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Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

CDRI	Cambodia Development Resource Institute
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HEIP	Higher Education Improvement Project
IAU	International Association of Universities
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Executive summary

Background

Internationalisation is known to contribute to higher education development, particularly through the integration of international, inter-cultural or global dimensions into the purpose, functions, or delivery of higher education institutions (Knight 2004). Within this inter-connected world, higher education institutions are pressured to produce quality human resources with global citizenship characteristics. Students have benefited greatly from this process as they can have access to international/regional standards of education services and the opportunity to be exposed to other countries, people, and cultures. Academics likewise benefit as they are able to exchange knowledge and experience with their peers in other countries and have chances to collaborate with them on research projects. At the institutional level, four rationales lead higher education institutions to internationalise themselves. They are: academic (to improve education service delivery), socio-cultural (to discuss local cultural identity, intercultural understanding, and global citizenship), political (to support foreign policies and international technical assistance) and economic (to generate extra revenue and to compete globally). With these stated benefits, it is crucial to have active participation from all relevant stakeholders, especially the faculty members, whom Childress (2018, 37) recognises as the "steward[s]" of the teaching, research, and services of the institutions of higher education. Therefore, it is the purpose of this study to explore the engagement of Cambodian faculty members in higher education internationalisation. The specific objectives of the study are to examine faculty members' attitudes toward internationalisation, to identify internationalisation activities that they have been engaged in, and to explore factors influencing their participation in those internationalisation activities.

Methodology

This study employed a two-stage purposive sampling technique to recruit the participants. First, the research team identified target higher education institutions using reputational sampling and information on the institutions' websites and social media pages. Then, the team requested the participating HEIs to nominate their faculty members and administrators for the study. The participants should have international experience and have at least two years of working experience at the current institution. Between May and July 2021, interviews were conducted virtually with 26 faculty members and 23 university administrators in eight HEIs in Phnom Penh, Battambang, and Svay Rieng. The interviews were recorded and transformed into text data using the edited transcription technique. Data were then imported into NVivo 12 for reflective thematic analysis.

Results

The study finds that faculty members have a positive attitude towards higher education internationalisation as they perceive it as bringing benefits to the institution, particularly to teaching, learning, and research. However, their understanding of higher education internationalisation is limited to their roles and experience engaging in internationalisation activities and mostly focused on outbound mobility. Not many mentioned on-campus or inbound activities. A variety of faculty international engagements were reported throughout the study, and they have been categorised into three distinct types: capacity development programs, internationalising curriculum and teaching, and international research collaboration. Although there are various types of activities, the most visible is the capacity development program, particularly through short-course training or scholarships for post-graduate studies. The

internationalisation of curricula has also been raised by the respondents, with a limited scope related to the use of foreign languages and the integration of international context into teaching and learning. Although research collaboration with foreign partners exists in Cambodia's higher education, it is still scarce, considering that it is mainly concentrated in public higher education institutions. Further, this study grouped factors that determine faculty engagement in internationalisation-related activities into individual factors, institutional factors, and Covid-19-related factors. The individual factors consist of intrinsic motivation, faculty employment nature (full-time or part-time), competencies, and demographic characteristics (gender and age). The institutional factors found in the study include leadership, institutional policies, human resources, and the type of institution (public or private). Last, the Covid-19 pandemic strongly affected internationalisation, as it caused a majority of activities to be cancelled or postponed, affecting faculty's internationalisation activities. However, respondents also noted that Covid-19 helps reduce the time and costs required to implement internationalisation.

Conclusion and implications

Faculty engagements in internationalisation are still limited in Cambodia. It is vital that both the government and HEIs put more effort into promoting internationalisation if the internationalisation goal and targets set in the Higher Education Roadmap are to be realised. MoEYS should dedicate extra funding to push the actions described in the roadmap. Lack of human resources is also found to be a hindrance to faculty engagement. Although this issue can be partially solved through the capacity development programs reported in the study, not many competent individuals are willing to commit to this profession full-time. An academic partnership is an effective way to promote academic mobility (inbound and outbound), and collaboration and establishing regional and international partnerships have been proposed in the roadmap. However, the study found insufficient activities under this strategy. Therefore, more actions should be taken to build the capacity of HEIs, both public and private, to succeed in seeking and sustaining international partnerships. Moreover, a proper reward system and an enabling environment are keys to the promotion of faculty engagement in internationalisation. Hence, it is imperative that university management develop and put into practice an internal policy incentivising faculty members to actively involve themselves in and initiate more internationalised activities and, at the same time, provide a supportive environment where faculty members can efficiently implement activities. Different from many other countries, Cambodian faculty members are paid by teaching hours. This explains why they are reluctant to be involved in activities not directly related to teaching or in any engagements that affect their teaching hours. Thus, HEIs should reconsider the current salary structure if they wish to increase faculty involvement in internationalisation. Even after several public reforms and interventions, the lack of research culture and research capacities continues to be an issue in Cambodian higher education. There should be a practicable mechanism to implement professional progress that is based on merit and knowledge generation, not only knowledge transfer. It is time for Cambodian HEIs to move from teaching-based to research-based institutions. University salaries need to be much more competitive to attract more talented and experienced full-time researchers.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Despite its wide range of applications, internationalisation of higher education remains a complex phenomenon for discussion. For the past decades, internationalisation activities have been initiated as part of institutional development for most, if not all, higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world. Internationalisation helps HEIs boost their national and international visibility, mobilise internal intellectual resources and establish strong research teams. It can also assist HEIs in capitalising on their institutional strengths through international partnerships and in broadening their academic community by which they can benchmark their academic activities (Hénard, Diamond, and Roseveare 2012).

In Cambodia, higher education was first modernised in the late 1950s, when the late King, then Prince Norodom Sihanouk, engineered an unprecedented education expansion after Cambodia received independence from the French. The earliest university, Royal Khmer University, now the Royal University of Phnom Penh, was established in 1960. Since then, the system has experienced various changes, primarily driven by French colonialism, American republicanism, Soviet Union, and Vietnamese Marxism-Leninism, and a more hybrid democratism and neo-colonialism (Clayton and Yuok 1997; Leng 2013; 2022; Pit and Ford 2004; Sam, Zain, and Jamil 2012). Some might say that these foreign influences have contributed significantly to the rehabilitation and advancement of the higher education system in Cambodia. However, this notion is inappropriate in today's context as development assistance could, in some ways, bring about an imbalance between the local and international aspects of higher education (Leng 2013). Although this might be the case, Cambodian HEIs still embrace and utilise international partnership strategies to streamline their institutional development as it is perceived to expedite the process of attaining international academic standards, innovative curriculum design, the creation and acquisition of new knowledge and technology, and the development of human resource capacity (Chet and Un 2019; Sok and Bunry 2021; Yun 2014). Activities such as foreign scholarships for post-graduate studies, short-term mobility programs, curriculum development, joint degree programs, satellite/branch campuses, research collaborations, conferences and seminars, and infrastructure development can generally be observed in Cambodian higher education (Leng 2022; Yun 2014). Internationalising a curriculum has specifically been asserted by Dash (2017) as a cost-saving strategy to expose students, especially those who are immobile, to international content so that they can develop the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in regional and global labour markets. Research collaboration, on the other hand, has been limited in the context of Cambodia (Eam 2015; Heng, Hamid, and Khan 2022a; 2022b; Ros et al. 2020). Heng and his team (2022a) described faculty research activities as a lip-service, meaning faculty members only verbally express how vital research is while rarely implementing any research-related activities. Eam (2015) recommended that faculty members' time, research competencies, faculty size, and financial support be addressed to promote faculty engagement in research.

In a broad sense, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) sets out a broad vision for its higher education to "build a quality higher education system that develops human resources with excellent knowledge, skills and moral values to work and live within the era of globalization and knowledge-based society", with a mission to "develop an accessible higher education system that is diverse, internationally recognized, and conducive to teaching, learning, and research" (MoEYS 2014, 3; 2017, 6). In 2021, there were 130 HEIs, mostly concentrated in the capital Phnom Penh. Among all, 82 HEIs (13 public) were

under the direct supervision of MoEYS, and they hosted 16,438 educators (21.4%, females) and 198,363 students (49.7%, females) in that year. More than half (45 HEIs) offered post-graduate programs, while 21 hosted up to doctoral programs (MoEYS 2022). Countless efforts have been made to tackle issues within higher education, but only one policy document has explicitly addressed the issue of internationalisation. The *Cambodian Higher Education Roadmap 2030 and Beyond* puts forward four key intervention strategies, one of which is the strategy for higher education internationalisation. In this strategy, MoEYS sets out two objectives and proposes five strategies for Cambodia to boost its international engagement and prepare its higher education for regional and global integration. The strategies are to (1) enhance faculty and student mobility, (2) boost program and institution mobility, (3) promote regional academic programs, (4) encourage regional research partnerships, and (5) increase international academic programs (MoEYS 2017, 26–29). However, previous research indicated that the internationalisation of Cambodian HEIs is still at an early stage (Hill, Hell, and Cauter 2019; Yun 2014). Most of the associated activities are seen through the mobility of students and staff, while other activities, such as recruiting and hosting international students and faculty members, are still limited (Chet 2006; Dash 2017). These issues were iterated by Khalid et al. (2019, 94), who concluded that Cambodia is "not competitive globally at this point due to a lack of sufficient resources for internationalisation practices, language barriers, low funding and limited regional scholarships, and ineffective national and institutional policies to implement internationalisation", and recommended HEIs expand international research collaboration and encourage more student mobility programs within the region. Sok and Bunry (2021, 217) urged Cambodia to pay meticulous attention to higher education internationalisation, adding:

> Cambodia shall ensure effective, proactive, comprehensive policy implementation at the national and institutional levels. Improving the buy-in of internationalization strategic positioning to serve HE system development, and its development cannot be devoid of sub-sectoral development, including qualification upgrade, molding well-rounded graduates, improving Cambodia's competitiveness, and improving research programs that promote internationalization at home and one that can promote higher education development.

