

Toward a strategic framework for internationalization: evidence from North Eastern Mindanao State University

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the institutional practices and level of implementation of internationalization at North Eastern Mindanao State University (NEMSU), a regional state university in the Philippines. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 213 faculty members and administrators through a validated survey instrument. Results show that participation in international conferences ($M=3.58$) and benchmarking experiences ($M=2.91$) are the most developed internationalization practices, while student mobility remains the least implemented ($M=1.94$). Correlation analysis indicates that benchmarking demonstrated strong statistical associations with implementation outcomes in instruction ($r=0.39$), governance and leadership ($r=0.58$), institutional partnerships ($r=0.61$), and quality assurance ($r=0.62$). These findings suggest that institutional learning through benchmarking is more closely aligned with internationalization implementation than mobility-based practices in resource-constrained regional universities. The study provides empirical evidence for developing a context-responsive internationalization framework for state universities and colleges (SUCs). However, the findings should be interpreted cautiously due to the use of self-reported data and the cross-sectional design of the study.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Internationalization has become a central strategy in higher education as institutions respond to globalization, cross-border knowledge production, and increasing demands for globally competent graduates [1], [2]. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are now expected to prepare learners who possess intercultural competence, global awareness, and the capacity to engage in diverse academic and professional environments [3], [4]. Addressing internationalization is not only an academic imperative but also a strategic response to global societal shifts and the pursuit of equitable, inclusive, and quality education. Beyond academic mobility, internationalization increasingly encompasses curriculum development, research collaboration, institutional partnerships, and alignment with international quality standards [5]–[7].

In the Philippine context, internationalization has been formally promoted through national policies and regulatory frameworks issued by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), which encourage state universities and colleges (SUCs) to strengthen global engagement through mobility programs, research collaboration, and institutional partnerships [6]. These policies aim to enhance academic quality, institutional

competitiveness, and regional development. However, translating policy mandates into institutional practice remains uneven, particularly among regional and resource-constrained universities [7], [8].

Regional SUCs often face structural and operational challenges that limit the scope of their internationalization efforts. These include restricted funding, limited international linkages, uneven faculty readiness, and competing local priorities [9], [10]. As a result, internationalization initiatives in regional universities tend to emphasize more attainable activities such as participation in international conferences and benchmarking, while more resource-intensive practices such as student and faculty mobility remain limited [10]. Despite these constraints, regional universities play a critical role in expanding access to quality higher education and reducing geographic and social inequities, making their internationalization efforts especially significant.

Existing literature on higher education internationalization in the Philippines and similar developing contexts has largely focused on national universities or urban-based institutions [11], [12]. While these studies provide valuable policy-level insights, they offer limited understanding of how internationalization is operationalized at the institutional level in regional SUCs. Moreover, many studies describe internationalization initiatives descriptively without empirically examining how specific institutional practices contribute to implementation outcomes across instruction, research, extension, governance, and quality assurance [13], [14].

Despite national policies on internationalization in Philippine higher education, empirical evidence on how regional SUCs operationalize and implement internationalization remains limited. Most existing studies focus on national universities or urban-based institutions, leaving regional SUCs underrepresented. Moreover, few studies examine how specific institutional practices such as benchmarking, mobility, and academic networking statistically relate to implementation outcomes. This study addresses these gaps by providing a localized, data-driven assessment of internationalization at North Eastern Mindanao State University (NEMSU).

NEMSU, a multi-campus SUC in the Caraga region, presents a relevant case for examining internationalization in a regional context. Although internationalization is articulated in its strategic agenda, the university continues to face challenges related to limited mobility programs, constrained funding, and developing international partnerships. Understanding how institutional practices relate to implementation outcomes at NEMSU can provide evidence-based guidance for strengthening internationalization strategies in similar regional universities.

