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## HIGHER EDUCATION IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD: THE CASE FOR INTERNATIONALIZING UNDERGRADUATE POLITICAL SCIENCE PROGRAMS

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### ABSTRACT

The internationalization of higher education appears to be a global strategic priority for universities. It is said to frame the institutional policies, student mobility trends and economic strategies. While high-income countries have dominated global education networks through branch campuses, transnational programs, and aggressive international student recruitment, low-income and middle-income countries, including Bangladesh, are actively developing localized internationalization models to attract international students. They are also able to retain domestic talent at the same time. This paper looks into various internationalization models applied in undergraduate political science education. It aims to evaluate their effectiveness in both high- and low-income settings. Highlighting student mobility trends, economic benefits, and risk factors associated with internationalization, this study focuses particularly on developing countries like Bangladesh. The study also discusses how social science disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and economics have successfully achieved international perspectives integrated through joint degrees, virtual collaborations, multilingual programs, and cross-border fieldwork. The paper suggests that the Delphi Method can serve as a tool to implement policies to guide Bangladeshi educational leaders and policymakers. Determining the most effective internationalization strategies is the key goal here. This research is targeted to deduce best practices conducted worldwide and regional economic considerations. Providing a roadmap for Bangladesh to strategically internationalize undergraduate political science programs is the main focus. Meanwhile mitigating risks such as brain drain, financial constraints, and geopolitical dependencies is also to be considered.

### KEYWORDS

Internationalization, Higher Education, Political Science, Student Mobility, Bangladesh, Globalization, Delphi Method, Social Sciences, Educational Policy, Regional Collaboration

### INTRODUCTION

The internationalization of higher education is apparently the trend that defines the global education industry. It works effectively in building institutional policies, student mobility

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patterns and national economic strategies. Higher education institutions across both high-income and low-income countries are taking on various internationalization models. Student mobility programs, transnational education and curriculum integration are also incorporated in them (Moshtari & Safarpour, 2024). From improving the global reputation of universities to attracting foreign students as well as improving domestic education standards, internationalization provides numerous benefits. However, it also poses several risks, including financial burdens, brain drain and academic dependency on foreign institutions (Basten & Crespo Cuaresma, 2014). In the particular case of Bangladesh, internationalization comes up with a unique economic advantage. The country can generate foreign exchange earnings by attracting international students to study in Bangladeshi universities. Meanwhile, the outflow of Bangladeshi students pursuing education abroad can also be reduced, consequently saving foreign currency (Shayery et al., 2022). However, to achieve this, analyzing global student mobility trends becomes essential. Besides, identifying effective internationalization models and alleviating the associated risks also remain equally significant.

Student mobility has experienced a significant global increase in recent years, with over 6.3 million students studying outside their home countries as of 2021, up from 2.1 million in 2000 (OECD, 2022). Low- and middle-income countries bring forth the majority of international students, particularly China, India, Vietnam, and Nigeria. Their destinations are concentrated in high-income nations such as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia (UNESCO, 2021). This mobility demonstrates the prestige associated with international education along with providing evidence of the quality gaps in local higher education systems and economic migration opportunities (Marginson, 2017). In response, several developing nations have been working toward internalizing internationalization. Retaining their students domestically while also attracting foreign students is the main focus (Teferra, 2017). Bangladesh has a rapidly expanding education sector that includes low tuition costs. It makes Bangladesh potentially an attractive destination for regional international students, particularly from South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

Among various disciplines, political science has been ranked as a strategic and historically significant field. It is frequently considered as a royal subject in academic institutions on a global scale. Political science has played an important role in shaping governance, policy-making and international relations being older than most other disciplines in global education (Held, 2006). The internationalization of social sciences, including political science, economics, and sociology can be distinguished from the internationalization of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields given the fact that social sciences require strong cultural, historical, and contextual understanding (Harb & El Hajj, 2025; Musiał, 2023). This raises critical questions about how high-income and low-income countries adopt internationalization strategies in social sciences. Moreover, it remains a significant question how ensuring academic mobility, research collaboration and curriculum diversification can be feasible.