1.2. Objectives of the study

Internationalisation is not always clearly understood, and understanding can be different among stakeholders, which leads to different approaches taken by individual HEIs. For some, the term simply refers to those activities that enhance the quality of teaching and learning and the university brand image such as an updated and internationally recognised curriculum, the adoption of English as a medium of instruction, international research collaboration, and the development of institutional infrastructure. Others view it as a way to boost intercultural understanding that can be achieved through student and staff exchanges (Tek and Leng 2017; Yun 2014). Whatever it is, or whatever it can be, it requires the participation of many stakeholders. According to Childress (2018, 37), faculty members are one of the key actors, and their participation is essential as they are the "steward[s] of an institution's teaching, research and services agendas" and the "key forces in institutional transformation and the internationalisation of knowledge". Hence, this study intends to develop an understanding of faculty engagement in higher education internationalisation in Cambodia. The study addresses the following questions: (1) What are faculty members' attitudes towards their institution's internationalisation endeavours? (2) what internationalisation activities have they been engaging in? and (3) what are the factors influencing their participation in those internationalisation activities?

The study attempts to better understand faculty engagement in Cambodian higher education internationalisation with insights into faculty attitudes towards internationalisation, engagement, and motivations for and hindrances to their active participation. The research also contributes to the limited literature on Cambodian higher education development and faculty engagement in these matters.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Higher education internationalisation

Although higher education internationalisation is not a newly discussed notion, there are still misconceptions and different interpretations of the term by different stakeholders. Many attempts have been made to define the term. One of the earliest attempts was by Arum and Van de Water (1992, 202), who described internationalisation as "the multiple activities, programs and services related to international studies, international educational exchange and international technical cooperation". This definition was initiated to inspire others to further refine it and to raise awareness of the need for a term that a larger audience could debate. Years later, Knight (1994) proposed another definition by delineating the term as a process, rather than separate activities, of integrating international dimensions into the key functions of higher education institutions (HEIs) through perspectives, activities, or services. It marked a milestone for researchers and practitioners in the field, and Knight continued refining her working definition and attempted to generate a neutral description that could be used universally.

Sanderson (2008), however, criticised Knight's definition as focusing mainly on the institutional level, leaving those at the supra-national and within-institution levels not knowing what they should do to internationalise themselves. To improve this shortfall, de Wit and his team (2015) expanded Knight's definition by emphasising the intentionality of HEIs and the expected outcomes of internationalisation. They referred to internationalisation as "the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society" (de Wit et al. 2015, 29). Numerous scholars then began to add adjectives to the definition to reflect their perception of how internationalisation can be used as a tool for institutional development. Those adjectives include "comprehensive" (Hudzik 2011), "reflexive" (Juergen 2014), "intelligent" (Rumbley 2015), and most recently, "virtual" internationalisation (Bruhn-Sass 2017). While a variety of definitions of the term "higher education internationalisation" have been suggested, this paper follows the oft-cited definition by Knight (2004, 11) for its neutrality and universal application. The definition is read as "the process of integrating an international, inter-cultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education institutions".

The rationales for HEIs to incorporate international, intercultural, and global dimensions into their purpose, functions and service delivery have been traditionally categorised into academic, socio-cultural, political, and economic (Knight and de Wit 1997). The intention to improve educational quality, particularly by embedding international components into teaching and research, the expansion of academic horizon, institutional building, profile, and status are parts of the academic rationales. Socio-cultural motives driving HEIs to internationalise cover the need to address issues related to domestic cultural identity, intercultural understanding, and global citizenship development. Politically speaking, foreign policy, national identity and security, international technical assistance, and peace and mutual understanding are

the reasons why HEIs choose to participate in the internationalisation process. Revenue generation, global competitiveness, and labour markets compose the economic motivations of higher education internationalisation. These categorisations provide a broad perspective; however, a more sophisticated set of rationales is required as internationalisation grows more pervasive and multifaceted (Knight 2004; Seeber et al. 2016). Hence, it is essential to distinguish among rationales at different levels – supra-national, national, institutional, and individual.

Moving from a marginal aspect to a university's top priorities, the development of higher education internationalisation has been affected by numerous global forces (Gao, Baik, and Arkoudis 2015). The development and application of modern ICT, the call for competition and collaboration in the international arena (for world-class university status), the decline in public funding for higher education, and the aspiration to become an entrepreneurial university force HEIs to redefine their organisational structure and institutional systems in ways that set internationalisation as a key strategic goal, affecting universities' basic foundations of research and teaching. At the system level, the rationales for a country to open itself to the world include quality human resource development, access to higher education, trade expansion, national-building, social-cultural understanding, and soft power (Knight 2016).

There is also a vast amount of published literature on institutional motivations for internationalisation. Internationalisation is driven by the desire to advance research and knowledge production, improve academic studies, develop staff and student capacity, raise institutional status and reputation, or generate incomes (Altbach and Knight 2007; Knight 2004; Yang 2002). For example, a recent IAU survey involving 907 HEIs from 126 countries revealed that the primary rationales driving HEIs to participate in international activities were: to expand international cooperation, improve staff capacity, enhance the quality of teaching and learning, and increase students' international understanding and engagement with global issues (Marinoni 2020; Buckner and Stein 2020). In addition, the same survey reported that participating in internationalisation helped boost HEIs' research activities, ensure fair access to higher education, engage more with the community, support student diversity, modernise physical infrastructure, and enhance students' learning experience.

Individual motivations to engage in international activities are worth mentioning, as changes start from individual actions. Knight (2016) stated that personal rationales could be the opportunity to broaden international professional networks, extend one's worldview and competencies on global issues, expand one's career opportunities, and improve intercultural knowledge and skills. However, rationales are not static; they are modifiable depending on time and context. In de Wit's (2013, 17–18) words:

> Rationales are different over time and by country/region, they are not mutually exclusive, and they lead to different approaches and policies. Currently, changes are taking place at a rapid pace in different parts of the world and rationales become more and more interconnected.

Childress (2018) pointed to the fact that a solid institutional commitment, clear communication channels, and faculty engagement are required to implement internationalisation plans, and many institutions are grappling with how to turn a strong commitment into a thorough and realistic strategy. However, for effective management of the internationalisation process, it has been suggested that HEIs should have a complete understanding of their institutional context so that they can develop concise action plans, maximise the implementation process, and continuously conduct monitoring and evaluation (Hénard, Diamond, and Roseveare 2012).

Further, a review by Gao, Baik, and Arkoudis (2015) listed a set of international strategies which are categorised into three aspects – governance, academic and service. The governance aspects include administrative processes, leadership and organisational structures, budgetary allocations, and monitoring and evaluation systems. It was emphasised that these components are critical in creating an institution-wide environment conducive to internationalisation and in generating a policy framework for implementation. The academic component, on the other hand, encompasses the university's core functions, which include teaching, learning, and research. Specific strategies must be developed to support the recruitment of foreign staff and students, exchange programs for students and staff, joint degree programs, curriculum development, international partnerships and networking, and research collaborations provided that HEIs wish to have more international elements in their academic activities. The service category covers both the facilities and services that are made available to international students, for example, physical infrastructure, academic advice and counselling, language support, dormitory and more.

As mentioned, different people understand the concept of internationalisation of higher education differently, resulting in different approaches being taken. The approaches describe HEIs' strategies/practices to internationalise and to evaluate the "manner" in which they conceptualise and implement those collective activities (Arum and Van de Water 1992; Knight 2004). Table 1 describes some common internationalisation approaches adopted by HEIs to achieve their goals.

Table 1: Internationalisation approaches taken by higher education institutions

Approach	Description
Activity	Internationalisation is described in terms of activities such as study abroad, curriculum, academic programs, international students, institutional linkages and networks, development projects, and branch campuses.
Outcomes	Internationalisation is presented in the form of desired results such as student competencies, increased profile, and more international agreements, partners, or projects.
Rationales	Internationalisation is described with respect to the primary motivations or rationales driving it. They can include academic standards, income generation, cultural diversity, and student and/or staff development.
Process	Internationalisation is considered to be a process in which an international dimension is integrated in a sustainable way into the three primary functions of an institution: teaching/learning, research, and service to society.
At home	Internationalisation is interpreted as the creation of a culture or climate on campus that promotes and supports international/inter-cultural understanding and focuses on campus-based or "at-home" activities.
Abroad (Cross-border)	Internationalisation is seen as the cross-border delivery of education to other countries through a variety of delivery modes (face-to-face, distance, e-learning, etc.) and through different administrative arrangements (franchises, twinning, branch campuses, etc.).