This study aims to: i) assess the level of institutional practices of internationalization at NEMSU in terms of student mobility, faculty mobility, participation in international conferences, consortia, and benchmarking experiences; ii) determine the level of implementation of internationalization across instruction, research, extension, institutional partnerships, governance and leadership, and quality assurance; and iii) examine the relationship between institutional practices and implementation outcomes. By grounding internationalization in empirical evidence, this study contributes practical insights that can inform institutional planning, policy development, and sustainable internationalization strategies for regional SUCs in the Philippines.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to assess the level of institutional practices and the implementation of internationalization at NEMSU. The design was appropriate for describing existing conditions and examining the relationships between institutional practices and implementation outcomes using numerical data. A structured survey questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument and generated quantifiable responses from faculty members and administrators across the university's campuses. While limited qualitative comments from selected respondents were noted to provide contextual interpretation, these inputs were not systematically analyzed and did not constitute a mixed-method design. The study remained strictly quantitative in intent, data structure, and analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the level of institutional practices and implementation of internationalization, while correlation analysis was applied to determine the strength and direction of relationships between the variables examined.

2.2. Research locale

The study was conducted at NEMSU. NEMSU, formerly known as Surigao del Sur State University, is a state university with its main campus in Tandag City, Surigao del Sur, Philippines, and six satellite campuses located in Cantilan, Lianga, Cagwait, San Miguel, Tagbina, and Bislig. The university provides higher education in the fields of industrial technology, teachers education, agriculture, agribusiness, commercial sciences, forestry, aqua-marine technology, environmental science, arts, sciences, engineering, and technology.

2.3. Research respondents

The study involved faculty members and administrators from NEMSU, which has seven campuses and a total of 326 regular employees. The respondents included 36 members of the executive committee and 177

permanent faculty members, for a total of 213 participants. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure proportional representation across campuses and employment roles (administrative and faculty). The strata were defined based on campus location and employment category, allowing each campus to contribute respondents relative to its population size. The sample size was computed using Cochran's formula at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, ensuring adequate statistical reliability and representativeness of the target population.

2.4. Research instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a modified survey questionnaire designed to assess the institutional practices and level of implementation of internationalization at NEMSU. The instrument was adapted from a validated questionnaire used in a prior study on internationalization practices in SUCs in Region III. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts with a total of 48 items. Part I contained 24 items measuring institutional practices across four dimensions: student mobility (6 items), faculty mobility (6 items), participation in international conferences and consortia (6 items), and benchmarking experiences (6 items). Part II also contained 24 items assessing the level of implementation across six areas: instruction (6 items), research (6 items), extension (6 items), institutional partnerships (6 items), governance and leadership (6 items), and quality assurance (6 items).

Each item was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not practiced/implemented at all) to 5 (highly practiced/implemented). An example item from the student mobility dimension is: "*The university provides funding support for students to participate in international exchange programs.*" The instrument underwent a two-stage validation process. Content and construct validity were established through evaluation by three experts in higher education management and internationalization. A pilot test was conducted among 20 faculty members from a nearby state university and college to assess clarity and internal consistency. The pilot test yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89, indicating high reliability. Minor revisions were made based on pilot feedback to improve item clarity and contextual relevance. The questionnaire was self-administered and distributed to respondents in printed and online formats, allowing participants to complete the survey at their convenience.

2.5. Conceptual framework of the study

The study was guided by a conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between institutional practices and the level of implementation of internationalization as shown in Figure 1. Institutional practices such as student and faculty mobility, participation in international conferences, consortia, and benchmarking experiences serve as enabling factors that influence implementation outcomes across instruction, research, extension, institutional partnerships, governance and leadership, and quality assurance. The interaction of these variables provides the empirical basis for developing a proposed strategic framework for sustainable internationalization at NEMSU.

