. However, the availability of internationalization-related policies, strategic planning, and administrative support significantly influenced the successful implementation of these practices. The study concluded that international collaboration remained an essential component of higher education internationalization in Thailand, contributing to academic excellence, global competitiveness, and institutional development. It further recommended strengthening institutional support systems, expanding international partnerships, and enhancing policy implementation to sustain and improve international collaboration initiatives among HEIs in Thailand.

Keywords: - International collaboration, higher education institutions, engagement, implementation, institutional performance, Thailand, global partnership framework

INTRODUCTION

International collaboration has become a central component of higher education internationalization in response to globalization, technological advancement, and the growing demand for globally competent graduates. Higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide engage in collaborative activities such as joint research, student and faculty exchanges, dual-degree programs, and academic partnerships to enhance academic quality, research productivity, innovation, and institutional competitiveness (Jeon, 2023; OECD, 2025). According to Philip G. Altbach and Hans de Wit (2018), international collaboration enables universities to strengthen academic networks, improve research outputs, and expand global engagement.

In Southeast Asia, internationalization of higher education has intensified due to regional integration and global competition. Thailand, through its “Thailand 4.0” agenda and the policies of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation (MHESI), actively promotes international collaboration to support research development, innovation, and global competitiveness (Day et al., 2021; de Wit & Altbach, 2021). Thai universities have expanded partnerships, mobility programs, English-medium instruction, and international research initiatives to improve institutional visibility and educational quality.

Despite these developments, Thai HEIs continue to face challenges in implementing and sustaining international collaboration. Financial limitations, inadequate institutional support, language barriers, cultural differences, and administrative constraints often hinder effective global engagement (Knight, 2018; de Wit & Altbach, 2021). Moreover, disparities in institutional capacity and organizational readiness affect the sustainability and outcomes of internationalization initiatives (Jampaklay, Penboon, & Lucktong, 2022).

Given these conditions, this study examines the implementation of international collaboration practices among higher education institutions in Thailand and their influence on institutional performance across academic quality, research productivity, graduate competence, institutional visibility, innovation, and sustainability. The study also identifies the challenges Thai HEIs face in sustaining international collaboration. The findings are expected to contribute to higher education policy, institutional planning, and the development of more sustainable internationalization strategies in Thailand and Southeast Asia.

Statement of the Problem

This study examined the influence of international collaborations on Thai educational institutions. Specifically, the following problems were answered:

1. What is the profile of HEIs in Thailand in terms of:
 - a. type of higher education institution; (public or private)
 - b. number of years in the operation;
 - c. number of years with international partnerships/collaborations;
 - d. number of students (as a whole);
 - e. number of foreign students;
 - f. number of faculty members (as a whole);
 - g. number of foreign faculty members;
 - h. geographic location;
 - i. internationalization office/ unit presence;
 - j. number of active international MOUs/MOAs; and
 - k. number of memberships in the international organization?
2. What is the level of engagement in international collaboration of HEIs in Thailand in terms of:
 - a. Academic partnerships;
 - b. Research collaborations;
 - c. Faculty mobility;
 - d. Student mobility;
 - e. Joint or dual-degree programs; and
 - f. International conferences and networks?

3. What is the level of implementation of international collaboration practices among HEIs in Thailand in terms of:
 - a. Curriculum internationalization;
 - b. Research and innovation sharing;
 - c. Capacity building;
 - d. Policy implementation;
 - e. Resource mobilization; and
 - f. Quality assurance and sustainability?
4. What is the level of performance of HEIs in international collaboration in terms of the following:
 - a. Quality of Academic Outputs;
 - b. Quality of Research Outputs;
 - c. Graduate Employability and Global Competence;
 - d. Institutional Visibility and International Reputation;
 - e. Knowledge Exchange and Innovation; and
 - f. Sustainability of International Collaborations?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the level of engagement in the international collaborations among HEIs in Thailand and the profile variables?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the level of implementation of international collaboration practices among HEIs in Thailand and the profile variables?
7. Is there a significant relationship between the level of engagement in international collaborations and the level of performance of HEIs?
8. Is there a significant relationship between the level of implementation of international collaborations and the level of performance of HEIs?
9. What are the challenges encountered in the engagement in international collaborations among HEIs in Thailand?
10. What Enhanced Global Partnership Framework can be proposed based on the results of the study?

Scope and Delimitations

This study examines the influence of international collaboration on higher education institutions (HEIs) in Thailand by assessing their level of engagement, implementation practices, and institutional performance related to international collaboration. It also explores the challenges encountered by Thai HEIs and identifies international collaboration practices implemented across institutions.

The study is limited to HEIs in Thailand and excludes primary and secondary educational institutions. Geographically, it focuses on provinces with a high concentration of HEIs. The respondents consist of administrators directly involved in internationalization initiatives, including Directors of International Relations Offices, Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, and Internationalization Coordinators.

Review of Related Literatures

The related literature highlights that international collaboration has become a vital component of higher education institutions (HEIs) in response to globalization and regional integration. Internationalization involves integrating global and intercultural dimensions into teaching, research, and institutional functions through partnerships, mobility programs, collaborative

research, and international academic networks (Knight, 2020). In Asia, particularly in Thailand, HEIs actively pursue international collaboration to enhance academic quality, research productivity, institutional competitiveness, and global visibility. Government support, ASEAN integration, and global partnerships significantly influence these initiatives (de Wit & Altbach, 2021; British Council, 2021).

The literature further emphasizes that institutional profile characteristics such as the type of institution, years of operation, size, geographic location, international office presence, foreign faculty and students, and membership in international organizations affect the capacity of HEIs to engage in international collaboration. Larger and older universities often demonstrate stronger global partnerships due to better resources, reputation, and research infrastructure (Altbach & de Wit, 2020; Marginson, 2018). International collaboration is commonly reflected in research partnerships, faculty and student mobility, joint degree programs, curriculum internationalization, and participation in international conferences and networks (Elsevier, 2022; Leask, 2021).

Studies also reveal that effective international collaboration enhances institutional performance by improving research productivity, academic quality, graduate employability, innovation, institutional visibility, and global competitiveness (Hazelkorn, 2021; UNESCO, 2022). However, HEIs continue to face challenges such as financial limitations, language and cultural barriers, administrative complexities, policy differences, limited digital infrastructure, and sustainability concerns in maintaining long-term international partnerships (Marinoni et al., 2021; OECD, 2021). These challenges highlight the need for strong institutional support, strategic leadership, sustainable funding, and effective internationalization policies to ensure successful global engagement among HEIs in Thailand.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the study is anchored on Internationalization Theory, Network Theory, Resource Dependence Theory, Institutional Theory, and Knowledge-Based Theory, which collectively explain the motivations, processes, and outcomes of international collaboration among higher education institutions (HEIs). Internationalization Theory explains that HEIs integrate global and intercultural dimensions into teaching, research, and institutional functions to improve academic quality, global engagement, and institutional competitiveness (de Wit, 2020). Network Theory further emphasizes that universities benefit from academic networks that facilitate knowledge exchange, research collaboration, and access to international opportunities (Scott, 2017; Whetsell & Sidorova, 2024).