Source: Knight (2004, 20)

In addition, HEIs need collaboration from many stakeholders, not only within the institution but also from government agencies, non-governmental and semi-governmental organisations, private and public foundations, and conventions and treaties (Jaramillo and Knight 2005). In his report on the results of the 5th IAU survey, Marinoni (2020) revealed that the industry sector, the

prospective students seeking education with international standards and the local government are the fundamental external forces pushing HEIs to internationalise. Meanwhile, the key internal drivers of internationalisation at HEIs are university management and the international relations office, as they are the steering wheel for all pursuits related to internationalisation. Middle managers (deans, department heads, and office chiefs), academics, and students also apparently influence institutional internationalisation as they are directly involved in the process and implement tasks necessary to achieve the desired outcome of internationalisation (Seeber et al. 2016). Academics, in this sense, the faculty members, play a vital role in the institution's quest for internationalisation, as Childress (2018, 37) remarked:

> … faculty have long been recognised as key forces in institutional transformation and the internationalisation of knowledge. This is understandable, as faculty directly impact the teaching, research, and service mission of higher education institution. In particular, faculty have direct involvement and authority in (a) curricular content changes, (b) research, scholarly collaboration, and interdisciplinary engagement, and (c) international development and service.

2.2. Faculty international engagement and attitude towards higher education internationalisation

Literature confirms that faculty members play a crucial role in institutional development, and their engagement strongly affects the level at which they participate in such activities. However, research focusing on this particular group has mostly been absent from studies on the internationalisation of higher education (Childress 2018; Finkelstein, Walker, and Chen 2013; Friesen 2012; Stohl 2007). Through international teaching and research, joint research publications and reviews, membership in global research networks, and international development projects, faculty members have enjoyed opportunities to explore the world and bring back knowledge and experience to share with their students and colleagues at their home campus. Childress (2018) echoed this idea when she pointed out that faculty members directly influence the teaching, research, and services of HEIs. They were found to be actively involved in composing program curricula, developing and implementing joint research studies with foreign partners and developing international development projects. By providing them with authority and power, they can decide to infuse international, global, and cultural dimensions into their curricula, research projects and services or can even take part in their university's internationalisation process.

Regarding faculty international engagement, Knight (1994) identified several academic activities and services that are carried out or should be considered for the development and implementation of internationalisation plans. These activities include curricular development, students' international exposure, international student mentorship, mobility programs, foreign language courses, international development projects, international partnership agreements, joint international research, area/theme studies, cross-cultural training, extracurricular activities, and other institutional services with international dimensions. All of these require the active engagement of faculty members. Another way of looking at it is that faculty international activities can be classified into four specific types – curriculum development, research and teaching, overseas study programs, and other areas such as alumni networks, university partnerships, joint or dual degree programs, and international research committees (Dewey and Duff 2009). Beatty (2013) provided more details about each category by positing that many activities can be considered forms of international faculty engagement. These include internationalising curricula, leading students on exposure or field trips abroad, presenting research findings at international conferences, reviewing and publishing articles in

international journals, participating in inter-cultural and international training programs and other professional development, such as being of service to a university internationalisation committee or belonging to other international associations. However, involving faculty members in internationalisation activities can be quite challenging as some view it as additional work and are not willing to participate unless certain rewards are given, and institutional support and guidance are available (Beatty 2013; Childress 2018; Clarke and Yang 2019; Dewey and Duff 2009; Friesen 2012). Otherwise, even those passionate about international activities cannot make any significant impact.

In her comparative case study on faculty engagement in internationalisation, Childress (2018) identified five types of faculty involvement. Those labelled as "champions" tend to have a broad understanding of international developments related to their discipline and possess excellent cross-cultural communication skills. "Advocates" are those only interested in a specific attribute of internationalisation. Compared to others, these two groups have the most robust commitment and dedication to internationalisation. The next are "latent champions/advocates"; this group roams around to see how internationalisation is implemented. If given the right experience and incentives, they would be as passionate about internationalisation as the champions or advocates. "Sceptics" refer to those who question the importance of international issues and, hence, are hesitant to join the process. Last are the "opponents"; they are the ones who usually disagree and try to prevent internationalisation activities from happening. These forms of engagement help determine the attitude of faculty members towards internationalisation and thus should be seriously considered.

2.3. Influential factors on faculty engagement in higher education internationalisation

It has been agreed that faculty members significantly impact institutional missions, which include teaching, research, and services as they directly influence curricular content, research and scholarly engagement and collaboration, and international development projects and services (Childress 2018). Hence, this section identifies the motivating and hindering factors affecting faculty decisions to participate in internationalisation activities to promote faculty engagement in this process. In one of the earliest study in this field, Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) identified two sets of internal characteristics (self-knowledge and social knowledge), along with several environmental factors as the determinants of faculty work (teaching, research, and services). Self-knowledge refers to the self-assessed competences necessary to attain specific tasks or goals and is closely associated with the performance of faculty roles; it includes interests and preferences, commitment, self-belief, attitudes, and satisfaction. Social knowledge, on the other hand, embraces individuals' perceptions of their social environment, mainly how they think about their institution's prime agendas, values, and culture, as well as collegiality. An example of this would be a perception of the institution's social and material support, preferences, and priorities. Moreover, these internal characteristics are affected by the external environment, namely government funding, quality of institutional resources, governance and geographical location and institutional responses to external conditions. These can include institutional promotion policies, the tenure system, merit raises, better clerical support, more funding, and teaching or research assistant availability. Other factors such as individual demographic background, career features and social contingencies (i.e., roles and responsibilities of parents and children, illness, and pregnancy) also influence individual self-knowledge and social knowledge, which, in the end, affects their behaviour and productivity.

Based on the above framework, Finkelstein and his team (2013) confirmed that self-knowledge and social knowledge are the key variables for predicting faculty engagement in international research projects. They found that interests and job preferences play a part in pushing faculty members into international research collaborations since the amount of effort put into specific tasks is linked to the level of interest and types of work responsibilities held by individual faculty. Finkelstein's team also revealed that faculty members who work at an institution operated by academia were more likely to participate in cross-border research projects than those run by administrators. These findings have been verified by Nyangau (2020). In her study, interpersonal skills, organisational knowledge, and problem-solving skills were crucial for effective international engagement as the work most frequently entails interactions with various stakeholders with their own sets of viewpoints and goals. In this sense, faculty members should be able to assess the situation and gain partners' trust before initiating any new activities. In connection with social knowledge, incentives – in the form of work recognition, job promotion and collegiality – are the determinants of faculty engagement in internationalisation (Barman and Ray 2011; Raina and Khatri 2015; Nyangau 2020). A good collegial relationship has been proven to provide a friendly atmosphere for faculty members to seek advice and counsel from one another without leaving anyone behind. Despite a sense of collegiality, some still find it discouraging to engage in international activities as their environment is not always favourable. For instance, there might be some resistance, usually from senior faculty, who do not value internationalisation and are often the team's decision-makers (Raina and Khatri 2015; Nyangau 2020). If this is the case, they will discourage their team from carrying out internationalisation-related activities.

Another issue is related to the competency of individual faculty members. If they lack the knowledge and skills necessary for implementing internationalisation, they tend to be reluctant to participate in internationalised activities (Calikoglu, Lee, and Arslan 2020; Childress 2018; Clarke and Yang 2019; Nyangau 2020). This issue is specifically true among senior members (Raina and Khatri 2015; Nyangau 2020). This competence issue was also found in a study by Li and Tu (2016), in which they argued for more capacity development programs for faculty members. According to them, creating enabling external circumstances (i.e., materials and social support) alone will not significantly impact faculty participation in internationalisation as long as their ability to carry out international activities remains underdeveloped. Li and Tu recommend that foreign language proficiency and inter-cultural competency should be well developed so that faculty members can proactively take part or even initiate internationalisation plans at home and abroad. Other researchers also highlighted socio-demographics and careers as features contributing to the engagement of faculty members. For instance, Vabø et al. (2014) revealed that a gender difference in faculty engagement in internationalisation persists. Women are more engaged in supporting internationalisation through at-home activities, while their male counterparts are most seen involved in research projects that require cross-border mobility. This is confirmed by Nyangau (2020), who demonstrated that family responsibilities continue to restrict female faculty members since they are the primary caregivers at home.

The institutional support structure also affects faculty engagement in internationalisation. For instance, a lack of communication and information sharing, work recognition, administrative support, internationalisation-related promotion policies, as well as leadership inconsistency can be quite damaging to faculty passion and commitment to internationalisation (Dewey and Duff 2009; Friesen 2012; Clarke and Yang 2019; Calikoglu, Lee, and Arslan 2020; Li, Khattak, and Jiang 2021; Sok and Bunry 2021; Almeida et al. 2019). When they are not recognised

for their work on internationalisation despite an increased workload, faculty members will find no motivation to continue to work on international activities and consider it extra, non-compulsory work (Childress 2018; Clarke and Yang 2019; Calikoglu, Lee, and Arslan 2020). Another key issue explored in numerous research studies is funding (Dewey and Duff 2009; Li and Tu 2016; Childress 2018; Clarke and Yang 2019; Calikoglu, Lee, and Arslan 2020). HEIs have been struggling to obtain funding to support their internationalisation initiatives. Faculty members sometimes have to share the funding burden by self-sponsoring to complete their assigned internationalisation tasks. This cost-share is due to their ardent desire to widen their cultural/professional perspectives to improve students' learning and attain the institution's goals (Nyangau 2018; Clarke and Yang 2019; Calikoglu, Lee, and Arslan 2020).