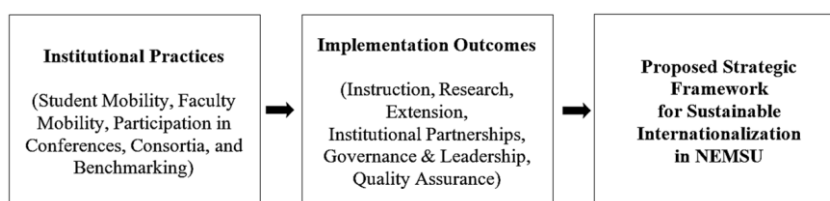


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

2.6. Ethical considerations

At the time of the study, NEMSU had not yet established its institutional research ethics committee. Nevertheless, the conduct of this research underwent a formal approval process from the university president, the vice president for research and extension, and the respective campus directors of all participating campuses. The researchers ensured that all ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the data collection process. Participants were fully informed about the objectives and scope of the study, and their participation was entirely voluntary. They were also made aware of their right to withdraw from study at any point without any consequence. Anonymity and confidentiality of all responses were guaranteed, and data were used solely for academic and research purposes. The study adhered to the general ethical standards governing research involving human participants as recognized in institutional and national guidelines.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. NEMSU academic practices for global competitiveness and partnerships

The internationalization of higher education institutions is reflected through their mission and vision statements by comparatively analyzing the level of practices or implementation of the different internationalization initiatives and outcomes of the institution. The first problem investigates the level of practices on internationalization of the institution in terms of student mobility, faculty mobility, participation in internationalization conference and benchmark experience.

The adjectival interpretation of weighted mean scores followed an equal interval classification across the 5-point Likert scale to ensure consistency and statistical justification. The scale was interpreted as follows: 1.00-1.80 (not practiced), 1.81-2.60 (sometimes practiced), 2.61-3.40 (practiced), 3.41-4.20 (moderately practiced), and 4.21-5.00 (highly practiced). Table 1 presents the level of institutional practices in NEMSU across the four key indicators of internationalization.

Table 1. Level of institutional practices in NEMSU

Indicator	Weighted mean	Adjectival rating
Student mobility		
Offers scholarships to international students.	1.81	Sometimes practiced
1. Widely disseminates and supports international scholarships to local students.	2.13	Sometimes practiced
2. Has local students in the total enrollment who are in short-term exchange programs abroad and offers international scholarships.	2.14	Sometimes practiced
3. Actively provides funding earmarked explicitly for deserving students who could gain knowledge and skills through international education, internship, and other relevant efforts.	2.31	Sometimes practiced
4. Has international student in the total enrollment who are either pursuing a degree in the institution.	1.70	Not practiced at all
5. Has international students in the total enrollment who are on short-term exchange programs abroad.	1.54	Not practiced at all
Mean	1.94	Sometimes practiced
Faculty mobility		
1. Has guidelines specifying international work or experience as a consideration in faculty promotion and tenure decisions.	2.44	Sometimes practiced
2. Promotes faculty exchanges to institutions in different countries.	2.23	Sometimes practiced
3. Receives external funding from the state government for international programs and activities.	2.27	Sometimes practiced
4. Allocates funds for full-time faculty members to participate in the internationalization of courses and those who teach at institutions abroad (as visiting professor).	2.45	Sometimes practiced
5. Offers opportunities for faculty to increase their foreign language skills, workshops to faculty members on using technology to internationalize the curricula and global learning assessments.	2.36	Sometimes practiced
6. Considers international background, experience, and interests when hiring faculty in fields that are not explicitly international.	2.68	Practiced
Mean	2.40	Sometimes practiced
Participation to international conference, consortia and capacity building		
1. Provides moral and financial support to faculty members to attend international conferences, seminar, trainings and workshops.	3.56	Sometimes practiced
2. Provides fund support to publish on international journals either in Scopus, ASEAN Citation Index (ACI) and the like.	3.73	Moderately practiced
3. Encourages faculty members to attend international symposiums on campus and encourages faculty to conduct research on international topics.	3.74	Moderately practiced
4. Provides support to faculty who are engage in internationalization such as awards, honors and other professional recognitions.	3.45	Moderately practiced
5. Top leaders/supervisor express support for faculty participation in international activities.	3.54	Moderately practiced
6. Offers a range of professional development opportunities (e.g., host/conduct international conferences and workshops) to promote faculty internationalization.	3.47	Moderately practiced
Mean	3.58	Moderately practiced
Benchmark experience		
1. Has several Active Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) with foreign institutions or other SUCs over the last five (5) years.	2.78	Moderately practiced
2. Provides opportunity to benchmark/compare institutional performance within the context of international good practices, with the purpose of implementing change in order to improve.	2.98	Practiced
3. Allocates special resources (money/space, staff) for intercultural activities.	2.90	Practiced
4. Has guidelines specifying benchmark experience as a consideration to faculty promotion and increases the global outlook of faculty and staff in their ensuing teaching activities.	2.88	Practiced
5. Builds connections with the local and global environment in which they live and the global climate.	2.91	Practiced
6. Identify peers for more meaningful benchmarking and has a budget allocated for benchmarking activities.	3.04	Practiced
Mean	2.91	Practiced
Over-all mean	2.71	Practiced