Resource Dependence Theory explains that HEIs establish international partnerships to access critical external resources such as research funding, technology, expertise, and global recognition (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Institutional Theory highlights that universities adopt internationalization practices because of external pressures, global standards, and the need for legitimacy and prestige within the higher education sector (Jeon, 2023; OECD, 2025). Meanwhile, Knowledge-Based Theory views knowledge as the primary resource of organizations and explains that international collaboration enables HEIs to create, transfer, and apply knowledge more effectively through research and academic exchange (Grant, 2023).

Together, these theories provide a comprehensive explanation of how and why HEIs engage in international collaboration. They explain institutional motivations, the importance of

academic networks, the need for external resources, the influence of institutional pressures, and the role of knowledge generation in strengthening global partnerships and institutional development.

Conceptual Framework

The study is anchored on the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model, which explains how institutional characteristics and internationalization efforts influence global partnership outcomes among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Thailand. The input component includes the profile of HEIs, level of engagement in international collaboration, implementation of internationalization practices, and challenges encountered in global partnerships. Literature emphasizes that institutional resources, internationalization strategies, and collaboration practices significantly affect the success of international engagement and institutional competitiveness (de Wit et al., 2020; Knight, 2020; UNESCO, 2021).

The process component utilizes a cross-sectional descriptive-correlational research design employing structured questionnaires to examine relationships among variables and determine how engagement and implementation influence institutional performance. This approach is appropriate for identifying patterns and associations in educational and internationalization research (Creswell & Creswell, 2021).

The output of the framework is the development of an enhanced global partnerships framework that strengthens academic quality, research productivity, institutional reputation, and global competitiveness among HEIs. Studies show that effective international collaboration improves innovation, sustainability, and institutional visibility in higher education (Altbach & de Wit, 2021; OECD, 2022). The framework also incorporates a feedback mechanism that enables HEIs to continuously improve policies and internationalization practices through evidence-based decision-making and adaptation to global trends (UNESCO, 2021).

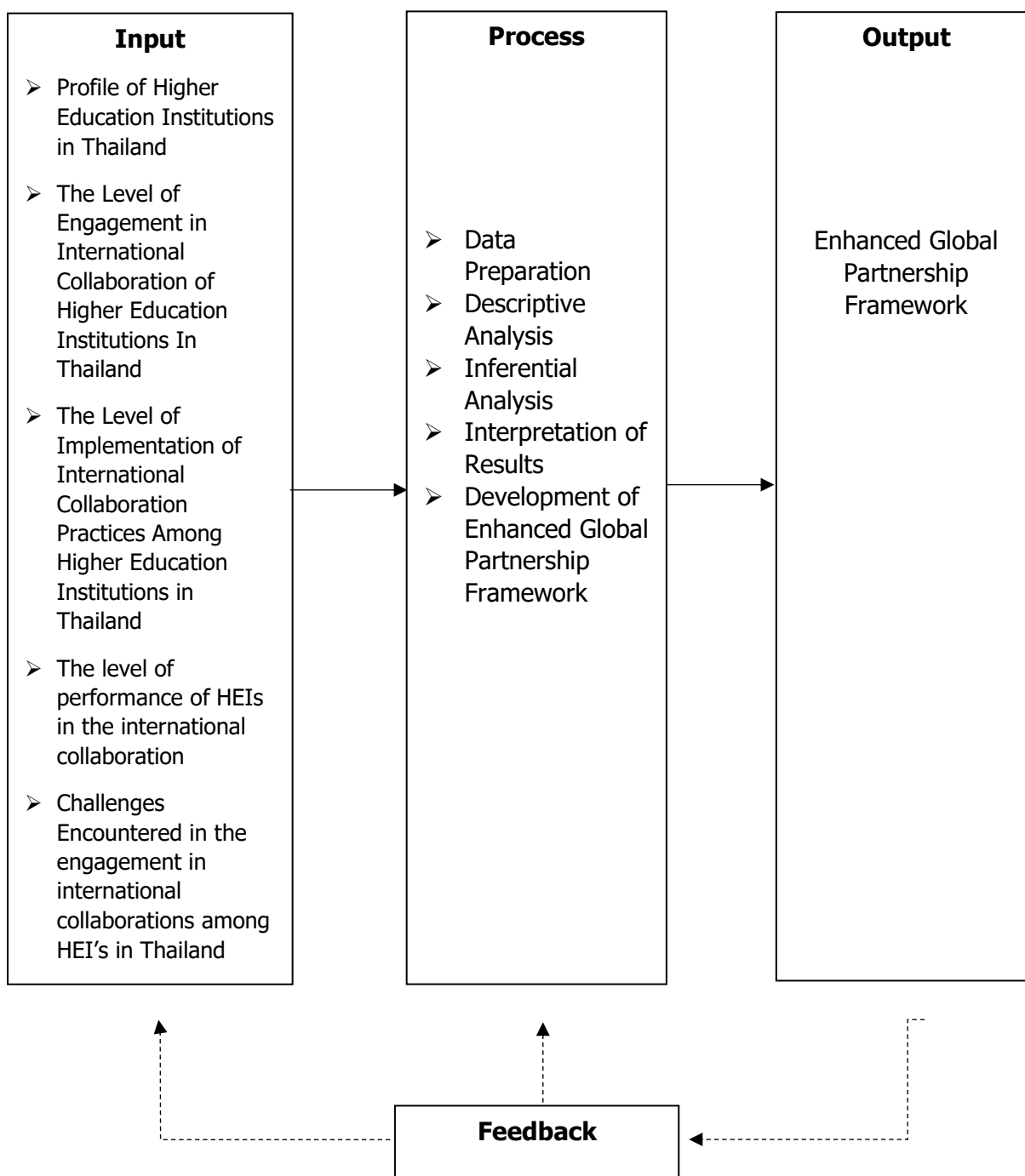


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative research study examined the international collaboration of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Thailand. Specifically, it investigated the profile of HEIs, the level of engagement in international collaboration, the implementation of internationalization practices, the challenges encountered in global partnerships, and their influence on institutional performance. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to analyze the

relationships among variables and provide insights into strengthening global partnerships and internationalization efforts among HEIs in Thailand.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive–correlational research design to examine the relationships between the institutional profiles of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), their level of engagement in international collaboration, and the implementation of international collaboration practices. The descriptive approach identified current conditions and collaboration patterns, while the correlational method determined relationships among institutional characteristics and internationalization practices (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

A cross-sectional survey was utilized to systematically gather comparable data from multiple institutions within a single period (Fink, 2017). This survey-based approach supported quantitative analysis, broad institutional coverage, and the generation of generalizable insights, consistent with previous studies on higher education internationalization and collaboration (Jeon, 2023; OECD, 2025; AUN, 2023).

Research Steps

This study commenced with an extensive review of the literature and related studies to establish a comprehensive understanding of international collaboration among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), particularly in the context of internationalization in higher education in Thailand. The review examined theories, empirical studies, and global practices related to international collaboration, institutional performance, internationalization strategies, and challenges encountered by HEIs. Relevant literature from international organizations and scholarly studies was analyzed to provide the theoretical and conceptual foundation of the study (de Wit & Altbach, 2021; Knight, 2020; OECD, 2025).

Following the literature review, the research design and methodology were carefully developed to align with the study's objectives. The study employed a quantitative descriptive–correlational research design using a cross-sectional survey approach to collect data from HEIs in Thailand. A structured questionnaire was prepared to gather information regarding institutional profiles, level of engagement in international collaboration, implementation of internationalization practices, institutional performance, and challenges encountered in global partnerships. Survey research was selected because it enables systematic data collection, quantitative analysis, and the identification of relationships among variables across multiple institutions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Fink, 2017).