High-income countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, and Germany often focus on exporting their higher education systems, setting up branch campuses in developing regions, and recruiting international students. They also adopt aggressive marketing strategies that (Wilkins & Huisman, 2021). In contrast, low-income and middle-income countries, including Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Ethiopia, rely on student exchange programs, foreign partnerships, and English-taught programs to internationalize their education. Substantial financial investments are avoided in the process. (Knight, 2015). Despite these efforts, several risk factors threaten the success of internationalization, including brain drain, regulatory challenges, economic constraints, and cultural mismatches (Teichler, 2020). Hence, an effective strategy must be introduced which shall minimize these risks through

balanced policies ensuring affordability and accessibility. Meanwhile it should be able to enhance local education infrastructure to retain students while attracting international learners.

The whole outlook of internationalization is diverse and rapidly fluctuating. The internationalization of undergraduate education is performed in multiple forms. The methods vary from student mobility and study-abroad programs to curriculum reforms, branch campuses, and global service-learning. Different institutional goals and student needs are successfully provided by every model. Student exchanges and study abroad are undoubtedly some approaches. Additionally, innovations such as online collaborations, multilingual degrees, and global internship opportunities continue to expand access to international education. Universities worldwide strive to prepare graduates for global careers, and hence internationalization will remain a significant feature of undergraduate education in the 21st century.

Exploring the various models and practices of internationalization in both high-income and low-income countries, this article also assesses their successes and challenges. Its further goal is to examine how political science, as a strategic discipline, fits into these internationalization efforts. It would also scrutinize what measures Bangladesh and similar nations can take to reduce risks and at the same time maximize the benefits of global education integration. By drawing from global best practices and lessons learned from international experiences, this discussion aims to provide a comprehensive roadmap for developing countries to effectively internationalize their undergraduate programs. At the same time, it seeks to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth.

### **Learners of Political Science are the Strategy Makers**

In an era when factors such as trade, technology, migration, and governance structures interconnect nations progressively, the study of political science is more critical than ever. Globalization has transformed the political landscape, making it essential for individuals to understand how political systems function, interact, and respond to global challenges. Our critical readings on the recent international literature made us believe that graduating in political science is a deliberate necessity.

While political science is often promoted as an essential discipline for understanding governance, diplomacy, and global interdependence, its strategic value remains contested. Critics argue that political science is not similar to technical or scientific disciplines. Thus it doesn't possess tangible applications that can directly contribute to economic or technological progress (Fukuyama, 2016). The study of political structures, ideologies, and policies does not necessarily decipher immediate problem-solving skills. Seemingly it becomes less pragmatic in an era dominated by technological innovation and economic competitiveness (Rosenberg, 2019). Moreover, some scholars contend that political science often reproduces ideological biases rather than promoting objective analysis (Mearsheimer, 2021). Political theories frequently reflect the dominant narratives of particular regions or power structure. Reinforcement of Western-centric frameworks that fail to explain the alternative governance models also remain a major concern (Chomsky, 2003). Thus, despite political science providing valuable insights, its strategic importance may be exaggerated compared to disciplines with direct economic or scientific utility.

Political science contains a perceived inability to generate definitive solutions to pressing global issues and thus it produces another critique as a strategic subject. Fields such as engineering or medicines produce concrete innovations and life-saving interventions. In contrast, political science largely revolves around theoretical debates that often lack immediate applicability unlike them (Walt, 1998). International relations theories, for example, offer various perspectives on war, conflict, and diplomacy but eventually they

have struggled to prevent global crises such as the Russia-Ukraine war or the failure of international climate agreements (Ikenberry, 2018). Furthermore, the discipline often fails to anticipate or mitigate political upheavals effectively. There are certain miscalculations surrounding the Arab Spring or the rise of populist movements in democratic nations that can be counted as significant examples (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018). Theoretical knowledge and real-world impact lacks connection which indicates an interesting theory suggesting that even though political science is intellectually enriching, it may not always be able to function as a strategically indispensable subject.