As shown in Table 1, the results reveal that NEMSU demonstrates varying levels of practice in internationalization across the four key indicators: student mobility, faculty mobility, participation in international conferences and consortia, and benchmarking experiences. Among these, participation in international conferences and benchmarking are the most consistently practiced, indicating that the university prioritizes faculty exposure and institutional learning through external collaborations. These areas show that NEMSU's approach to internationalization is more participation-driven than mobility-based, reflecting the practical realities of limited funding and institutional linkages.

Student mobility remains the least developed area, suggesting that the university faces challenges in sustaining exchange programs or attracting foreign students. This aligns with Nugroho and Jaqin [15], who identified mobility as one of the most resource-dependent dimensions of academic internationalization. Faculty mobility is moderately practiced, showing the institution's gradual shift toward building professional competencies aligned with global standards. The findings further affirm Deredzai and Goronga [16], who emphasized that while both faculty and students view internationalization positively, budgetary limitations often restrict participation in international exchanges.

Participation in international conferences and consortia emerged as NEMSU's strongest area of international engagement. This reflects institutional efforts to enhance visibility through research presentation, publication, and participation in global academic events. The findings echo Marinenko [17] who emphasized that institutional support for faculty development and exposure to international forums enhances overall academic quality and competitiveness. Similarly, benchmarking experiences reveal that the university values comparative learning, collaboration, and adoption of best practices from partner institutions. This finding supports Udekwe and Obadire [18] who argue that benchmarking helps higher education institutions evaluate their standing relative to global standards and adapt strategies accordingly. Overall, the data show that NEMSU's internationalization practices are moderately implemented, with notable strengths in academic collaboration and benchmarking but limited progress in mobility programs. This pattern reflects a pragmatic institutional approach focused on attainable aspects of internationalization given the university's current capacity and resource constraints.

3.2. Level of implementation in building an international knowledge-based academic landscape

The second problem investigates the level of implementation of the institution in terms of instruction, research, extension, institutional partnership, governance and leadership and quality assurance and practices. The adjectival interpretation of weighted mean scores in Table 2 (see Appendix) followed the same equal-interval classification of the 5-point Likert scale described in Table 1 to ensure consistency in the interpretation of internationalization implementation across all institutional domains. The detailed results are summarized in Table 2.

As presented in Table 2, the findings indicate that NEMSU has implemented internationalization strategies across various academic and administrative domains, though the degree of implementation varies among areas. The results show that internationalization is more visible in instruction, research, governance, and quality assurance, while extension and institutional partnerships are still developing. This pattern reflects an institution transitioning from initial engagement to gradual structural integration.

In the area of instruction, results suggest that the university has started to incorporate international perspectives into its curriculum and faculty development programs. However, the limited offering of foreign language courses highlights a gap in preparing students for global competitiveness. Fitayanti [19] and Anoshkova [20] emphasized that language education is essential for fostering intercultural communication and enhancing employability in international contexts. Strengthening this component would allow NEMSU to align more closely with global standards in higher education.