After the development and validation of the research instrument, data were collected through the administration of questionnaires to selected respondents from HEIs in Thailand. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed throughout the study. The collected data were then organized, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools to determine patterns, relationships, and significant findings related to international collaboration practices and institutional performance. The results served as the basis for developing an enhanced global partnerships framework for HEIs in Thailand (Jeon, 2023; UNESCO, 2021).

Data Collection and Sample Selection

The data collection process commenced through the administration of structured questionnaires to selected respondents from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Thailand. The survey instrument gathered data regarding institutional profiles, level of engagement in international collaboration, implementation of internationalization practices, institutional performance, and challenges encountered in global partnerships. The questionnaires were distributed electronically to ensure broader institutional coverage and efficient data collection across regions. Prior to data collection, respondents were informed of the study's objectives, and ethical considerations, such as confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation, were strictly observed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The study used purposive sampling to select respondents from HEIs actively engaged in international collaboration and internationalization initiatives. Respondents included university administrators, international relations officers, faculty members, and other institutional representatives knowledgeable about international partnerships and collaboration practices. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate because it enabled the selection of participants with relevant expertise and direct involvement in internationalization activities, ensuring the collection of reliable and meaningful data (Fink, 2017; Jeon, 2023).

After data collection, the responses were organized, encoded, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to determine patterns, relationships, and significant findings regarding international collaboration among HEIs in Thailand. The use of survey-based quantitative data supported objective analysis and the generation of generalizable insights related to institutional internationalization practices and global partnership development (OECD, 2025; UNESCO, 2021).

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis employed quantitative methods to examine relationships among variables related to international collaboration among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Thailand. Collected survey data were organized, encoded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to determine patterns, levels of engagement, implementation practices, institutional performance, and challenges encountered in international collaboration. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations were utilized to describe the institutional profiles and assess the extent of internationalization practices among HEIs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Inferential statistical methods, including correlation analysis, were used to assess significant relationships among institutional characteristics, international collaboration engagement, and institutional performance indicators. These analyses enabled the study to identify associations among variables and evaluate the influence of internationalization practices on global partnership outcomes. The use of statistical analysis ensured the objectivity, reliability, and validity of the findings and supported evidence-based interpretation of the data (Fink, 2017; OECD, 2025).

The results of the statistical analyses were interpreted in relation to the study's objectives and the existing literature on higher education internationalization and global partnerships. The findings served as the basis for developing an enhanced global partnerships framework that may

strengthen international collaboration practices among HEIs in Thailand (Jeon, 2023; UNESCO, 2021).

Research Hypotheses and Validation

This study aimed to test the hypothesis that the profile of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), their level of engagement in international collaboration, and the implementation of internationalization practices significantly influence institutional performance and global partnership outcomes in Thailand. The study also hypothesized that challenges encountered in international collaboration affect the effectiveness and sustainability of internationalization efforts among HEIs. These hypotheses were examined by analyzing survey data collected from selected institutional representatives involved in internationalization and global partnership activities.

The hypotheses were validated using appropriate statistical analyses to determine the significant relationships among institutional characteristics, international collaboration practices, and institutional performance indicators. Correlation analysis and other relevant statistical tools were utilized to assess the extent to which engagement in international collaboration and implementation of internationalization strategies contributed to academic quality, research productivity, institutional visibility, and global competitiveness. The quantitative findings provided empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of international collaboration practices among HEIs in Thailand (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Fink, 2017).

The results of the study revealed patterns and relationships that supported the importance of internationalization in strengthening institutional development and global engagement. Findings indicated that HEIs with stronger international collaboration practices and institutional support systems demonstrated higher levels of research productivity, partnership sustainability, and international visibility. The validation of the hypotheses contributed to the development of an enhanced global partnerships framework that may guide HEIs in improving internationalization strategies and collaboration practices (Jeon, 2023; OECD, 2025; UNESCO, 2021).

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

This study was limited to selected Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Thailand and focused primarily on institutional perspectives regarding international collaboration and internationalization practices. The findings were based on responses gathered through survey questionnaires, which may reflect subjective perceptions and institutional self-assessments. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study limited the investigation to data collected within a single period and did not capture changes in international collaboration practices over time. Variations in institutional resources, participation levels, and respondents' accessibility may also have influenced the scope and generalizability of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Despite these limitations, the study observed strict ethical standards throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection, and participants were fully informed about the objectives and purpose of the study. Confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were ensured, and respondents were given the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. Data gathered from participants were used

solely for academic and research purposes and were handled with utmost confidentiality (UNESCO, 2021).

Furthermore, ethical considerations included ensuring the accurate, objective, and respectful presentation of participants' responses and institutional information in the analysis and reporting of findings. The study also adhered to principles of research integrity, transparency, and responsible data management to maintain the credibility and validity of the research outcomes related to international collaboration among HEIs in Thailand (OECD, 2025; Jeon, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP #1: The Profile of Higher Education Institutions in Thailand

Table 1
Profile of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Thailand
n= 108

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Type of Higher Education Institution	Public	52	48.1
	Private	56	51.9
Number of Years in Operation	Less than 10 years	12	11.1
	10–20 years	34	31.5
	21–50 years	41	38.0
	More than 50 years	21	19.4
Number of Years in International Partnerships/Collaborations	Less than 5 years	14	13.0
	5–10 years	43	39.8
	11–20 years	27	25.0
	More than 20 years	24	22.2
Number of Students (As a Whole)	Less than 5,000	30	27.8
	5,000–10,000	48	44.4
	10,001–20,000	17	15.7
	More than 20,000	13	12.0
Number of Foreign Students	None	7	6.5
	1–50 students	44	40.7
	51–200 students	37	34.3
	More than 200	20	18.5
Number of Faculty Members (As a Whole)	Less than 100 members	16	14.8
	100–300 members	54	50.0
	301–600 members	25	23.1
	More than 600	13	12.0
Number of Foreign Faculty Members	None	7	6.5
	1–10 members	54	50.0
	11–30 members	34	31.5
	More than 30 members	13	12.0
Geographic Location	Central	42	38.9
	Northern	22	20.4
	Southern	16	14.8
	Eastern	16	14.8
	Western	12	11.1
International Office Unit Presence	Yes	76	70.4
	No	32	29.6
Number of Active International MOUs/MOAs	None	2	1.9
	1–10	41	38.0
	11–30	27	25.0
	31–60	20	18.5
	More than 60	18	16.7
Number of Memberships in International Organizations	None	5	4.6
	1–5 members	61	56.5
	6–10 members	19	17.6
	More than 10	23	21.3

The findings show that HEIs in Thailand are relatively balanced between public and private institutions and are generally well-established, with most operating for more than 20 years. Institutions typically have a moderate size in terms of student population and faculty, indicating stable operational capacity. In terms of internationalization, most HEIs demonstrate moderate engagement, with several years of experience in international collaboration, a presence of foreign students and faculty, and active participation in partnerships and global networks.

Geographically, HEIs are concentrated in the Central region, followed by the Northern region, with fewer institutions in other areas. A majority of institutions have established international offices, reflecting organizational support for global activities. Overall, while HEIs in Thailand show growing involvement in international collaboration, variations in resources, experience, and participation levels suggest differing capacities to sustain and expand global engagement.