3. Research Methodology

This study is exploratory in nature, with the adoption of a qualitative research approach to understand how faculty members "make sense of their lives and their experiences" in the international engagement at their respective universities (Merriam and Tisdell 2015, 24). The sub-sections below describe sampling and participants, data collection procedures, analysis of the collected data, and trustworthiness of the research design.

3.1. Sampling and participants

This study used a two-stage purposive sampling technique to recruit the participants. First, the research team used a reputational sampling approach based on the authors' insight and work experience with Cambodian higher education institutions (HEIs) and information collected from websites and social media pages of HEIs in Cambodia. The selection criteria included the number of existing international programs, the language of instruction, the number of MoUs with international partners, and the institutional mission and vision. The research team then approached 11 HEIs identified in the first stage for their participation in the data collection process; eight agreed to participate. After selecting HEIs, the research team requested them to nominate their faculty members and administrators for the study. The recruitment criteria were: i). participants should have international experience, and ii) participants should have worked at the current institution for more than two years. However, two participants had less than two years of working experience at their affiliated institution, as it was difficult to recruit female faculty members, and one administrator had just been transferred.

Two groups of respondents were interviewed, namely faculty members and university administrators. The first group consisted of Cambodian lecturers and researchers working full-time and part-time. They are academic staff whose roles are to teach, research and provide other educational services. The second group have administrative functions related to international relations and research. Some Cambodian deans also teach at their affiliated HEIs but are still categorised as university administrators and excluded from the faculty member group since their main roles are related to management and administration.

Between May and July 2021, 49 respondents (26 faculty members and 23 university administrators) from the eight HEIs in Phnom Penh, Battambang, and Svay Rieng participated in the interviews. Three of the participating HEIs are private universities. One-fourth of the study respondents were female. More than half of the faculty members were trained overseas, but less than 40 percent worked in science-related fields. Many work full-time and have more than five years of working experience at their affiliated HEI. Further demographic information about the respondents can be found in Table 2.

Table 2: Respondents' demographic information

	Faculty Members (n=26)	University Administrators (n=23)	Total (n=49)
Sex			
Female	10 (38.5)	3 (13.0)	13 (26.5)
Male	16 (61.5)	20 (87.0)	36 (73.5)
Academic Discipline			
Social Science*	16 (61.5)	7 (30.4)	23 (46.9)
Science**	10 (38.5)	2 (8.7)	12 (24.5)
N/A	0 (0.0)	14 (60.9)	14 (28.6)
Employment Type			
Full-Time	15 (57.7)	23 (100.0)	38 (77.6)
Part-Time	11 (42.3)	0 (0.0)	11 (22.4)
Institution Type			
Public	17 (65.4)	16 (69.6)	33 (67.3)
Private	9 (34.6)	7 (30.4)	16 (32.7)
Years of Service			
Less than 2 years	1 (3.8)	1 (4.3)	2 (4.1)
2 to 5 years	4 (15.4)	1 (4.3)	5 (10.2)
More than 5 years	21 (80.8)	21 (91.3)	42 (85.7)
Educational Background			
Local	11 (42.3)	7 (30.4)	18 (36.7)
Abroad	15 (57.7)	16 (69.6)	31 (63.3)

Percentage in parentheses.
* Arts, Business Administration, Economics, Education, Humanities, Languages, Law, and Tourism
** Agriculture, Agronomy, Agro-Industry, Chemical and Food Engineering, Electrical and Energy Engineering, Rural Engineering, Geo-Resource and Geotechnical Engineering, and Veterinary Medicine

3.2. Data collection

Before data collection began, the research team prepared two separate interview guides, one for faculty members and another for university administrators. Faculty members were asked about their perceptions of internationalisation, their international engagement, and the impact of Covid-19 on their international activities (Appendix 1a). For university administrators, the interviews focused on their perceptions of internationalisation, institutional strategic plans for faculty international engagement, and their views on the attitude and involvement of faculty members in international activities (Appendix 1b). Two field assistants were recruited to conduct the key informant interviews (KIIs) between 11 May and 7 July 2021. The interviews were organised online via Zoom as Cambodia, particularly Phnom Penh, was on lockdown. The online interviews started with a self-introduction and research objectives, followed by the technical questions mentioned earlier.

All participants were informed about the interview protocol and confidentiality at the beginning of the interviews. All interviews, except one, were recorded on Zoom with consent from the respondents, and the research team also created edited transcriptions of the interviews. Their direct involvement in data collection and transcription processes helped researchers familiarise themselves with the data and was helpful for data coding in the following phase. Transcribed data were then imported to NVivo 12 for analysis.

3.3. Data analysis

The approach used to analyse collected data was based on Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2020) reflexive thematic analysis. The team first read the transcribed interviews, along with the field notes of each interview to familiarise themselves with the data. As mentioned previously, the team also familiarised themselves with the data by participating in all the interviews. Transcripts were then jointly open-coded in NVivo 12 by the research team. These codes were later collated, and eight initial themes were generated to answer the interview questions. After thoroughly reviewing the initial themes, three main themes were constructed, each responding to the research questions. Last, the research team continued refining the themes and forming connections between them. It should be noted that the data from faculty members were treated as the key data, while the information gathered from the administrators was mainly used as triangulated data.

3.4. Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are critical criteria to assess the rigour, or what Lincoln and Guba (1985) called the "trustworthiness" of the research design. In this study, to ensure that credibility is achieved, the research team was fully involved in all interviews even though field assistants were recruited to collect and transcribe the data. In addition, the team read and edited the transcripts to confirm that all transcripts were the same as what had been reported by the respondents. Data triangulation was also done between data from faculty members and administrators. Further, a detailed description of the data collection process was provided so it could be replicated in the future. Dependability was ensured through the researchers' narrative of the research process. Finally, to achieve confirmability, a validation workshop was held in January 2022 to verify the preliminary findings with stakeholders and ensure that the findings were shaped by the respondents, not the researchers' motivations or interests.

4. Results

This section is divided into three parts: faculty attitude towards university internationalisation, their international engagement and factors influencing their decision to involve themselves in internationalisation activities, each responding to the study's main research questions.

4.1 Faculty attitude towards institutional internationalisation

Faculty members understood the term "internationalisation" based on their roles and experience in engaging in international-related activities. However, internationalisation is generally understood as the act of seeking international recognition and achieving international academic standards through international cooperation and regional and global integration. Simply put, it is defined as the process of uplifting educational services to international standards. In addition, there was a mixed understanding of the relationship between internationalisation and globalisation as some respondents commented that internationalisation and globalisation are the same, while some faculty members stressed that internationalisation happens because of globalisation. With that being said, the term អន្តរជាតូបណីយកម្ម (an-ta-rak-chea-to-pa-ni-y-kam), a Khmer translation for internationalisation, is relatively uncommon among the respondents as some of them have never heard the term before. When introduced to the term and asked to define it, one participant responded:

I understand what it is, but when you ask me the term in Khmer language, it is a bit hard for me to understand. However, what comes to my mind when I hear that term is that it is when we integrate ourselves into the international level - something like international cooperation internationally recognised academic programs and so on. (FM07)

In terms of perspectives on internationalisation, most faculty members believed that Cambodian HEIs could use internationalisation as a strategy to develop their institutions. In their view, not being a part of internationalisation means they will miss out on the development of foreign countries.

It [internationalisation] is vital not only for lecturers but also students. If there is no internationalisation, we are like "the frogs in the well"; we will not be aware of or receive updates on what is happening in the outside world. (FM03)

Further, internationalisation in the form of international cooperation among HEIs is seen to provide opportunities for lecturers and students to exchange experiences and learn from one another.

To be recognised internationally, we [HEIs] must connect ourselves to the world through international partnership programs, international conferences, study trips, as well as learning about international curriculum development models. This is because when a university sends lecturers abroad, they would see and learn from the international contexts, which in return, they can bring those experiences back to develop the university. (FM26)

The study also found that most faculty members were willing to participate in internationalisation. Outbound capacity development programs stand at the top of all internationalised activities. This will be discussed in further detail in the next sub-section.

4.2. Faculty international engagement

The study found that the most common faculty involvement in internationalisation is in the form of capacity development programs offered by international partners. Other less active engagements include integrating international context in curriculum design and teaching and conducting research collaboration with foreign partners.

4.2.1 Outbound capacity development programs

Virtually all faculty members interviewed have experienced at least one overseas training program or mission via either their respective HEIs (for full-timers) or their primary affiliated institutions (for part-timers). Faculty members are willing to be part of internationalisation as it provides them opportunities to develop their capacity through training, exposure visits, participation in academic conferences, and scholarship opportunities to pursue post-graduate studies.

I was able to go to Japan because of a project I was involved in. It was a collaborative project with our Japanese partner to study the Tonle Sap area. One of the project components was the analysis of a specific type of pollutant, but at my university, we could not conduct that kind of analysis yet. So, we had to go to Japan to attend a training workshop there [to learn from them]. (FM05)

It is worth noting that the majority of Cambodian faculty members only hold master's degrees or bachelor's degrees. Being able to continue their education in developed countries is the aspiration of many faculty members. Faculty members, especially those at public HEIs, have opportunities to pursue post-graduate studies in other countries, mainly through two channels.