For research, the findings show steady implementation supported by institutional funding and participation in international conferences. While faculty members are encouraged to engage in research collaboration, the limited number of internationally co-authored publications reveals an area for growth. This suggests that international collaboration remains at a formative stage, echoing Cheng *et al.* [21] who found that faculty partnerships significantly increase institutional research visibility and impact when supported by sustained collaborative frameworks.

Implementation in extension programs is evident but uneven. Although faculty and students are involved in local outreach, there is minimal engagement in international community projects. This indicates that extension remains domestically focused rather than globally networked. The finding is consistent with the role of extension activities in higher education [22], which underlined that international partnerships in community projects promote mutual learning and broaden the institution's social responsibility.

In terms of institutional partnerships, the results reveal limited joint-degree or dual-degree programs with foreign universities, reflecting the early stage of NEMSU's international linkages. Nevertheless, participation in webinars and collaborations with competitive institutions demonstrate the university's intention to expand its global presence. Suntharalingam [23] and Miller *et al.* [24] noted that establishing

joint academic programs and sustained partnerships is vital for institutionalizing internationalization and enhancing regional integration.

The dimensions of governance and leadership show that internationalization has gained administrative recognition, with leadership support and designated responsibilities already in place. However, more consistent participation of administrators in international immersion programs would strengthen institutional readiness. This finding aligns with Qudrat-Ullah [25], who emphasized the importance of leadership engagement and strategic management in driving international initiatives.

For quality assurance, NEMSU's practices indicate that international perspectives are being integrated into institutional assessment. The involvement of foreign professors and exposure to global research resources demonstrate progress toward global alignment. Ahmad *et al.* [26] confirmed that the presence of internationally trained faculty and exposure to international evaluation systems enhance institutional quality and competitiveness.

Overall, the results reflect that NEMSU has achieved a moderate level of implementation across most areas of internationalization. Instructional reforms, research participation, and governance structures show significant progress, while mobility, extension, and institutional partnerships require greater policy and financial support. This pattern suggests a gradual but consistent movement toward a globally engaged academic environment that aligns with CHED's vision for regional universities.

3.3. Association between institutional practices and internationalization implementation at NEMSU

In exploring the dynamic intersection of institutional practices at NEMSU, this study delves into the correlation between the university's efforts to develop a competitive global human resource and its overall implementation in building an internationally knowledge-based academic landscape. This investigation seeks to unravel the intricate relationship between these two critical dimensions, shedding light on how NEMSU's practices contribute to the creation of an academic environment that transcends borders and fosters global excellence. Table 3 presents the correlation coefficients and effect sizes illustrating the degree of association between institutional practices and internationalization implementation across academic and administrative domains.

The correlation analysis revealed varying degrees of association between NEMSU's institutional practices and the level of implementation of internationalization across academic and administrative domains. Using Cohen's effect size benchmarks, most associations involving student mobility and faculty mobility were negligible to weak, indicating that mobility-related practices are less consistently aligned with institutional implementation outcomes. This pattern reflects the realities faced by regional higher education institutions, where limited funding, logistical constraints, and restricted international linkages often limit the scope and sustainability of mobility programs. In contrast, participation in international conferences, consortia, and capacity-building programs demonstrated moderate positive associations with research ($r=0.25$), extension ($r=0.38$), governance and leadership ($r=0.43$), and quality assurance ($r=0.45$). These associations suggest that academic exposure and engagement in international scholarly networks are closely aligned with institutional functions related to knowledge production, leadership development, and quality systems. Rather than indicating direct effects, the findings point to the role of academic networking as a reinforcing mechanism that supports institutional readiness for international engagement. This interpretation is consistent with Chachkhiani and Tabatadze [27], who emphasized that capacity-building initiatives enhance institutional preparedness for global engagement through shared academic experiences and organizational learning.