Additionally, worthwhile political participation may not be achieved from the study of political science. In fact it can result in perpetuation of elitism rather than empowerment of individuals. Political knowledge is often centralized within academic institutions and think tanks. As a result, a gap is created from the general public and hierarchies of expertise are reinforced (Mounk, 2018). The theory that political science inherently promotes democratic engagement as economic power often dictates real political influence rather than academic knowledge is challenged by this exclusivity (Streeck, 2016). Furthermore, higher education is progressively being commercialized which raises concerns about the accessibility and neutrality of political science research because funding sources and institutional affiliations may affect the scope and direction of political inquiry (Mirowski, 2008; Schwarzmantel, 2007). Consequently, political science is often framed as a strategic discipline for exploring global challenges whose accessibility, practical relevance, and ideological neutrality is still to be scrutinized critically.

### **Internationalization of Social Science Disciplines in Renowned Universities**

The internationalization of social science disciplines—such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and economics—has become a major approach for leading universities worldwide. Integration of global perspectives into curricula, promotion of international research collaborations and strengthening of student mobility are involved in this process. Analysing the maintenance of internationalized social science subjects by renowned institutions is mandatory if we wish to understand effective strategies and the ways they are associated with higher education.

For instance, scope of sociology as a discipline extends significantly beyond national boundaries. Besides the comparative and transnational studies being incorporated effectively, reflection of the current globalized nature of social issues is its prime attribute. At present, leading universities combine global themes, student exchange programs, and cross-cultural research collaborations to make their sociology curricula international. For example, the University of California, Berkeley and Harvard University, both highly ranked in sociology, offer courses on comparative social analysis and global sociology. Topics such as social inequalities, globalization, and migration from international perspectives are addressed thereby (Top Universities, 2023). These institutions actively collaborate with research centers in Europe, Asia, and Africa. They also continue to promote meaningful cross-border studies that induce social change.

Similarly, the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) has formed global fellowships and academic partnerships with organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank which has eventually strengthened exposure in international context. It has successfully enabled students to engage with real-world sociopolitical issues within a global context through these initiatives, providing both academic advancement and professional development (LSE, 2023). Overall, internationalization in sociology is achieved through strategies like cross-border research collaborations on migration, urbanization, and social justice; student exchange programs with European and Asian universities. Integration of global case studies into classroom learning is also correspondingly effective.

Beside sociology, psychology education has also evolved to reflect the diverse cultural dimensions of human behaviour, focusing on international research and collaborative learning. Top universities now emphasize cross-cultural mental health practices and global partnerships as part of their undergraduate offerings. For instance, Harvard University and King's College London are pioneering joint research initiatives and student exchange programs. Harvard's Global Mental Health Initiative partners with researchers in Asia, Africa, and Latin America that allow students to explore mental health in varied cultural contexts (U.S. News, 2023). In a similar case, King's College London maintains collaborations with European and Commonwealth universities, providing students with research fellowships and global placements (King's College London, 2023).

In addition, institutions such as the University of Toronto and the National University of Singapore (NUS) have modified their programs to be incorporated with multicultural research methodologies. NUS can be considered as an example which offers access to a dual-degree psychology program. This privilege is available to universities in Australia and the UK. It enables students to conduct psychological research across multiple regions (NUS, 2023). These internationalization efforts are supported through a combination of dual-degree programs, cross-cultural research on cognitive and behavioral sciences and mental health initiatives in developing countries. All of these programs aim at preparing students for work in diverse and global settings.