First, as part of international collaborations between Cambodia HEIs and its foreign partners, Cambodian faculty members were dispatched to partner countries to further develop their capacity. Second, many scholarship schemes under bilateral partnerships specifically target individuals holding civil servant status. Therefore, faculty members at public HEIs have a higher chance of being awarded a scholarship to pursue their education abroad. Thanks to these scholarship programs, a large proportion of faculty members in the participating public HEIs were educated abroad. Yet, there are not many foreign faculty members in our selected public HEIs.

> My PhD program was sponsored by the Belgian Development Agency. Because of this sponsorship, many of our lecturers were able to pursue their studies in Belgium. They provide a specific quota to my university. (FM04)

> We have sought cooperation with our foreign partners through the World Bank project. In one partnership with a Thai university, we sent three lecturers for the PhD program and another three for the master's program there. (UA14)

Many faculty members have been involved in many on-campus capacity development activities, whether attending guest lectures or training workshops on research methodology, educational technology, and so on, offered by international experts. However, they did not identify it as internationalised engagement.

4.2.2 Curriculum development and teaching

Issues related to integrating the international dimension into teaching were not particularly prominent in the interviews. In most cases, this was not raised by our respondents until probed about curriculum development. Based on our interviews, the curriculum development process starts with the deans, who first draft the curriculum based on MoEYS guidelines and labour market demands. Then faculty members are invited to provide input on the proposed curriculum. To some extent, their international experiences and observations on local and international contexts shape the directions of the revised curriculum. In most cases, the curricula of universities overseas are also used as their benchmarks. As FM19 put it:

> I usually give comments on the proposed curriculum as I always read and explore the development process of other universities in the region. My comments are related to the macro level as I tend to look at the big picture, meaning I reflect on the regional development needs rather than only on national needs. I believe that if we only investigate the national level, we cannot catch up with other countries.

A majority of the faculty members rely on materials in the English language in their teaching. In addition to textbooks selected by their schools, they normally introduce additional foreign learning materials so that their students will have better knowledge of what is happening in the world. Faculty members commonly adopt foreign textbooks or materials in their teaching, yet the language of instruction normally is Khmer. In some cases, faculty members also use a combination of English and Khmer in their classrooms.

> I teach mainly in Khmer because I teach only bachelor's degree students. However, even though I teach them in Khmer, most of the study materials that I give to my students are mostly in English. Again, I give them the English study materials, but I have to explain those materials in Khmer. (FM08)

In the past, French was widely used in some universities, but English has become the most dominant international language of instruction. For instance, one of the participating HEIs used French as the main language of instruction in the past, but none of the respondents in that HEI now teach in French. Another HEI even offers an international program fully taught in English.

Cambodian faculty members rarely have experience teaching international students. Enrolment of international students in Cambodian HEIs is extremely low, even in the program fully taught in English mentioned earlier. The Covid-19 pandemic makes the situation even worse, as some HEIs reported zero international students during the period. According to FM18, during the time the study took place, there were no international students taking courses at his institution because of travel restrictions.

4.2.3 Research collaboration

Some respondents raise joint research projects with international partners as a form of internationalisation. However, Cambodian faculty members, in general, are not active in research, not to mention joint research. Only a few are committed to research through partnership projects or established networks while studying abroad.

> I do keep in contact with my former supervisor, and we conduct joint research projects together. Some other lecturers do the same. We try to stay in touch with our former supervisors through whom we can have joint research projects. (FM07)

> We have research collaborations with other countries like the Philippines and joint research projects supported by the World Bank. We normally write and publish in international journals. Currently, I have four research articles in hand, one of which has already been reviewed. (FM13)

A limited proportion of faculty members mostly engage as team members, while the project leaders are usually deans. Nonetheless, the research process requires strong teamwork between management and faculty members. As FM05 emphasised:

> To bid on big projects, we have to work as a team. Our researchers and lecturers first develop the draft proposal and then consult with management to finalise it.

Students are sometimes utilised as research assistants to help with data collection, whereas the analysis and writing tasks are the researchers' responsibility.

> In a project, we are allowed to recruit research assistants. The assistants play an important role in supporting project implementation. Instead of being in the lab all the time, I only need to be there once in a while to monitor the experiment process. Once the data is ready, I analyse and write the research papers myself. (FM13)

With regards to academic presentations, not many reported having experience joining any conference at the international level. Nevertheless, in some HEIs, faculty members who engage in international research collaborations are well exposed to academic conferences overseas. As FM06 expressed, there are plenty of opportunities for her and other researchers at her university to present and publish their findings once they are involved in the projects.

4.3. Influencing factors on faculty engagement in internationalisation

In this sub-section, factors influencing faculty engagement in internationalisation are categorised into individual and institutional factors and Covid-19-related factors. Key individual factors include intrinsic motivation, faculty employment nature, competencies, and demographic

characteristics. For the institutional factors, the university leadership, institutional policies, availability of human resources, and institution type are identified as hindering the active participation of faculty members in internationalisation activities. In addition to the individual and institutional factors, Covid-19 has posed significant challenges for Cambodian faculty members to implement their activities with international partners.

4.3.1 Individual factors

Faculty members are willing to join internationalised activities mainly due to the opportunities for professional development and a sense of belonging to their university. A majority of the faculty members interviewed expressed their willingness to upgrade their skills and knowledge. For instance, a faculty member who is actively engaged in internationalised activities stated:

> It [attending international academic conferences] was a good experience and opportunity for me because most of the participants were experts from different fields. So, I can learn a lot whenever I go to those events. And I could also apply the acquired skills and knowledge at my institution. Same as conferences held here. Even though it was held in Cambodia, it was an international conference in which a lot of presenters or speakers from different countries joined in; and as one of the presenters, I can also improve my presentation skills and other related stuff (FM05)

This finding is consistent with the administrators' perspectives. Internationalisation is believed to contribute to staff capacity development:

> It [internationalisation] is mainly to develop their capacity to understand other universities and cultures outside Cambodia. It can help them improve their language capacity and be adaptive to foreign environments. (UA16)

Another reason to engage in internationalisation is to build networks and strengthen institutions' quality of education. By meeting people from different fields, cultures, and ethnicities, they can broaden their horizons, which is beneficial for themselves and their institutions. Some faculty members also believe that the engagement will equip them with more knowledge and skills necessary for teaching. To some faculty members, being selected to represent their universities gives them a sense of pride and fulfilment. The sense of belonging is particularly strong amongst those who teach at their alma mater.

The employment nature of Cambodian faculty members is another factor affecting their decision to be involved in internationalisation. Most of the interviewed respondents work at multiple workplaces, either at other HEIs, governmental agencies or in the private sector. With a large teaching and non-teaching workload to complete, they hesitate to commit to other activities besides teaching. Most part-time respondents, who teach at an HEI as a secondary job, tend to excuse themselves from non-teaching duties. They are only willing to participate in short-term activities. They are attracted to the opportunities to travel overseas but are concerned with their duties at their primary workplace. The following comments were given by our part-time respondents:

> I cannot participate in international events as it overlaps with the time of my job in the public sector. However, if the event is organised on a Saturday, it is fine for me. (FM25)

> The university asked me to participate, but most of the time, I rejected their request. I don't want to have any conflicts of interest with my primary workplace. As I am committed to my work as a government official, I have to be active in my primary institution. (FM26)

Opportunity costs were also mentioned by the respondents. Although most of them were willing to participate in the outbound activities like attending short-course training, academic conferences, or exchange programs, a few of them would excuse themselves from the assignment. They reported that being away from school affects their teaching earnings because Cambodian lecturers are usually paid by teaching hours.

> The income from teaching does not meet the standard of living, so I have to teach at other universities and work in other places as well. If they [the management] nominate me to join the long-period program, I would reject the opportunity, but I am willing to join if it takes just a week, like attending short-course training. (FM18)

The lack of English proficiency, technical knowledge, and research capacity are also factors constraining faculty members from participating in internationalised activities. For instance, partnership projects usually sponsor a limited number of people; hence, competent staff are more likely to be selected to join these activities.

> It depends on the theme of the event and who is in charge of that work. The management also puts language ability into consideration when they assign someone. Even if the topic is in the areas of work of person A, management will nominate someone else who can understand the topic and can share what s/he has learnt upon her/his return if person A has limited language ability. (FM03)

UA11 also added that "even if faculty members are interested in participating, they are hesitant to participate alone mainly due to their language ability". Without support from their colleagues, it is challenging for them to travel abroad, let alone communicate with partners in a foreign language.

In reality, however, it is challenging to find perfect candidates. With limited human resources, competent staff are often assigned many tasks, and they would excuse themselves from additional work if they were overloaded. As a result, management has to send someone else, although his or her expertise might not be related to the activities. For example, FM10 recalled her experience being assigned to participate in a research project that is not her expertise:

> It is difficult to comprehend the work because it is not in my field. However, after receiving some advice from the experts, I was able to perform the job; it is just a tough row to hoe. (FM10)

Being confident about her technical knowledge and skills, FM04 still has concerns about teaching.