Benchmarking experiences showed the strongest associations across all implementation domains, with correlation coefficients ranging from $r=0.58$ to $r=0.62$. These strong associations were evident in instruction, research, extension, institutional partnerships, governance and leadership, and quality assurance. The results indicate that benchmarking activities are closely aligned with institutional processes that require structured planning, comparative evaluation, and continuous improvement. Importantly, these findings do not imply causation; rather, they suggest that institutions that engage more actively in benchmarking also tend to report higher levels of implementation across multiple domains. These findings are further supported by organizational learning theory, which posits that institutions improve performance through systematic comparison, reflection, and adaptation of external best practices. In this context, benchmarking serves as a structured learning mechanism that enables higher education institutions to internalize international standards and translate them into governance, quality assurance, and instructional improvements. This pattern also reflects elements of institutional isomorphism, where universities align their policies and practices with internationally recognized models to enhance legitimacy and competitiveness within the global higher education environment.

Overall, the findings indicate that NEMSU's internationalization efforts are more strongly associated with collective and institution-driven practices, particularly benchmarking and academic networking, than with mobility-centered initiatives. This pattern is characteristic of regional SUCs with limited international mobility but increasing participation in collaborative, evaluative, and capacity-building activities. Such an approach

reflects a pragmatic pathway toward internationalization, allowing institutions to progressively align with global higher education standards while operating within existing structural and resource constraints.

Table 3. Association between institutional practices and the level of internationalization implementation

Institutional practice	Implementation domain	Computed r	p-value	Conclusion	Effect size
Student mobility	Instruction	-0.014	0.980	Not significant	Negligible
	Research	0.018	0.972	Not significant	Negligible
	Extension	-0.011	0.983	Not significant	Negligible
	Institutional partnership	0.518	0.000	Significant	Moderate
	Governance and leadership	0.647	0.000	Significant	Strong
Faculty mobility	Quality assurance and practices	-0.064	0.176	Not significant	Negligible
	Instruction	-0.052	0.923	Not significant	Negligible
	Research	-0.042	0.937	Not significant	Negligible
	Extension	-0.578	0.000	Significant	Strong
	Institutional partnership	0.041	0.939	Not significant	Negligible
Participation in international conferences, consortia, and capacity building	Governance and leadership	-0.546	0.000	Significant	Strong
	Quality assurance and practices	0.328	0.526	Not significant	Moderate
	Instruction	-0.220	0.676	Not significant	Weak
	Research	0.249	0.001	Significant	Weak
	Extension	0.383	0.003	Significant	Moderate
Benchmarking experiences	Institutional partnership	-0.363	0.481	Not significant	Moderate
	Governance and leadership	0.433	0.021	Significant	Moderate
	Quality assurance and practices	0.452	0.000	Significant	Moderate
	Instruction	0.393	0.014	Significant	Moderate
	Research	0.458	0.011	Significant	Moderate
	Extension	0.619	0.000	Significant	Strong
	Institutional partnership	0.611	0.000	Significant	Strong
	Governance and leadership	0.579	0.002	Significant	Strong
	Quality assurance and practices	0.622	0.000	Significant	Strong

3.4. Practical recommendations for NEMSU

Based on the results, NEMSU should take strategic actions to strengthen internationalization. Strengthening international affairs and linkages is recommended to coordinate programs on faculty and student mobility, research collaboration, and global partnerships. The university should allocate a regular budget for international activities and benchmarking to ensure continuity and measurable outcomes. Moreover, formalizing partnerships with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other international universities through joint research projects, academic consortia, and exchange initiatives will enhance global visibility and organizational learning. These measures will strengthen institutional capacity, ensure sustainability, and align NEMSU's direction with national and global higher education priorities.

3.5. Theoretical and practical contribution

This case study contributes to the broader theory and practice of higher education internationalization by providing localized empirical evidence from a regional university in a developing country context. It highlights how institutional practices such as benchmarking and academic networking can drive internationalization even within resource-constrained environments. The findings offer a practical model for SUCs in similar settings to design context-responsive strategies that align with global frameworks while addressing local institutional realities.