SOP #2: The Level of Engagement in International Collaboration of HEIs in Thailand

Table 2
Summary of the Level of Engagement in International Collaboration of HEIs in Thailand

Domain	Mean	Description
A. Academic Partnerships	3.81	High Engagement
B. Research Collaborations	3.65	High Engagement
C. Faculty Mobility	3.62	High Engagement
D. Student Mobility	3.55	High Engagement
E. Joint or Dual-Degree Programs	3.47	Moderate Engagement
F. International Conferences and Networks	3.55	High Engagement
Overall Mean	3.61	High Engagement

Note: Highest frequencies are in boldface

4.51 – 5.00	Very High Engagement	1.51 – 2.50	Low Engagement
3.51 – 4.50	High Engagement	1.00 – 1.50	Very Low Engagement
2.51 – 3.50	Moderate Engagement		

The findings indicate that higher education institutions in Thailand demonstrate a generally high level of engagement in international collaboration. Institutions are most actively involved in academic partnerships, followed by research collaborations and faculty mobility, showing strong participation in joint academic and research activities. Engagement is also high in student mobility and participation in international conferences and networks, reflecting active global involvement.

However, joint or dual-degree programs show only a moderate level of engagement, indicating that these initiatives are less developed compared to other collaboration areas. Overall, while HEIs in Thailand are actively engaged in international collaboration, there is still room to strengthen and expand joint or dual-degree programs to further enhance global integration.

SOP #3: Level of Implementation of International Collaboration Practices Among HEIs In Thailand

Table 3
Summary of the Level of Implementation of International Collaboration Practices
Among HEIs in Thailand

Domain	Mean	Description
A. Curriculum Internationalization	3.64	High Implementation
B. Research and Innovation Sharing	3.21	Moderate Implementation
C. Capacity Building	3.55	High Implementation
D. Policy Implementation	3.53	High Implementation
E. Resource Mobilization	3.44	Moderate Implementation
F. Quality Assurance and Sustainability	3.61	High Implementation
Overall Mean	3.50	Moderate Implementation

Note: Highest frequencies are in boldface

4.51 – 5.00	Very High Implementation	1.51 – 2.50	Low Implementation
3.51 – 4.50	High Implementation	1.00 – 1.50	Very Low Implementation
2.51 – 3.50	Moderate Implementation		

The findings show that higher education institutions in Thailand demonstrate an overall moderate level of implementation of international collaboration practices. Strong implementation is evident in curriculum internationalization, quality assurance and sustainability, capacity building, and policy implementation, indicating that many institutions have established internal systems and structures to support internationalization.

However, research and innovation sharing and resource mobilization are only moderately implemented, suggesting that these areas are less consistent and still developing across institutions. Overall, while HEIs in Thailand have made progress in implementing international collaboration practices, further improvement is needed to strengthen research activities and funding support for more sustainable internationalization.

SOP #4: The Level of Performance of HEIs in International Collaboration

Table 4
Summary of the Level of Performance of HEIs in International Collaboration

Domain	Mean	Description
A. Quality of Academic Outputs	3.49	Moderate Performance
B. Quality of Research Outputs	3.54	High Performance
C. Graduate Employability and Global Competence	3.53	High Performance
D. Institutional Visibility and International Reputation	3.37	Moderate Performance
E. Knowledge Exchange and Innovation	3.49	Moderate Performance
F. Sustainability of International Collaborations	3.43	Moderate Performance
Overall Mean	3.48	Moderate Performance

Note: Highest frequencies are in boldface

4.51 – 5.00	Very High Performance	1.51 – 2.50	Low Performance
3.51 – 4.50	High Performance	1.00 – 1.50	Very Low Performance
2.51 – 3.50	Moderate Performance		

The findings indicate that higher education institutions in Thailand demonstrate an overall moderate level of performance in international collaboration. Strong performance is observed in

research outputs and graduate employability and global competence, showing that institutions are producing quality research and preparing graduates for the global workforce.

However, other areas such as academic outputs, knowledge exchange and innovation, sustainability of partnerships, and institutional visibility are only at a moderate level. This suggests that while HEIs are benefiting from international collaboration, further improvements are needed to enhance innovation, strengthen long-term partnerships, and increase global recognition.

SOP #5: Relationship Between the Level of Engagement in International Collaboration Among HEIs in Thailand and Their Profile Variables

Table 5

Relationship Between the Level of Engagement in International Collaboration Among HEIs in Thailand and Their Profile Variables

Profile	Level of Engagement							Overall Mean
		A	B	C	D	E	F	
Type of Higher Education Institution	r _{pb}	-.208*	-.331**	-0.103	-0.015	0.112	-0.099	-0.114
	Sig.	0.030	0.000	0.288	0.875	0.248	0.310	0.241
Number of Years in Operation	r _s	0.136	.192*	0.122	-0.025	-0.124	0.031	0.054
	Sig.	0.161	0.047	0.209	0.794	0.201	0.749	0.575
Number of Years in International Partnerships/Collaborations	r _s	.390**	.353**	.355**	0.184	0.015	.197*	.287**
	Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.056	0.877	0.041	0.003
Number of Students (As a Whole)	r _s	0.146	.225*	.263**	0.061	-0.010	.247**	0.180
	Sig.	0.131	0.019	0.006	0.531	0.918	0.010	0.062
Number of Foreign Students	r _s	0.086	0.137	.291**	.193*	.228*	0.100	.214*
	Sig.	0.379	0.157	0.002	0.045	0.018	0.304	0.026
Number of Faculty Members (As a Whole)	r _s	0.138	.325**	0.115	0.020	-0.036	0.185	0.139
	Sig.	0.155	0.001	0.236	0.834	0.709	0.056	0.152
Number of Foreign Faculty Members	r _s	.220*	0.162	.289**	.317**	.333**	0.069	.287**
	Sig.	0.022	0.094	0.002	0.001	0.000	0.477	0.003
International Office Unit Presence	r _{pb}	-0.051	-0.114	-0.023	-0.104	-0.086	-0.049	-0.086
	Sig.	0.601	0.242	0.812	0.283	0.376	0.616	0.374
Number of Active International MOUs/MOAs	r _s	0.140	0.079	.270**	.275**	.318**	0.175	.263**
	Sig.	0.147	0.419	0.005	0.004	0.001	0.070	0.006
Number of Memberships in International Organizations	r _s	0.150	0.092	0.170	0.169	0.140	0.080	0.163
	Sig.	0.122	0.344	0.078	0.080	0.149	0.410	0.091

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: Type of Higher Education Institution (1=Public, 2=Private);

International Office Unit Presence (1=Available, 2=Not Available)

Level of Engagement in International Collaboration

A. Academic Partnerships

C. Research Collaborations

E. Faculty Mobility

B. Student Mobility

D. Joint or Dual-Degree Programs

F. International Conferences and Networks

The findings show that several institutional profile variables are significantly related to the level of engagement in international collaboration among higher education institutions in Thailand. Public institutions tend to have higher engagement in academic partnerships and

student mobility compared to private HEIs. More established institutions are also more active in student mobility, indicating that experience contributes to participation in international activities.