Anthropology is another important subject associated with social science which is international by nature due to its primary focus on cultural diversity and global societies. Furthermore, its subject matter deals with human evolution. Universities offering anthropology programs often emphasize fieldwork in diverse global regions. As a result, students are provided with opportunities for direct cultural immersion and hands-on ethnographic experience. For instance, the University of Oxford and University College London (UCL) facilitate international fieldwork in regions such as Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia. Therefore students become able to perform immersive research with indigenous communities. Participation in archaeological excavations as well as engagement in cross-cultural analysis can also be achieved (Top Universities, 2023). Similarly, Yale University and the Australian National University (ANU) prioritize indigenous studies and global anthropology, with ANU housing a dedicated Indigenous Studies Institute that focuses on aboriginal and Pacific Islander cultures (ANU, 2023). Various strategies support the internationalization of anthropology such as global ethnographic field placements, collaborations with international research centers and multilingual, culturally immersive curricula. Hence students can be trained to navigate and understand the complexities of human societies worldwide.

Economics is inherently a global discipline which is centered on understanding international trade. It also concentrates focus on macroeconomic policies and financial systems. As such, leading universities have prioritized internationalization through dual-degree programs. They have also adopted global research initiatives and student exchanges to ensure the process. The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), one of the world's top institutions for economics, attracts students from over 140 countries and offers joint-degree programs with Columbia University, Sciences Po (France), and Peking University (China). Students are able to acquire an authentic global education in financial markets in addition to international trade policy and development economics because of these partnerships (LSE, 2023). Correspondingly, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the University of Tokyo have launched international economic research initiatives in collaboration with global institutions namely World Economic Forum and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These collaborations create a scope for students to be

exposed to real-world global economic challenges and policy frameworks (MIT, 2023). The internationalization of economics is further strengthened through strategies like financial market research partnerships, dual-degree and exchange programs. Policy collaborations with international economic organizations also acts as an effective strategy ultimately preparing graduates for careers in globally interconnected economies.

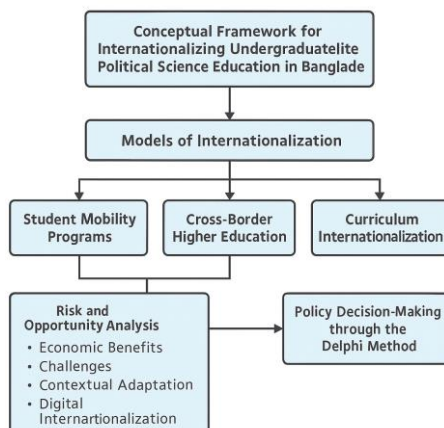
The above scenarios provide evidence for the transformation of academic landscape of major universities worldwide by the internationalization of social science disciplines. Whether through collaborative research, joint-degree programs, study-abroad opportunities, or global fieldwork, renowned institutions are ensuring that students gain a well-rounded, internationalized education. These efforts facilitate cross-cultural competencies, global perspectives, and professional opportunities in an interconnected world for the students. These models certainly provide valuable lessons on best practices and successful implementation strategies for the continued internationalization of the higher education systems of the developing nations.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Delphi Method as a Conceptual Framework for Internationalization**

The Delphi Method serves as an effective conceptual framework for guiding the internationalization of undergraduate education. It's more functional particularly in developing countries like Bangladesh (Figure 1). Global education policies, economic considerations, and cultural factors are seemingly complex issues. Fortunately the Delphi Method provides a structured decision-making approach that allows policymakers, educational leaders, and stakeholders to reach a consensus on best practices for internationalization (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963).

Regarding guiding the internationalization of higher education, the Delphi Method offers a framework that is highly effective and accommodating. It is more effective especially in contexts like Bangladesh where national priorities and resource constraints should be aligned strategically. The Delphi Method is iterative and consultative whereas traditional policy models rely on static theoretical assumptions. Thus it allows experts to participate in multiple rounds of structured feedback to gradually refine policy recommendations. This approach is valuable for internationalization efforts for several reasons. Firstly, integration of diverse perspectives by involving academic experts, university administrators, policymakers, and industry leaders, promoting a cross-disciplinary approach is carried on that creates alignment of educational strategies with national economic and development goals. Secondly, it enables data-driven decision-making. As a result stakeholders are allowed to evaluate various internationalization models—such as student mobility, joint degrees, digital learning, and branch campuses—based on their feasibility and projected outcomes. Through both qualitative and quantitative forecasting, the method predicts the long-term success of different strategies (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). Third, the Delphi Method is effective in identifying and mitigating risks that include brain drain and financial limitations. Cultural mismatches and regulatory obstacles are also noteworthy. The iterative dialogue among experts helps develop context-specific risk mitigation strategies prior to policy implementation. Ultimately, a more informed and resilient internationalization roadmap is ensured.