3.6. Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations. First, the reliance on self-reported data from faculty and administrators may introduce social desirability and perceptual bias. Second, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causal relationships between institutional practices and implementation outcomes. Third, the study focused on a single regional State University, which restricts the generalizability of findings to other SUCs with different levels of resources and international exposure. Fourth, student perspectives and international partners were not included, which could have provided a more comprehensive view of institutional internationalization. Future studies should adopt longitudinal, mixed-method, and multi-institutional designs to strengthen causal interpretation and contextual comparison.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the institutional practices and level of implementation of internationalization at NEMSU. The findings indicate that participation in international conferences, academic networking, and benchmarking activities is more strongly aligned with implementation across instruction, research,

governance, and quality assurance, while student and faculty mobility remain comparatively limited. These results suggest that NEMSU's internationalization efforts are currently concentrated in participation-based activities that are feasible within existing institutional and resource constraints, rather than being fully embedded within core academic and administrative structures.

To advance internationalization in a more sustainable and systemic manner, NEMSU must adopt policy-driven interventions that move beyond isolated initiatives. Without a mandated institutional budget line for mobility and international partnerships, internationalization will remain activity-based rather than structurally embedded. The establishment of dedicated mobility scholarship schemes for students and faculty is necessary to address access and equity gaps, while a clearer ASEAN integration strategy can provide a realistic and regionally aligned pathway for collaboration, research, and exchange. In parallel, the acceleration of joint-degree and dual-degree programs with selected international partners can institutionalize internationalization within the curriculum. Embedding these measures into institutional planning, budgeting, and program design will enable NEMSU to transition toward a more resilient, inclusive, and strategically grounded internationalization model appropriate for regional SUCs in the Philippines.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

This journal uses the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) to recognize individual author contributions, reduce authorship disputes, and facilitate collaboration.

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C : **C**onceptualization

M : **M**ethodology

So : **S**oftware

Va : **V**alidation

Fo : **F**ormal analysis

I : **I**nvestigation

R : **R**esources

D : **D**ata Curation

O : **O**riting - **O**riginal Draft

E : **E**riting - **R**eview & **E**ditng

Vi : **V**isualization

Su : **S**upervision

P : **P**roject administration

Fu : **F**unding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Authors state no conflict of interest.

INFORMED CONSENT

We have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This study received administrative clearance from the university president and the campus directors of NEMSU. At the time of the study, the university had no formally constituted institutional review board. Nevertheless, the researchers strictly adhered to ethical standards governing research involving human participants, including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. All procedures complied with relevant institutional and national ethical guidelines.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, [ISD], upon reasonable request.

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APPENDIX

Table 2. Level of implementation of NEMSU

Indicator	Weighted mean	Adjectival rating
Instruction		
1. Offers foreign language courses which are relevant to the students' international industries and a proportion of students from total enrollment.	2.54	Sometimes implemented
2. Includes global citizenship, international understanding, and sustainable development elements into its academic programs.	2.81	Implemented
3. Includes in the curriculum the various forms of international visual culture that influence global knowledge in terms of sociocultural, as well as disciplinary contexts.	3.06	Implemented

Table 2. Level of implementation of NEMSU (continue)