Notably, the number of years in international collaboration shows strong positive relationships across multiple areas, making it a key factor influencing overall engagement. Similarly, institutional size (number of students and faculty) and the presence of foreign students and faculty are positively associated with higher engagement, suggesting that larger and more internationally diverse institutions have greater capacity for collaboration. The number of active international agreements (MOUs/MOAs) also significantly supports engagement across several domains.

However, the presence of an international office and membership in international organizations do not show significant relationships with engagement levels. Overall, the results indicate that experience, institutional capacity, and international human resources are the most important factors influencing engagement in international collaboration, while some structural features have limited direct impact.

SOP #6: Relationship Between the Level of Implementation of International Collaboration Practices and Their Profile Variables

Table 6
Relationship Between the Level of Implementation of International Collaboration Practices Among HEIs in Thailand and Their Profile Variables

Profile	Level of Implementation							Overall Mean
		A	B	C	D	E	F	
Type of Higher Education Institution	r _{pb}	-0.035	0.063	-0.019	-0.153	-0.107	-0.062	-0.063
	Sig.	0.722	0.519	0.848	0.113	0.269	0.521	0.517
Number of Years in Operation	r _s	-0.064	0.124	-0.070	0.045	-0.128	0.006	-0.014
	Sig.	0.509	0.202	0.473	0.647	0.185	0.954	0.887
Number of Years in International Partnerships/Collaborations	r _s	0.041	0.022	0.017	0.129	-0.100	0.079	0.040
	Sig.	0.675	0.822	0.864	0.182	0.302	0.418	0.677
Number of Students (As a Whole)	r _s	.202*	.210*	0.130	.233*	.200*	0.074	.224*
	Sig.	0.036	0.029	0.179	0.015	0.038	0.444	0.020
Number of Foreign Students	r _s	-0.045	0.059	-0.041	-0.077	-0.065	-0.064	-0.047
	Sig.	0.642	0.548	0.672	0.428	0.504	0.512	0.631
Number of Faculty Members (As a Whole)	r _s	-0.040	0.029	-0.146	0.022	-0.053	-0.018	-0.042
	Sig.	0.682	0.768	0.131	0.823	0.583	0.855	0.663
Number of Foreign Faculty Members	r _s	0.088	0.095	-0.030	0.085	0.042	-0.063	0.047
	Sig.	0.364	0.329	0.759	0.382	0.663	0.515	0.626
International Office Unit Presence	r _{pb}	-0.011	0.031	0.111	0.009	0.012	.205*	0.076
	Sig.	0.913	0.749	0.253	0.930	0.902	0.033	0.435
Number of Active International MOUs/MOAs	r _s	.279**	0.054	0.057	0.151	0.148	0.010	0.145
	Sig.	0.003	0.577	0.561	0.120	0.126	0.919	0.133
Number of Memberships in International Organizations	r _s	0.116	-0.056	-0.032	-0.002	-0.056	-0.046	-0.018
	Sig.	0.232	0.563	0.742	0.985	0.566	0.636	0.853

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: Type of Higher Education Institution (1=Public, 2=Private);
International Office Unit Presence (1=Available, 2=Not Available)

Level of implementation in International Collaboration

A. Curriculum Internationalization

C. Research and Innovation Sharing

E. Capacity Building

B. Policy Implementation

D. Resource Mobilization

F. Quality Assurance and Sustainability

The findings show that most institutional profile variables have no significant relationship with the level of implementation of international collaboration practices among higher education institutions in Thailand. This suggests that factors such as institutional type, years of operation, international experience, and membership in organizations do not strongly influence how these practices are implemented.

However, institutional size (number of students) demonstrates a consistent positive relationship with several implementation areas, indicating that larger institutions tend to have better implementation due to greater resources and capacity. The number of active international agreements (MOUs/MOAs) is also positively linked to curriculum internationalization, highlighting the role of formal partnerships. Additionally, the presence of an international office is associated with stronger quality assurance and sustainability practices.

Overall, the results suggest that institutional capacity, partnerships, and organizational support structures play a more important role in implementation than basic institutional characteristics.

SOP #7: Relationship Between the Level of Engagement in International Collaboration and the Level of Performance of HEIs

Table 7

Relationship Between the Level of Engagement in International Collaboration and the Level of Performance of HEIs

Level of Performance	Level of Engagement						Overall Mean
		A	B	C	D	E	
Quality of Academic Outputs	r_s	.476**	.420**	.563**	.487**	.562**	.581**
	Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Quality of Research Outputs	r_s	.313**	.432**	.527**	.320**	.320**	.511**
	Sig.	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.000
Graduate Employability and Global Competence	r_s	.400**	.290**	.452**	.499**	.599**	.399**
	Sig.	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Institutional Visibility and International Reputation	r_s	.334**	.314**	.480**	.392**	.487**	.490**
	Sig.	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Knowledge Exchange and Innovation	r_s	.348**	.332**	.469**	.401**	.480**	.544**
	Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Sustainability of International Collaborations	r_s	.483**	.418**	.613**	.523**	.548**	.633**
	Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Overall Mean	r_s	.447**	.386**	.535**	.485**	.557**	.579**
	Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Level of Engagement in International Collaboration

- A. Academic Partnerships
- C. Research Collaborations
- E. Faculty Mobility

- B. Student Mobility
- D. Joint or Dual-Degree Programs
- F. International Conferences and Networks

The results show a strong and significant positive relationship between the level of engagement in international collaboration and institutional performance among higher education institutions in Thailand. This indicates that higher engagement is associated with better outcomes across all performance areas.

Specifically, engagement is strongly linked to improvements in academic and research outputs, graduate employability and global competence, institutional visibility, and knowledge exchange and innovation. The strongest relationship is observed in the sustainability of international collaborations, suggesting that more engaged institutions are better able to maintain long-term partnerships.

Overall, the findings confirm that increased participation in international collaboration significantly enhances institutional performance, highlighting its importance in strengthening global competitiveness and long-term development of HEIs.

SOP #8: Relationship Between the Level of Implementation in International Collaboration and the Level of Performance of HEIs

Table 8
Relationship Between the Level of Implementation of International Collaboration and the Level of Performance of HEIs

Level of Performance	Level of Implementation						Overall Mean
		A	B	C	D	E	
Quality of Academic Outputs	r_s	.637**	0.158	.713**	.683**	.672**	.722**
	Sig.	0.000	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Quality of Research Outputs	r_s	.330**	0.180	.426**	.505**	.439**	.521**
	Sig.	0.000	0.062	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Graduate Employability and Global Competence	r_s	.500**	0.102	.593**	.556**	.525**	.597**
	Sig.	0.000	0.292	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Institutional Visibility and International Reputation	r_s	.539**	0.124	.624**	.634**	.585**	.610**
	Sig.	0.000	0.201	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Knowledge Exchange and Innovation	r_s	.522**	0.102	.690**	.648**	.651**	.592**
	Sig.	0.000	0.294	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Sustainability of International Collaborations	r_s	.552**	0.159	.730**	.744**	.686**	.769**
	Sig.	0.000	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Overall Mean	r_s	.567**	0.152	.692**	.700**	.653**	.723**
	Sig.	0.000	0.115	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Level of implementation in International Collaboration

A. Curriculum Internationalization

C. Research and Innovation Sharing

E. Capacity Building

B. Policy Implementation

D. Resource Mobilization

F. Quality Assurance and Sustainability

The findings reveal a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between the level of implementation of international collaboration practices and institutional performance among higher education institutions in Thailand. This indicates that more effective implementation leads to improved outcomes across most performance areas.