> Normally, the lecturers are specialised in specific fields like solid waste management or wastewater treatment. We can understand the technical aspects of our fields, but we need more than that to attain international teaching standards. So, we must fulfil those criteria, and we need more time to achieve our goal of promoting our program so it will be internationally recognised. (FM04)

As priority is always given to teaching roles, research capacity among faculty members remains insufficient. Faculty members do not spend adequate time improving their research skills as this is not within their interests or what they consider their main role as faculty members. Consequently, when a joint research project occurs, they appear to be reluctant to be a part of it. A few administrators noted:

> For research projects with foreign partners, we require lecturers to have English capacities and time. So, if they are busy with their teaching, they cannot be involved in research projects. For those lecturers who have experience in teaching, they already have their teaching materials, and it doesn't take much of their time to prepare for their lessons. But to do research is different; they have to invest more time. (UA05)

> From my observation, faculty research engagement is still limited. Their main role is to teach; they do teaching more than conducting research. And for any project which requires them to go to the field, they don't have time. Their primary interest is basically teaching [to earn money]. (UA02)

In addition, demographic characteristics, namely gender and age, affect faculty members' engagement in internationalisation. Socially constructed roles, such as caring for children and ageing parents, tend to restrict female faculty members from fully participating in internationalisation, especially when it requires cross-border travelling. Compared to their male counterparts, females, particularly those who are married, are tied to family responsibilities. Single female faculty members with less of a family burden tend to be more proactive in partaking in international activities.

> It is exceedingly difficult for me to leave my house for a long period, like one month or so. When I travel, I have to bring my kids to my parents, who live far away. I have to do household chores, take care of the kids and have other family issues. (FM6)

> Many talented women abandon their opportunities because of family responsibilities. As some family members don't understand women's difficulties, they have no choice but to pass up the opportunities. I was worried that I would be in the same situation, but my family understands my situation and has been very supportive. (FM10)

University administrators echoed this issue as UA08 stated, "when they [female faculty members] get married and have children, they become less active." As seen in the list of participants in this study, there is a critical inadequacy of female faculty members in Cambodian higher education. The universities find it challenging to nominate female lecturers to participate in international events since there are fewer female members, and most of them are not willing to travel abroad.

However, the barriers hindering females from engagement are not due to their capacities but existing stereotypes of women's roles. Female respondents even reported that supervisors sometimes reject invitations on their behalf, assuming they would not participate.

> Sometimes I lose an opportunity because management thinks that I have a family and a small son and so I cannot go. I missed an opportunity that came to me and did not even have the chance to refuse it. (FM03)

Besides the gender aspect, age is another demographic factor found to influence faculty's decision to participate in internationalised activities. Some faculty have a mindset that there is little meaning in exploring new things as they have seen enough and will retire soon. When asked whether travelling abroad is beneficial to their teaching or research, FM02 replied that he has been busy with teaching and has never been abroad. From management's perspective, limited English language proficiency hinders older members from engaging in internationalised activities. In contrast, junior members are more optimistic about engagement in internationalisation.

> Opportunities to go abroad can build our capacity, and when our capacity is enhanced, we can involve ourselves more in the school's activities to help develop our university. (FM17)

When asked why junior members are more positive about engagement in internationalisation, university administrators explained:

> First, they [junior members] are just starting their careers, so they don't have as many responsibilities as the seniors … Second, they are at a stage in which they need to sharpen their skills – the "learning phase"; that is why they are trying to acquire new skills, and are willing to travel to learn more, to attend meetings overseas. Third, they can create or join more networks and have chances to get a scholarship to pursue their education or project funds. Fourth, they don't have much experience abroad yet, so they want to experience it. Last, it is easier for them to travel when they don't have family commitments. (UA09)

> Ageing lecturers' language proficiencies are also limited. This is a communication barrier, making it difficult to be "outward" and "internationalised". [They] don't want to do anything new…they are almost retired. (UA02)

4.3.2 Institutional factors

The interviews revealed that the level of faculty engagement in internationalisation varies depending on the leadership of their management. If management values internationalised activities, faculty members are more likely to pay close attention to them. Hence, the perspective of the management team is seen as shaping the behaviour of faculty members; for instance, UA02 mentioned, "top management is the key to encourage lecturers. Even sometimes, it is in the form of verbal compliment, it is a resource to push them further". This was also confirmed by the faculty members, as FM04 stated, "the university management team is very supportive and encouraging when we want to have a master's program in our faculty to reach international standards. This kind of encouragement satisfies and inspires me to engage in internationalised activities."

When university leaders prioritise internationalisation, most faculty members express that they are inclined to receive more opportunities and support (moral and technical). Regarding moral support, faculty members are free to engage in any international activities they want without constraint and with strong encouragement from the management team. Both a university administrator and a faculty member said:

> If staff wants to connect with any international partners, the school will give them support. For IR staff, they are the "intermediary" and the coordinator, but the one who plays the main role is the management team … (UA13)

> Honestly speaking, I was a bit concerned because my language skill was limited at that time, but my boss strongly encouraged me to join. He told me not to worry because we went there and worked as a team, so if I had a problem, the team would help me. (FM12)

As institutional support, capacity development training is provided to enhance faculty members' competence and skills. For example, FM10 pointed out her improvement in internationalisation, saying, "back then, I didn't know how to write a proposal, but after short courses that the university provided, we started to understand how to write, what is a concept note, and how to manage a budget plan; thus, we passed from one project to another, and have more experience now". In addition to training, mentorship and sharing sessions are also commonly identified by the respondents as a means of their academic and professional improvement, preparing them for internationalised activities.

> From what I observe, for example, when there is training on curriculum development, those in charge of the matter could have a chance to go for training in Thailand, etc. And when they come back, they share their experience. (FM15)

> I praise the leadership of this university as they have tried to train the next generations. After I finished my bachelor's degree in 2010, I was trained by a former dean on project coordination (local/ abroad) and teaching. Understanding all of these allows me to know what we are lacking and what can be done to improve. The culture of passing knowledge from one generation to another is firmly established in my heart. (FM10)

Not many HEIs have concrete written strategic plans or policies on internationalisation. As a result, faculty members do not understand the benefits of internationalisation and find the activities trivial. According to faculty members, universities need to establish clear guidelines explaining the importance of internationalisation and provide proper incentives to encourage the active engagement of faculty members.

> I don't see any clear strategies that the university wants to implement. I also teach at other private and public universities, and I observed that all those universities don't have any strategies to encourage lecturers to participate in internationalised activities. (FM19)

> The university also encourages us to improve our teaching methods [based on what we learnt from training overseas], but they don't have any concrete strategy to motivate us to do so. They only tell us to do that [without any stick or carrot]. Lecturers who want to implement it can just do it. If they don't, nothing will happen to them. (FM6)

Contrary to what faculty members noted, university administrators stated that there is a clear strategic plan to promote internationalisation. For instance, there are policies related to incentives (promotion, increased salary/teaching time, certificates of recognition, monetary funds, capacity development training, job security, etc.) and administrative support that spur faculty engagement. With regard to incentive policies, a few university administrators said:

> For those who are active, we have some policies to motivate them. (1) We send them for short-term training/conferences (based on their disciplinary subjects) upon the invitation of our international partners; (2) We present them with a certificate of appreciation; (3) We increase their teaching rate. In our last 5-year plan, we set a policy, a guideline that if lecturers wrote one article and published it in our established research series, regardless of quality, and gave two to three presentations, we would give them a total of US$1,000 for one article… (UA19)

> Previously, the Rector encouraged lecturers to do research individually, and those who did and produced a report with less than 20 pages would be provided US$800. (UA01)

Together with incentive policies, administrative support is also provided by the university, considering that the tasks prior to participating in cross-border activities can be time-consuming due to complicated processes.

> Another challenge concerns the documentation for visa application. For example, I had a recent case regarding participation in training in Australia, I had to prepare so many things on my own, but the university also supported some administrative tasks such as issuing a nomination letter, employment letter or something like that. (FM04)

> When lecturers start to apply for research or register to attend a conference, the school/ administrative staff are very supportive in terms of issuing a nomination letter for them. As I said earlier, the school always encourages them to engage in such activities, and there is always monetary support for them. (UA04)

The above-mentioned policies match the comments of the faculty members who strongly believe that there should be policies relating to incentives and other benefits for participants as it will motivate them to actively engage in internationalisation activities. In addition, several

faculty members request more support from the upper level (e.g., writing a recommendation letter, finding connections, etc.) as it will motivate them to work better, knowing that they are not alone in pushing for internationalised activities to happen in the institution.

The data suggest that a lack of human resources is also a hindrance to faculty international engagement. Many faculty members are interested in starting international activities with partners overseas but feel that they do not have a dedicated team to initiate these activities due to their limited capacity and workload. It is challenging to find a replacement when faculty members go abroad to carry out international missions, let alone host big events such as international conferences or workshops. As a faculty member complained:

> Our faculty is small, with less than ten members. We do not even have the capacity to organise big events locally, let alone international events. (FM22)

It has been observed that public provincial universities have many opportunities to form international partnership programs, yet they do not have enough human resources to handle them. Administrators stated:

> There are many opportunities to conduct projects with international partners, but we do not have enough people to execute them. We are located in a province, so it is hard to attract good human resources. There are many projects waiting for us to implement them (UA08)

> So far, we have made an MOU with a Vietnamese university. We planned to send our staff and lecturers to join a short course training of around three months there, but unfortunately, we lack the staff in my faculty, so until now we have not sent out our staff there yet. Franky speaking, there are only three of us in the office. (UA12)

According to university administrators, HEIs could get more grants by building trust with foreign partners; to do that, they need human resources and a qualified team to deliver quality outputs. Without an existing network of faculty members and the knowledge itself, it can be a challenge for universities to seek partnerships.