Indicator	Weighted mean	Adjectival rating
4. Highlights international education programs, activities, and opportunities in its curriculum which include international competencies that make students global citizens.	3.14	Implemented
5. Supports curriculum development seminars, trainings and workshops which can be taught by specialist to faculty in all disciplines and help faculty with pedagogy and international content.	3.44	Moderately implemented
6. Has established joint programs matched with international partner universities.	2.97	Implemented
Mean	3.00	Implemented
Research		
1. Allocates funds for full-time faculty members who travel for research conferences abroad.	3.71	Moderately implemented
2. Has strengthened partnerships with foreign universities, industries, and research centers and conducts research fellowship/collaboration involving visits of scholars to countries of collaborating institutions.	3.05	Implemented
3. Has collaborative research projects for economic, environmental, and sustainable development with foreign institutions in the total number of research projects.	2.92	Implemented
4. Provides funds for full-time faculty members to participate in a study or conduct research abroad.	3.07	Implemented
5. Provides institutional funding awarded to deserving undergraduate and graduate students to participate in international research colloquiums.	2.93	Implemented
6. Has faculty who have internationally co-authored publications.	2.84	Implemented
Mean	3.08	Implemented
Extension		
1. Has guidelines that specify international extension work or collaborations and partnerships.	2.94	Implemented
2. Has guidelines to ensure that undergraduate and graduate students can participate in approved extension programs.	3.16	Implemented
3. Includes the participation of faculty members in an international extension project as stipulated in the Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR) targets.	2.82	Implemented
4. Provides funds for full-time faculty members to participate in an extension program abroad and has institutional funding awarded to undergraduate and graduate students to conduct international community outreach activities.	2.84	Implemented
5. Engages in activities apart from teaching and research (e.g., community development and fund-raising projects).	3.57	Moderately implemented
6. Has collaborative extension programs with foreign institutions in the total number of extension projects and has international faculty who have been abroad for extension programs.	2.53	Sometimes implemented
Mean	2.98	Implemented
Institutional partnership		
1. Offers joint-degree, dual/double-degree or certificate programs arranged with overseas partners in which home campus students may enroll.	2.32	Sometimes implemented
2. Implements campus-wide policies or guidelines for developing and approving partnerships or assessing existing alliances.	2.76	Implemented
3. Applies for international memberships such as ASEAN University Network (AUN), and ASEAN/inter-country mobility of students.	2.51	Sometimes implemented
4. Participates in the conduct and preparation of international webinars and collaborates with other competitive universities for sharing of internationalization practices.	3.12	Implemented
5. Provides funding for international work or collaborations and partnerships and operates degree and/or certificate programs delivered outside the Philippines for non-Filipino students in partnership with international institutions.	2.66	Implemented
6. Has several active MOA with foreign institutions over the last five years.	2.65	Implemented
Mean	2.67	Implemented
Governance and leadership		
1. Encourages academic/administrative leaders to attend International Immersion Program and collaborate with other competitive universities for sharing of internationalization practices.	3.04	Implemented
2. Ensures that internationalization is one of the top five priorities in the current strategic plan and formally assesses the impact or progress of its international education efforts.	3.28	Implemented
3. Has an internationalization head in charge, designated office/s and a budget allocated intended for advancing internationalization efforts.	3.58	Moderately implemented
4. Has an internal email/communication system where the information about international education activities and opportunities on campus are regularly disseminated to faculty and students.	3.39	Implemented
5. Has types of services (academic and non-academic) provided related to internationalization.	3.30	Implemented
6. Has a campus-wide policy development committee that works solely on advancing internationalization efforts on campus and is employed full-time to administer international activities and programs exclusively.	3.14	Implemented
Mean	3.29	Implemented

Table 2. Level of implementation of NEMSU (continue)





Indicator	Weighted mean	Adjectival rating
Quality assurance and practices		
1. Invites prominent foreign professors for lecturing, joint research, and consulting.	3.37	Implemented
2. Uses experience of the best foreign universities to enhance forms of teaching, study programs and plans.	3.26	Implemented
3. Fosters participation in international research projects jointly with leading foreign universities and research centers and foster participation of students in international student competitions.	3.28	Implemented
4. Provides free access for researchers, professors, students, and Ph.D. students to the world information resources, including electronic databases of foreign research periodicals.	3.16	Implemented
5. Supports activities of international nongovernmental organizations, involving the University staff and students.	3.23	Implemented
6. Implements/conducts quality assurance evaluation for international ranking (e.g., ISO and QStar).	3.34	Implemented
Mean	3.27	Implemented
Overall mean	3.05	Implemented

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