*Figure 1: Delphi Method as a Conceptual Framework for Internationalization*

As illustrated in Figure 2, application of the Delphi Method to internationalize political science education in Bangladesh is exhibited which is to be conducted in a planned way through a structured consultation process consisting of several rounds:

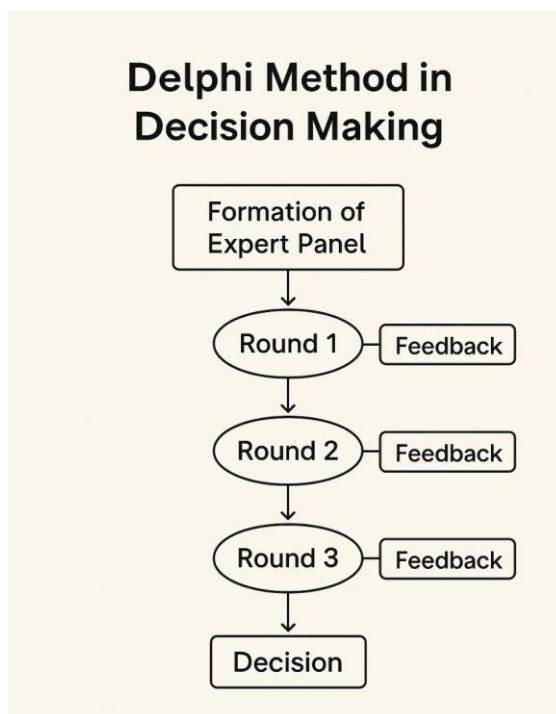
**Formation of Expert Panel:** The process begins with a group of experts is assorted from university administrators, Ministry of Education policymakers, international academic partners, and higher education researchers. This panel combines cross-sectoral insights which would assist in the latter decision-making.

**Round 1 – Identifying Models:** In the first round, experts are invited to propose and evaluate key internationalization models. Study-abroad programs, dual-degree initiatives, transnational collaborations, and digital international learning platforms are included in the scheme. Feedback is collected from the experts in charge to gain understanding of initial ideas and suggestions.

**Round 2 – Assessing Feasibility:** In the second round, members of the panel review the proposed strategies in terms of their financial, academic, and policy feasibility within the Bangladeshi context. Feedback on implementation barriers, student accessibility, and long-term sustainability is to be obtained from them.

**Round 3 – Refining and Building Consensus:** The third round involves formulating a set of policy recommendations which has the unified version previous feedback and the refined strategies. Panelists work toward achieving an agreement on the most appropriate, circumstance-specific internationalization model.

**Decision:** Based on the outcomes of the three iterative rounds and collective expert feedback, a final decision is made. An optimistic policy roadmap customised to Bangladesh's national higher education priorities is devised. Its ambition to become a regional hub for internationalized social science education remains promising.



*Figure 2: How Delphi Method Works in Decision Making Process*

## INTERNATIONALIZATION MODELS AND BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Internationalization at the undergraduate level is a rising trend in higher education. It is targeted to equip students with global competencies, cross-cultural communication skills and an understanding of international issues. Universities across the world take up different **models** of internationalization, varying from curriculum reforms to student mobility programs and cross-border collaborations. Institutions can align with global trends and promote international engagement among students with the help of these models. Below are some key models of internationalization at the undergraduate level, along with examples from various regions.

### Student Mobility Programs: Exchange and Study Abroad Opportunities

One of the most common approaches to internationalization is **student mobility**. In this process undergraduate students are allowed to study in a foreign country for a semester, a year, or even the duration of their degree. These programs increase cultural awareness, language proficiency, and expose pupils to diverse educational systems. For example, Erasmus+ (European Union), Fulbright Program (United States), Australia's New Colombo Plan.