The data from the study suggest that public HEIs tend to have more opportunities to engage in internationalised activities compared to private HEIs, considering their well-established reputation and status. If there are submissions of grant proposals from both public and private universities, it is very likely that the donor would opt for public universities. This has made it challenging for newly emerging private universities to initiate new internationalised activities.

> We have written proposals and taken part in the bidding; however, we failed to obtain those projects. Usually, funders or donors trust and would prefer public universities. (FM26)

Given that the main priority of private HEIs is survival, internationalisation does not seem to be on their priority list. Private HEIs find constraints in allocating budgets for these activities while improving teaching and learning remains their primary focus, as noted by an administrator:

> Unlike public schools, my university does not have budgets allocated for these activities. We depend solely on ourselves [to generate incomes] and the resources from our partners. (UA17)

While almost all faculty members at public HEIs have experience participating in at least one research project, those in private HEIs rarely have the opportunity to do so. Based on our data, four out of the 11 lecturers at private HEIs claimed that they have experience conducting research at their primary workplace but not at their affiliated HEIs. On a side note, research engagement varies by faculty discipline. Those who work in STEM-related fields have higher

odds of being involved in research projects, as a lot of grants have been made available specifically to STEM and agricultural sciences.

At private universities, which employ a large proportion of part-timers, respondents barely consider internationalised activities. Engaging in these activities means they need to give up their teaching hours, leading to reduced income. They are also required to compensate for missed teaching sessions upon their return. Administrators expressed their opinions about faculty perception of incentives given for international activities:

> Some individuals don't want to participate. They tend to have the old mindset that "without incentive, I would not work." We cannot blame them for that because everyone works primarily for their living. The institution is secondary. (UA10)

> They [faculty members] think they can earn more from teaching here in Cambodia. The decision on whether to take part in the overseas trip depends on financial benefits [from the overseas mission] and the income they can earn working here. (UA14)

4.3.3 Disruption of and opportunities from the Covid-19 pandemic

Implementation of internationalised activities was also greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to travel restrictions, most mobility programs were delayed or cancelled.

> In cooperation with university A, our researchers were supposed to join a seminar in Thailand. However, due to Covid-19, we had to postpone it. Last year, the plan was moved to this year, but again we cannot do it this year. We again have to delay it another year. (FM15)

It is also challenging when communication is conducted completely virtually. As a respondent commented about her experience working with foreign partners during the pandemic:

> Sometimes, there is some misunderstanding. We have no problem when writing e-mails since we can go back and read them, but we have some issues in online meetings as several people talk at the same time; sometimes, what I understood was different from what they expected. (FM15)

Overseas training courses, in particular, were heavily affected by travel restrictions during the pandemic. Training courses and meetings were shifted online or were cancelled. Many respondents were not content with online training, considering it to be less effective. Unstable internet connections and intercultural miscommunication were some of the issues raised by faculty members. A few faculty members, however, are still optimistic about virtual training programs, which can save costs and time.

> Before the Covid-19 outbreak, 4-5 people in my team were assigned to join training which costs around US$2,000 per person. With online training, the cost is zero, so we can have more people join all seven phases of the training. This is very beneficial for us. (FM03)

5. Discussion

The findings from the study show that Cambodian faculty members have a positive attitude towards the internationalisation of higher education and believe that it can be an effective strategy to boost institutional development. Nevertheless, most noticeable engagements in internationalised activities are centred around outbound capacity development programs through partnership projects or overseas missions related to their jobs at their primary workplaces. As Knight (2016) argued, internationalisation is beneficial for faculty members, as it offers them

opportunities to broaden their international professional networks, extend their worldview and competencies on global issues, and improve their intercultural knowledge and skills. Cambodian faculty members seem to greatly appreciate these opportunities. Only 8.74 percent of Cambodian faculty members hold PhD degrees (MoEYS 2022), and some of them obtained their degrees from universities in Cambodia. Engagement in short-term training or exchange visits requires less commitment and technical skills although effective communication skills are normally a prerequisite. However, the activities related to outbound faculty mainly rely on external support from development partners or joint projects with partnered institutions. The study does not find any initiatives from Cambodian HEIs or the government to dispatch faculty members on long-term sabbatical leaves, to learn from or work with international institutions as part of their professional and academic development. This kind of long-term professional development for faculty members can contribute not only to the improvement of individual careers but also to the strengthening of institutional development and higher education quality as a whole.

Compared with the engagements through capacity development programs, fewer faculty members actively take part in research collaborations with international partners. Majority of the participating institutions have the vision to become internationally recognised universities, and some aim to upgrade themselves into research universities. However, for various reasons, many HEIs continue to function as teaching institutions, and research is still far from their core missions. Having said that, a few universities have demonstrated their commitment to the roles in knowledge production, by initiating their own research projects through collaborations with international partners. Faculty members in the fields of agriculture, engineering, and science at public universities seem to be much more active in research, while faculty members in the field of social science are less so. This can be partly attributed to the Work Bank's HEIP project, as one of the project components is to promote research in these fields and its main targets are public universities (World Bank 2022). In addition, a large proportion of faculty members at private universities are part-time and paid by teaching hours. In line with the Ros et al. (2020) study, the scholarly role of faculty members was found to be limited. Coupled with little or no incentive to conduct research, research is a more challenging and time-consuming task for most faculty members. At most universities, there is no concrete mechanism to encourage them to dedicate more time or put more effort into the knowledge production process. Cambodian faculty members are paid for their teaching, not research (Heng, Hamid, and Khan 2022b).

Several key factors are found to influence engagement in internationalised activities: the employment system in Cambodian higher education, the perception of gender roles in Cambodian society, and the external support HEIs receive. Even though the participants in this study are relatively active in internationalised activities, less than half of them are full-time faculty members. A survey conducted by CDRI in 2020 involving 370 faculty members revealed that more than 60% of faculty members in Cambodia work part-time, and about half of them work at multiple HEIs. Part-time faculty members often excuse themselves from activities that are not related to teaching. This is especially true for private universities, which employ mostly part-time teaching staff (Un, Hem, and Sangha 2017) and leave the engagement in internationalisation primarily in the hands of management teams. However, as Childress (2018) insisted, faculty members' roles in internationalised activities are indispensable. Without active involvement from faculty members, the internationalisation process continues to be weak. It is worth noting that factors such as collegiality, peer pressure and motivation from colleagues that were found to influence faculty engagement in internationalisation in other countries (Blackburn and Lawrence 1995) were hardly raised by Cambodian faculty members.

Representation of female faculty members in Cambodian higher education remains low (MoEYS 2022), and data from the study also show that very few females are involved in internationalisation activities. This finding is consistent with Vabø et al. (2014) in their cross-country study and Nyangau (2020) in the United States of America. Female faculty members who were interviewed still hold the belief that it is their responsibility to shoulder family burdens. The constraints of household commitments lead female faculty members to pass up opportunities to take part in internationalisation activities overseas. After several refusals to participate, school management naturally excludes them from engagement. This social mindset needs to be changed, and support, not only from schools but also from their families, is necessary to increase female participation.

A reason that Cambodian faculty members engage less in research collaboration and more in capacity development overseas is their capacity to conduct research. Engaging in research requires more than effective communication skills; it requires competencies in research and technical knowledge. Majority of faculty members are not trained to be researchers and do not hold PhD degrees (Un, Hem, and Sangha 2017). Cambodia is in need of more well-trained and well-educated academics who can interact, exchange knowledge, and learn from established partnered universities if Cambodia wishes to realise its vision of becoming a knowledge-based society. It is not only the capacity of an individual faculty member but also that of the team or whole institution to kick-start or initiate internationalised activities or to reach out to potential partners. A significant proportion of engagements are initiated by international partners.

The study further reveals that internationalisation initiatives normally kick off at the management level, particularly deans, and very few faculty members initiate international engagement ideas. Even at public HEIs where faculty members are more active, most activities are top-down. In other words, they are assigned by the management. This leads to questions about whether faculty members are incapable of initiating ideas related to internationalisation or if they are competent but have no power, autonomy, or incentive to initiate new activities. In addition, as one university administrator acknowledged, internationalisation engagement is not part of their indicators to assess the performance of faculty members. This suggests that the engagement of faculty members in the process of internationalisation has yet to be integrated into university strategies.

6. Conclusion and Implications

In 2017, MoEYS laid out its roadmap for the higher education sector with the vision "to build a quality higher education system that develops human resource with excellent knowledge, skills and moral values in order to work and live within the era of globalization and knowledge-based society," (MoEYS 2014, 3). To realise this vision, internationalisation, one of the four key intervention strategies, is considered pivotal to raising the standards of Cambodian HEIs to regional and global levels. Nevertheless, little is known about the progress toward the goals proposed by MoEYS (2017), not to mention how faculty members are involved in related activities. This qualitative study aims to understand the attitude of Cambodian faculty members toward internationalisation and their actual engagement and identify factors that can facilitate or hinder their participation.