Implementation is strongly associated with academic outputs, research quality, graduate employability and global competence, institutional visibility, and knowledge exchange and innovation. The strongest relationship is observed in the sustainability of international collaborations, highlighting the importance of effective implementation in maintaining long-term partnerships.

However, policy implementation alone does not show a significant relationship with performance, suggesting that policies must be supported by proper execution and institutional mechanisms to be effective. Overall, the results confirm that strong implementation of international collaboration practices plays a critical role in enhancing institutional performance and global competitiveness.

SOP #9: Challenges Encountered in Engagement in International Collaboration Among HEIs in Thailand

Table 9
Challenges Encountered in Engagement in International Collaboration
Among HEIs in Thailand
n=108

Indicators	Very High		High		Moderate		Less		Least	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Financial limitations hinder collaboration.	36	33.3	31	28.7	36	33.3	3	2.8	2	1.9
2. Language barriers affect interaction.	18	16.7	38	35.2	40	37.0	8	7.4	4	3.7
3. Cultural differences create challenges.	16	14.8	34	31.5	41	38.0	15	13.9	2	1.9
4. Administrative/bureaucratic delays impede collaboration.	21	19.4	38	35.2	37	34.3	7	6.5	5	4.6
5. Institutional support is insufficient.	19	17.6	40	37.0	33	30.6	13	12.0	3	2.8
6. Long-term sustainability of partnerships is difficult.	13	12.0	34	31.5	46	42.6	8	7.4	7	6.5
7. Differences in academic standards/requirements.	16	14.8	44	40.7	36	33.3	10	9.3	2	1.9
8. Limited faculty/staff capacity for internationalization.	20	18.5	44	40.7	38	35.2	3	2.8	3	2.8
9. Lack of international networks or information.	17	15.7	33	30.6	37	34.3	13	12.0	8	7.4
10. Differences in legal or policy frameworks across countries hinder collaboration.	13	12.0	35	32.4	40	37.0	14	13.0	6	5.6
Mean			3.53 – Highly Serious							

Note: Highest frequencies are in boldface

4.51 – 5.00	Very Highly Serious	1.51 – 2.50	Less Serious
3.51 – 4.50	Highly Serious	1.00 – 1.50	Least Serious
2.51 – 3.50	Moderately Serious		

The findings indicate that higher education institutions in Thailand face highly serious challenges in implementing and sustaining international collaboration. Key issues include financial limitations, administrative and bureaucratic delays, and insufficient institutional support, all of which significantly constrain international activities.

Furthermore, limited faculty and staff capacity, along with differences in academic standards, further hinder effective collaboration. Challenges related to language barriers, cultural differences, and legal and policy variations also affect communication and the smooth implementation of partnerships.

Concerns about the sustainability of partnerships and limited access to international networks and information highlight ongoing difficulties in maintaining and expanding global engagement. Overall, while HEIs in Thailand are actively involved in international collaboration, these financial, institutional, and structural barriers must be addressed to improve effectiveness, sustainability, and global competitiveness.

SOP #10: Proposed Framework

The Proposed Enhanced Global Partnership Framework

I. Introduction

The Enhanced Global Partnership Framework was developed to address gaps identified in the study, where HEIs in Thailand showed high engagement in international collaboration but only moderate implementation and performance. The framework emphasizes the need for a strategic, integrated, and sustainable approach to internationalization by aligning institutional capacity, policies, resources, and performance goals. It focuses on strengthening academic partnerships, research collaboration, mobility programs, resource mobilization, policy implementation, capacity building, and quality assurance. Ultimately, the framework serves as a strategic guide for HEIs to improve institutional performance, sustainability, and global competitiveness through effective international collaboration.

II. Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations

The framework is grounded on theories of internationalization, collaborative networks, resource-based view (RBV), and systems theory, which explain how international collaboration contributes to institutional performance and effective implementation. Internationalization theory emphasizes the integration of global dimensions into teaching, research, and service, while collaborative network theory highlights the importance of partnerships and global knowledge networks in improving academic outputs and institutional visibility.

The framework also applies the resource-based view, which explains that institutional resources such as funding, infrastructure, partnerships, and organizational capability significantly influence the implementation of international collaboration. Systems theory further supports the framework by viewing international collaboration as an interconnected process involving inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes that require continuous evaluation and support mechanisms.

Conceptually, the framework is built on the alignment of engagement, implementation, and performance. Engagement refers to participation in international activities, implementation reflects the operationalization of these activities, and performance represents the resulting institutional outcomes. The framework emphasizes that effective implementation serves as the bridge between engagement and improved institutional performance, sustainability, and global competitiveness.

III. Framework Overview

The Enhanced Global Partnership Framework provides a comprehensive and systematic structure for improving international collaboration among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Thailand. It serves as an integrated model that links institutional characteristics, implementation practices, and performance outcomes into a unified system.

The framework explains how institutional inputs such as resources, partnerships, and organizational structures are transformed through international collaboration processes into measurable outputs and long-term outcomes. It highlights three key dimensions: engagement, implementation, and performance. Engagement refers to participation in international activities, implementation focuses on how these activities are operationalized, and performance represents institutional gains such as improved academic quality, research productivity, and global competitiveness.

The framework also incorporates mediating factors, including institutional capacity, leadership support, and faculty readiness, as well as enabling mechanisms such as funding, policies, and administrative systems. These elements strengthen the effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of international collaboration efforts. Through a systems-oriented and continuous improvement approach, the framework serves as a strategic guide for HEIs to enhance the quality and sustainability of their global partnerships.

IV. Core Components of the Framework

This is composed of interrelated components that collectively explain how international collaboration is developed, implemented, and translated into institutional success. Each component plays a distinct role while remaining interconnected within a dynamic system.

A. Input Component

The input component includes the foundational resources and institutional characteristics that shape the capacity for international collaboration. These consist of the type of HEI, number of students and faculty, years of operation, and experience in international partnerships. It also covers the presence of international offices, the number of active MOUs/MOAs, and institutional linkages with global organizations. These inputs determine the readiness and potential of institutions to engage in global partnerships.

B. Process Component

The process component represents the implementation of international collaboration practices. It includes curriculum internationalization, research and innovation sharing, faculty and student mobility, policy implementation, resource mobilization, and quality assurance and

sustainability. These processes translate institutional intent into concrete activities and programs that operationalize global engagement.

C. Mediating Factors

Mediating factors refer to internal conditions that influence how effectively inputs are transformed through processes. These include institutional leadership, faculty competencies, organizational culture, and strategic alignment. They explain variations in implementation and performance across institutions, even when resources are similar.

D. Enabling Mechanisms

Enabling mechanisms are the support systems that facilitate successful implementation. These include financial resources, administrative efficiency, technological infrastructure, and institutional policies. They help address barriers such as funding limitations, bureaucratic delays, and limited capacity, ensuring smoother and more effective collaboration.

E. Output Component

The output component reflects the immediate results of implemented international collaboration practices. These include increased academic partnerships, strengthened research collaborations, enhanced faculty and student mobility, participation in international conferences and networks, and the development of joint or dual-degree programs. Outputs demonstrate the operational success of collaboration efforts.