The Erasmus+ program in Europe offers bright possibilities for student exchanges between universities that are situated in different EU member states. Undergraduate students can study at partner institutions being supported financially for their stay at the convenience of the programs. This initiative makes ways for cross-cultural learning and strengthens the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by introducing standard academic recognition across institutions (European Commission, 2021). The Fulbright Program, having a reputation for postgraduate scholarships originally, also offers opportunities for undergraduate students to study abroad. In their scheme students outside the U.S. can also study in American universities. It aims to strengthen mutual understanding through



exchanging education in international aspects (Fulbright, 2023). Australia's New Colombo Plan encourages Australian undergraduates to study and intern in the Indo-Pacific region. It seeks to deepen Australia's engagement with its regional neighbors and provide students with first-hand experiences in Asian countries (Australian Government, 2021).

### **Curriculum Internationalization and Global Learning Initiatives**

Some universities integrate international perspectives directly into their undergraduate curricula rather than requiring physical mobility. This approach includes embedding global issues, case studies, and comparative analysis into coursework. Globally Integrated Courses, Liberal Arts Education with Global Focus, The African Leadership University are some selected examples as global learning initiatives through which curriculum has been internationalized.

Many universities in the U.S. and Europe offer courses that are merged in a way to encompass global policies. They open up opportunities for students to engage in virtual collaborations with fellow pupils from other countries. For example, the COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) model enables students from different countries to work on joint projects without physically traveling (Rubin & Guth, 2021). Japan's International Christian University (ICU) offers a liberal arts program concentrating on global education intensely. All students are required to take courses that address global challenges with many programs taught in English to draw students from international arenas (ICU, 2022). The African Leadership University (ALU) integrates pan-African and global perspectives into its curriculum. Students engage in courses encompassing African development within a global context which prepares them for future international leadership roles (ALU, 2021).

### **Cross-Border Higher Education: Branch Campuses and Joint Degrees**

Some universities increase their international occupancy by establishing branch campuses in foreign countries. Additionally, joint degree programs are introduced in collaboration with overseas institutions. For instance, New York University (NYU) Global Network, establishment of University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom, China, and Malaysia, Joint Degree Programs between France and Germany.

A unique model of internationalization can be observed in NYU. It operates through global campuses in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai. Students can choose to complete their entire degree at one of these locations or move between campuses at undergraduate level, which allows them to be exposed to multiple cultures (NYU, 2022). The University of Nottingham has established full-fledged campuses in China and Malaysia which empowers students to earn a UK degree while studying in Asia geographically. This provides local and international students access to a world-class education while paying less compared to studying in the UK. (Nottingham, 2022). The Franco-German University (UFA/DFH) offers binational degrees which allows students to split their undergraduate studies between institutions in France and Germany. Graduates receive diplomas recognized in both countries, and in result they are qualified with more employability in the EU (UFA, 2021).

### **Multilingual Education and English-Taught Programs (ETPs)**

A significant aspect of internationalization is offering undergraduate programs in English, especially in non-English-speaking countries. This attracts international students, creating a multicultural learning environment to enjoy. For example, the Netherlands introduced English-Taught Programs, China's Belt and Road Education Initiative, Switzerland's Bilingual Education.

Dutch universities have pioneered English-Taught Programs (ETPs), with over 60% of undergraduate courses available in English (Nuffic, 2021). Due to this approach more international students than ever are choosing the Netherlands for their studies. China has

been expanding English-language undergraduate programs to attract students from countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. Leading Chinese universities such as Tsinghua and Peking University now offer ETPs in engineering, business, and social sciences (MOE China, 2021). Swiss universities often offer bilingual or trilingual degrees in French, German, and English, preparing their students to accomplish graduation with strong language skills and the ability to work suited in multiple cultural environments (Swiss Universities, 2022).