The findings from the study suggest that Cambodian faculty members are generally positive about higher education internationalisation, believing it can contribute to the development of the higher education sector although some associate internationalisation with globalisation. Regardless of their approval of internationalisation, in reality, faculty members predominantly

take part only in outbound mobility. Furthermore, in most cases, outbound activities are limited to short-term training programs, study visits, and exchange programs, not long-term affiliations, such as visiting scholars or faculty members, as proposed in the higher education roadmap. Based on the actual engagement of faculty members, it is rather challenging to achieve the internationalisation target set in the roadmap due to the lack of funding sources (Mak et al. 2019). Without support from government funding, it is not realistic for Cambodian HEIs to send their faculty members on secondment overseas. The roadmap proposes the establishment of a national faculty mobilisation strategy and government funding to promote faculty mobility, yet these initiatives have not materialised to date.

Besides short-term capacity development, there is little incentive and enabling environment for faculty members to take part in other activities such as student mobility programs, international student mentorship, joint international research, or extracurricular activities. With limited inbound student mobility, faculty members have little or no opportunity to engage with foreign students. A few universities have established international academic programs, yet virtually all students are Cambodian. As this situation is also worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic, none of the faculty members in this study taught or supervised international students at the time of the interview. Leading students on exposure or exchange programs abroad is one common outbound activity that faculty members in developed countries take part in, yet such kind of outbound mobility is not yet found in Cambodia.

If faculty engagement in internationalisation is to be promoted, more commitment and support from the government and all HEIs is required. MoEYS should establish an action plan and dedicate extra funding to realise the targets and goals defined in its roadmap. Including some key indicators in the next Education Strategic Plan would help reinforce commitment and track progress toward achieving the targets. Strong support and leadership from HEI management to establish proper incentives and enabling environments are also key to the promotion of internationalisation. Most universities have the vision to internationalise their institutions, yet not many have concrete strategies to operationalise this vision. As faculty members are the core drivers for the success of internationalisation, university management should establish internal policies and strategies to encourage faculty members beyond outbound capacity development. Most importantly, since teaching is the main source of income generation for faculty members, management should rethink payment systems based on teaching hours if the quality of higher education is to be raised to regional and global standards as envisioned by the government. As long as faculty members are paid based on teaching hours, their priority will continue to be teaching.

Enhancing regional research partnerships is another internationalisation strategy adopted by the government; yet based on our data, there seems to be little progress in terms of the promotion of regional research partnerships. Since most projects are initiated by international partners outside the region, regional partnerships are scarce. In addition to the lack of incentives and enabling environments mentioned earlier, many interviewed faculty members also admitted to having limited research skills and capacities. The lack of research culture and capacity has been consistently pointed out in many studies, even after several reforms and interventions initiated by MoEYS to promote research culture in higher education. It is almost a decade since the government established Professorial Ranking in 2013 to promote academic scholarship and research in Cambodian higher education, yet it is rarely put into practice due to its complexity. All appointments require approval by the central government through official decrees from the Prime Minister and the King (Sen 2022). There should be a more practicable merit-based mechanism to implement professional progress for the promotion of research culture. The

lack of full-time competent researchers at universities suggests that academic careers are not alluring or well-regarded by well-trained scholars who have returned from their studies abroad. In addition, to attract more talented and experienced researchers, university salaries need to be more competitive. It is time for Cambodian HEIs to move from teaching-based to research-based institutions.

This study also comes with some limitations. Due to travel restrictions and social distancing requirements, fieldwork was conducted entirely online. This prevented us from having face-to-face interviews and, therefore, prohibited us from visiting the participating HEIs for general observations. The time of the study was also considered a limitation as we conducted the study during the global spread of the Covid-19 virus, meaning higher education internationalisation, not just in Cambodia but around the world, was affected, and we had to make certain adjustments. Furthermore, although the study attempted to include as many HEIs as possible, some HEIs considered active in internationalisation declined the request for participation. Hence, it is important to consider the potential bias in data generated from this study. Finally, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the engagement of faculty members in higher education internationalisation from a wider lens. Perspectives of foreign partners, the central government, and students also deserve further investigation.

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Appendix 1a: Interview guides (Faculty members)

[Faculty Member]

Interviewer(s):   Voice record: Yes / No
Interview date: Interview time:

Introduction:

[Hello, my name is [NAME], and I am a researcher at CDRI. We are now conducting data collection for a research study on *"Faculty Engagement in Internationalisation: A multi-case study of Cambodian higher education institutions."* The study aims to understand in detail how faculty members in Cambodian higher education institutions engage in institutional internationalisation. The interview is expected to last approximately 45 minutes and is tape-recorded if approved by the interviewee. All interview data will be kept confidential and used by the researchers for transcription and writing purposes only.]

- In this study, higher education internationalisation is defined as "a process of integrating international components into teaching, research and services of university" adopted from Knight (2004).

I. Demographic information	
Name: Gender: M / F Position: Type of work: Teaching / Research / Admin Fac./Dept./Office: Discipline:	HEI: Year of service: (year/month) Type of employment: Full-Time / Part-Time Int'l educational experience**:**
II. Attitude toward Higher Education Internationalisation	
1. Can you define what the internationalisation of higher education is?	
2. What are the activities your university has been implementing in terms of internationalisation?	
3. What is your view toward your university's internationalisation?	
III. Faculty International Engagement	
Have you ever participated in any internationalisation activity at your university?	
If "YES"	▪ What are those international activities?
	▪ How have you been engaged in those activities?
	▪ What factors influenced your decision to take part in those activities?
	▪ How was your experience being involved in university internationalisation?
	▪ What are the challenges you encounter while participating in those activities?
If "No"	▪ Why have you never been engaged in the university's internationalisation activities?
	▪ What are the barriers preventing you from (further) being involved in international activities?
IV. Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Higher Education Internationalisation	
4. How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the international activities you have been implementing?	
5. Do you think your institution has/Do you have any recovery plan for those internationalisation activities that have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic? If "Yes," what are they?	
V. Suggestions and Recommendations	
6. Any suggestions or recommendations for the development of higher education internationalisation in Cambodia?	

Appendix 1b: Interview guides (University administrators)

[University Administrator]

Interviewer(s):   Voice record: Yes / No

Interview date: Interview time:

Introduction:

[Hello, my name is [NAME], and I am a researcher at CDRI. We are now conducting data collection for a research study on *"Faculty Engagement in Internationalisation: A multi-case study of Cambodian higher education institutions."* The study aims to understand in detail how faculty members in Cambodian higher education institutions engage in institutional internationalisation. The interview is expected to last approximately 45 minutes and is tape-recorded if approved by the interviewee. All interview data will be kept confidential and used by the researchers for transcription and writing purposes only.]

I. Demographic Information	
Name: Gender: M / F Position: Office/Division:	HEI: Year of service: (year/month) Int'l educational experience**:**
II. Perception Toward Higher Education Internationalisation	
1. How do you define the internationalisation of higher education?	
2. What are the activities your university has been implementing in terms of internationalisation?	
3. Normally, how have internationalisation activities/ initiatives happened?	
4. Who is the most active in the internationalisation process? Who is in charge/initiates?	
III. Strategies to Engage Faculty Members in Internationalisation Activities	
5. Are faculty members required to participate in university internationalisation in addition to their faculty work?	
6. What are the strategies to encourage faculty members to engage in or initiate internationalisation activities?	
IV. Faculty Engagement in Internationalisation	
7. What is the proportion of faculty members engaged in university internationalisation?	
8. What are the internationalisation activities that faculty members have been engaged in?	
9. What is the attitude of faculty members toward university internationalisation?	
10. In what way have faculty members been involved in the university's international activities?	
11. In your opinion, what motivates faculty members to participate in internationalisation activities?	
12. What are the challenges faculty members encounter when implementing tasks of international nature?	
V. Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Higher Education Internationalisation	
13. How have international activities at your university been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?	
14. Does your university have any recovery plan for those internationalisation activities affected by the Covid-19 pandemic? If "Yes," what are they?	
VI. Suggestions and Recommendations	
15. Any suggestions or recommendations for the development of higher education internationalisation in Cambodia?	

Appendix 2: List of participants

No.	Code	Sex	Position	Discipline	HEI	Interview Date
1	**UA01**	M	Vice-Rector (International Relations)	N/A	Public	16-May
2	**UA02**	M	Dean	Social	Public	18-May
3	**UA03**	M	Deputy Director (International College)	Social	Public	20-May
4	**UA04**	M	Coordinator (International College)	N/A	Public	25-May
5	**UA05**	F	Coordinator (Research Centre)	N/A	Public	01-Jul
6	**UA06**	M	Deputy Director (International Cooperation and Research)	N/A	Public	19-May
7	**UA07**	M	Head (International Relations Office)	N/A	Public	26-May
8	**UA08**	M	Vice-Rector (Planning and International Cooperation)	N/A	Public	07-Jul
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14	**UA14**	M	Vice-Rector (Research and International Relations)	Social	Public	16-Jun
15	**UA15**	M	Dean	Science	Public	17-Jun
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17	**UA17**	F	Vice-Rector (International Relations)	N/A	Private	21-May
18	**UA18**	M	Vice-Rector (General Affairs)	N/A	Private	25-May
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