F. Outcome Component

The outcome component represents the long-term impacts of international collaboration on institutional performance. These include improved quality of academic and research outputs, enhanced graduate employability and global competence, increased institutional visibility and international reputation, strengthened knowledge exchange and innovation, and sustainable global partnerships. These outcomes signify the overall effectiveness and value of international collaboration in advancing institutional goals.

V. Feedback Mechanism

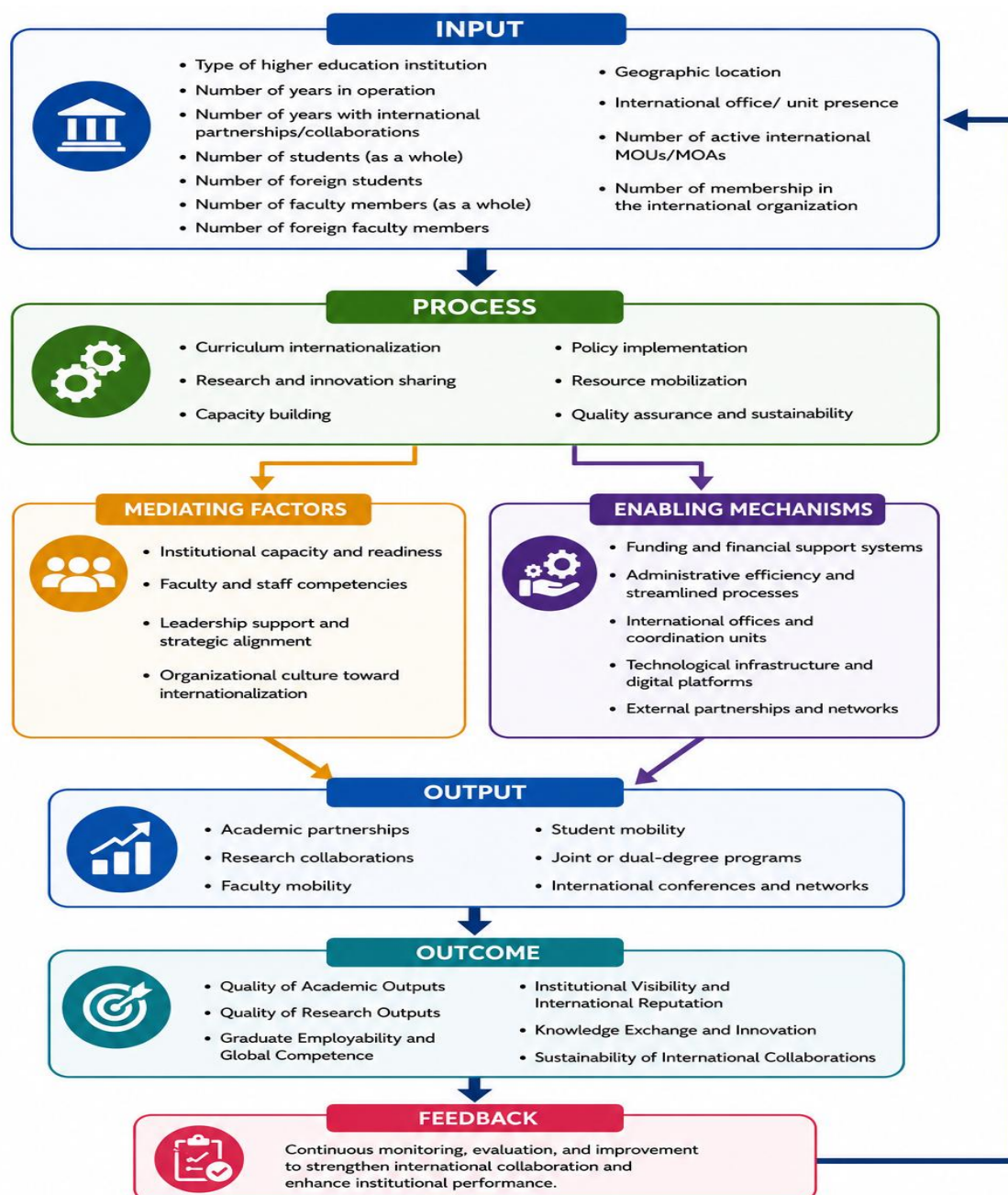
The feedback mechanism of the Enhanced Global Partnership Framework ensures continuous improvement and sustainability of international collaboration practices among HEIs in Thailand. It emphasizes regular monitoring and evaluation of outputs and outcomes such as academic quality, research productivity, graduate employability, institutional visibility, and partnership sustainability to identify areas needing improvement.

Evaluation results are communicated to institutional leaders and international offices to support policy refinement, resource allocation, capacity building, and strategy enhancement. The mechanism also incorporates feedback from faculty, students, and international partners to ensure that collaboration practices remain responsive, effective, and mutually beneficial. Through this cyclical process, HEIs can address weaknesses, adapt to global changes, and strengthen the quality and sustainability of international collaboration efforts.

VI. Structural Model Description

The components of the Enhanced Global Partnership Framework were systematically derived from the variables and findings of the study and organized into a logical and coherent structure. Specifically, the input component was based on the institutional profile variables examined in the study, such as type of HEI, institutional size, years of operation, international experience, presence of international offices, and number of partnerships and memberships. These factors represent the foundational capacities that influence international collaboration. The process component was drawn from the domains of implementation, including curriculum internationalization, research and innovation sharing, mobility programs, policy implementation, resource mobilization, and quality assurance, as these reflect the actual activities undertaken by institutions to operationalize international collaboration.

The Proposed Enhanced Global Partnership Framework



The output component was derived from the engagement domains, such as academic partnerships, research collaborations, faculty and student mobility, joint or dual-degree programs, and participation in international conferences and networks, which represent the immediate results of implemented processes. Meanwhile, the outcome component was based on the performance indicators identified in the study, including quality of academic and research outputs, graduate employability, institutional visibility and reputation, knowledge exchange and innovation, and sustainability of partnerships, as these reflect the long-term impacts of international collaboration.

In addition, mediating factors were incorporated to explain variations in results across institutions, particularly where differences in performance were observed despite similar levels of engagement or implementation. These include institutional capacity, leadership support, faculty competencies, and organizational culture. Similarly, enabling mechanisms were included based on the identified challenges, such as financial limitations, administrative constraints, and limited institutional support. These mechanisms—such as funding systems, administrative efficiency, infrastructure, and policy support—serve to facilitate and strengthen the implementation of international collaboration practices.

The framework follows a systems-based structure supported by the study's correlation results, which demonstrated strong and significant relationships between engagement, implementation, and performance. This validates the directional flow of the framework from inputs to processes, outputs, and outcomes, with mediating and enabling elements providing explanatory and supportive functions.

VII. Implications of the Framework

The Enhanced Global Partnership Framework highlights the need for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Thailand to strengthen the strategic implementation of international collaboration beyond mere participation. It emphasizes the importance of institutional capacity, leadership support, faculty development, and organizational readiness in sustaining effective internationalization efforts.

The framework also underscores the significance of adequate funding, efficient administrative systems, and strong institutional support mechanisms to address challenges related to financial limitations and infrastructure. Additionally, it stresses the importance of policy alignment, continuous evaluation, and data-driven decision-making to improve collaboration outcomes and institutional performance.