### **Service-Learning and International Internships**

International service programs and internships that provide opportunities to learn through experience is another form of undergraduate internationalization. Through engagement in community development projects, these programs provide students with global work experience and opportunities. Such as Princeton University's International Internship Program (IIP), Global Citizen Year (USA), Internships at the United Nations (Global). Princeton's IIP creates settings for students in summer internships with international organizations, NGOs, and research institutions across the world. It allows for the application of the knowledge they acquired academically in a real-world global environment (Princeton, 2021). The Global Citizen Year is a bridge year program that places students in developing countries where they can gain immersive, service-learning experiences before they start university. This initiative promotes leadership and cross-cultural engagement (Global Citizen Year, 2021). Securing internships at UN agencies at undergraduate level, allows some students to gain hands-on experience in international diplomacy, sustainable development along with global policy (United Nations, 2022).

### **INTERNATIONALIZATION TRENDS ACROSS HIGH AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES**

The internationalization of undergraduate education can be demonstrated through various models, including student mobility programs and curriculum internationalization. Cross-border higher education (such as branch campuses and joint degrees) and multilingual education also assist in the process. The adoption and implementation of these models often correspond with a country's economic standing. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the noteworthy factor here. High-income and middle-income countries have distinguished ways to approach internationalization. Economic resources, educational infrastructure, and strategic priorities largely influence the procedure.

#### **Student Mobility Programs**

Nations with higher GDPs typically act as hubs for international students, offering well-established infrastructures and scholarship programs to attract global talent. For instance, the Erasmus+ program functions in the European Union, creating opportunities for a large number of student exchanges among member countries. It contributes to improving the incorporation of culture and academics. Similarly, the Fulbright Program in the United States provides scholarships for international students to study in American institutions. Comprehension of cross-cultural contexts and academic excellence can gain promotion at the same time.

These countries are increasingly participating in student mobility initiatives. Their involvement in both sending and receiving international students stand up for their strategy. For example, China's Belt and Road Initiative includes educational exchanges which are set to promote regional cooperation and development. Additionally, countries like Hungary have launched programs to create appeal to international students. It helps them create a notable trace in global education in the process (Want and Want, 2022).

### **Curriculum Internationalization and Global Learning Initiatives**

Universities in these nations often combine perspectives from global context with the learning outcomes in their curricula. In addition, they create effective scope for virtual collaborations. The Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) model enables students from different countries to engage in joint projects without having to travel physically. The students can experience the international environment and attain digital literacy in the process (Marinoni and Cardona, 2024).

Lack of elements regarding resources may hinder the extent of curriculum internationalization. However, many institutions are taking up innovative approaches to solve the issue. For instance, universities in Estonia have implemented policies to internationalize their higher education systems whereas diversity and inclusion to be relevant to global educational standards is the prime focus (Fedotov, 2024) (Tamtik & Kirss, 2016).

### **Cross-Border Higher Education: Branch Campuses and Joint Degrees**

These countries often establish international branch campuses (IBCs) to increase their educational range and influence. For example, the University of Nottingham administers campuses in China and Malaysia. As a result students in these regions can have access to UK degrees. This strategy allows institutions to tap into new student markets, increasing their appearance worldwide (Yang, 2023).

Such nations are more commonly hosts to branch campuses from high-income countries, benefiting from the transfer of knowledge and educational practices. However, there is a growing trend of establishing indigenous cross-border collaborations. For example, China's joint degree programs with various international universities enable students to earn degrees recognized both domestically and abroad, reflecting a strategic move to enhance educational quality and global competitiveness (Wang and Want, 2022).

### **Multilingual Education and English-Taught Programs (ETPs)**

To attract a diverse student population, universities in non-English-speaking high-income countries offer programs in English. The Netherlands, for instance, has a significant proportion of English-taught undergraduate programs. Hence most of the international students choose it as their learning destination.

Similarly, these nations are increasing the number of English-taught programs offered to create appeal to international students. Improvement of the global employability of their graduates is another prime goal. China and Hungary have expanded their English-medium programs as part of their internationalization strategies. They are expecting to attract a broader student demographic in response and improve educational standards (Wang and Want, 2022).