Finally, the framework promotes sustainability and long-term impact by encouraging HEIs to establish enduring partnerships, foster mutual benefits, and enhance global competitiveness through meaningful and well-managed international collaboration initiatives.

SUMMARY

The findings confirm that international collaboration significantly contributes to the institutional development and global competitiveness of Thai HEIs. Consistent with the Internationalization Theory of de Wit (2020), the study demonstrated that internationalization is not merely an institutional activity but an integrated strategic process that enhances teaching,

research, and institutional governance. Institutions with stronger engagement in global partnerships exhibited higher levels of academic performance and institutional visibility.

The significant relationship between institutional profile variables and collaboration practices supports Resource Dependence Theory, which explains that institutions seek international partnerships to access external resources, expertise, and research opportunities. Larger institutions and those with established internationalization structures were better positioned to sustain global partnerships and collaborative initiatives.

The study also supports Network Theory, highlighting the importance of institutional networks in facilitating research collaboration, mobility programs, and knowledge exchange. Universities actively participating in international academic networks achieved greater research productivity and institutional recognition.

However, the findings also revealed persistent barriers affecting international collaboration. Financial limitations, administrative constraints, and language barriers continue to hinder effective implementation of internationalization programs among Thai HEIs, particularly in regional institutions with limited resources. These findings align with previous studies emphasizing disparities in internationalization capacity among developing-country universities.

The study further underscores the importance of strategic leadership and institutional commitment in sustaining global partnerships. International collaboration requires comprehensive institutional policies, continuous investment, faculty development, and digital readiness to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience in an increasingly globalized higher education environment.

In conclusion, international collaboration remains a vital mechanism for enhancing academic excellence, innovation, research productivity, and global competitiveness among HEIs in Thailand. Strengthening institutional support systems, expanding digital internationalization, and fostering sustainable partnerships are essential for achieving long-term institutional development and meaningful global engagement.

CONCLUSIONS

From the preceding findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The profile of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Thailand reflects a balanced distribution between public and private institutions, with most institutions having moderate years of operation and established international partnerships. HEIs are generally medium-sized in terms of student and faculty population, with a growing presence of foreign students and faculty members. The majority have international offices and active MOUs/MOAs, indicating a foundational capacity for global engagement, although variations exist in institutional resources and international exposure.
2. The level of engagement in international collaboration among HEIs in Thailand is generally high, particularly in academic partnerships, research collaborations, faculty mobility, student mobility, and participation in international conferences and networks. However, joint or dual-degree programs remain moderately implemented,

suggesting an area that requires further development to strengthen international academic integration.

3. The level of implementation of international collaboration practices is moderate overall, with strong implementation observed in curriculum internationalization, capacity building, policy implementation, and quality assurance. In contrast, research and innovation sharing and resource mobilization are only moderately implemented, indicating gaps in translating engagement into fully operationalized practices.
4. The level of performance of HEIs in international collaboration is moderate, with strengths in research outputs and graduate employability, while academic outputs, institutional visibility, knowledge exchange, and sustainability of collaborations require further enhancement. This suggests that while engagement and implementation are evident, their impact on overall institutional performance remains limited in some domains.
5. Significant relationships exist between the level of engagement in international collaboration and selected profile variables. Factors such as years of international partnerships, number of students, foreign students, foreign faculty members, and active MOUs/MOAs positively influence engagement. Public institutions tend to demonstrate higher engagement in certain domains. However, other variables such as institutional type, years of operation, and international office presence show limited influence. Geographic location has a moderate influence on certain engagement domains, particularly faculty mobility, academic partnerships, and participation in international conferences and networks. However, its effect on student mobility and joint or dual-degree programs is minimal, indicating that location alone does not strongly determine overall international engagement.
6. The level of implementation of international collaboration practices shows limited association with most profile variables, except for the number of students, which consistently demonstrates a positive relationship across several domains. Additionally, the presence of international offices and the number of active MOUs/MOAs contribute to specific areas of implementation, while most institutional characteristics have minimal direct impact.
7. There is a strong and significant positive relationship between the level of engagement in international collaboration and the level of performance of HEIs. Increased engagement leads to improvements across all performance domains, particularly in the sustainability of international collaborations, indicating that active participation in global partnerships enhances institutional outcomes.
8. Similarly, the level of implementation of international collaboration practices has a strong and significant positive relationship with institutional performance. Effective implementation, especially in research and innovation sharing, resource mobilization, capacity building, and quality assurance, significantly contributes to improved academic outputs, research quality, global competence, and sustainability. However, policy implementation alone does not significantly influence performance outcomes.

9. HEIs in Thailand face highly serious challenges in international collaboration, with financial limitations, differences in academic standards, limited faculty and staff capacity, administrative delays, and insufficient institutional support identified as major barriers. Additional concerns include language and cultural differences, sustainability of partnerships, limited international networks, and varying legal or policy frameworks. It suggests that despite active internationalization efforts, operational, financial, and organizational constraints continue to hinder sustainable international collaboration, highlighting the need for stronger institutional support, adequate resources, competent personnel, and effective administrative and policy systems.
10. The Proposed Enhanced Global Partnership Framework provides a strategic and systematic approach for strengthening international collaboration among HEIs in Thailand. Grounded in internationalization and organizational theories, the framework emphasizes the integration of institutional capacity, strategic partnerships, leadership support, resource mobilization, and continuous evaluation to improve the implementation and sustainability of internationalization practices. Through its interconnected components and feedback mechanisms, the framework aims to enhance academic quality, research productivity, institutional visibility, graduate competitiveness, innovation, and long-term global partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Higher education institutions (HEIs) in Thailand may strengthen their institutional capacity by expanding international offices, increasing participation in global organizations, and developing more formal partnerships to support internationalization efforts.
2. HEIs are encouraged to intensify participation in academic partnerships, research collaborations, faculty and student mobility, and international networks, with particular focus on expanding joint or dual-degree programs.
3. Institutions may strengthen the implementation of international collaboration practices, especially in research and innovation sharing and resource mobilization, to ensure more consistent and effective internationalization efforts.
4. HEIs may adopt targeted strategies to improve performance outcomes, particularly in academic outputs, institutional visibility, innovation, and sustainability of partnerships through continuous monitoring and evaluation.
5. Institutional leaders may consider key profile factors—such as international experience, institutional size, foreign students and faculty, and active agreements—in designing strategies to enhance engagement in international collaboration.
6. HEIs may leverage institutional size, available resources, and organizational structures to improve the implementation of international collaboration practices, with larger institutions supporting smaller ones through mentoring and partnerships.

7. Given the strong relationship between engagement and performance, HEIs may prioritize sustained participation in international collaboration activities to improve academic quality, research output, and global competitiveness.
8. Institutions may focus on effectively implementing key practices—such as capacity building, quality assurance, and research collaboration—to ensure that internationalization efforts translate into improved institutional performance.
9. HEIs may develop strategic interventions to overcome financial, administrative, and institutional barriers by increasing funding, streamlining processes, and enhancing faculty and staff competencies in internationalization.
10. HEIs are encouraged to adopt the proposed framework as a guide for strengthening international collaboration through integrated strategies, sustainable practices, and continuous improvement mechanisms.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT:

AI-supported tools helped with grammar and structure in creating this article. No AI tools were used to collect, analyze, or interpret data; all authors are credited for their academic contributions.

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