The economic status of a country matters significantly while considering its approach to the internationalization of undergraduate education. High-income countries, with more substantial resources, often focus on attracting international students through well-funded mobility programs. Establishing branch campuses abroad and offering diverse curricula with global perspectives are also easily accessible initiatives on their part. In contrast, middle-income countries are increasingly adopting strategies to both send students abroad and attract international students, developing joint programs, and enhancing English-taught course materials to integrate into the global educational landscape. A dynamic interaction between economic capacity and strategic priorities is exhibited by these trends. Eventually they work to shape the internationalization of undergraduate education globally.

### **Risk Factors in the Internationalization of Undergraduate Programs in Developing Countries**

When it comes to the internationalization of undergraduate programs in developing countries, there are a lot of significant opportunities. Immense improvement in education quality, global employability, and institutional competitiveness are some of them. However, these benefits must be weighed against a range of financial, academic, cultural, and political risks. Because if those are not properly managed, they can cause long-term educational sustainability to deteriorate. Financial and sustainability risk can be considered one of the primary challenges. Developing countries often face difficulties financing internationalization. High costs of establishing partnerships, branch campuses, and joint-degree programs are the leading factors creating the issue (Basten & Crespo Cuaresma, 2014). Excessive dependence on foreign funding introduces additional vulnerabilities. It was observed in Nigeria that funding shortages caused UK-affiliated programs to collapse, which ultimately left students devoid of degrees (OECD, 2022). Furthermore, increase in tuition fees associated with international programs can lead to exclusionary practices that affect low-income students in a biased way (Teferra, 2017).

Another major risk is maintenance of academic quality and recognition. Differences in grading systems, accreditation standards, and curricula between partner institutions may result in misalignment and reduce academic credibility eventually (Moshtari & Safarpour, 2024). Additionally, the increasing number of low-quality branch campuses or “diploma mills” threatens the integrity of international education (Wilkins, 2021). In some cases, curricula overly focused on global issues may neglect resonating with local aspects. Hence education is less relevant or applicable to national development needs (Maringe & Foskett, 2012). This was evident in Kenya, where graduates of foreign-affiliated programs struggled with employability due to not being able to adjust properly with the local labor market (British Council, 2021).

A persistent concern is the brain drain phenomenon, whereby students who pursue international education choose not to return home, and as a result the country loses skilled workforce (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). If internationalization unfairly benefits students from wealthier backgrounds, it causes a risk of increased social discriminations (Knight, 2015) (Basten & Crespo Cuaresma, 2014). Moreover, limited job opportunities upon return may push internationalized graduates to emigrate permanently, as observed in Pakistan’s HEC scholarship program. In that case many recipients refused to return despite state funding (Higher Education Commission Pakistan, 2021). Cultural and linguistic risks are also significant. Many internationalized programs rely on Western educational models and English-language instruction, which may not resonate with local cultures, resulting in the erosion of indigenous knowledge systems and potential cultural alienation (Teichler, 2020; Lomer, 2017). Societal resistance may emerge when such models are perceived as culturally intrusive. Students in Algeria created an example by protesting against the imposition of English-medium education, fearing it would marginalize Arabic and local identities (UNESCO, 2022).

Furthermore, geopolitical and policy risks complicate internationalization efforts. Political instability, regulatory restrictions, and strained diplomatic relations can hinder student mobility and prevent foreign partnerships from being established (Marginson, 2017; OECD, 2021). Sanctions on Iran, for instance, restricted international academic collaborations, stalling efforts to globalize higher education (Maringe, 2020). Similarly, technological constraints in many developing countries exacerbate the digital divide. Unreliable internet access, particularly in rural areas, along with high costs of digital learning infrastructure, limit participation in online international programs (UNESCO, 2021; Liu, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, students in rural India struggled to continue their education due to poor connectivity and digital illiteracy (World Bank, 2021).

Another risk involves dependency on foreign education systems. When local institutions rely heavily on Western accreditation and academic models, it may erode national education sovereignty and stifle the development of locally relevant curricula (Moshtari & Safarpour, 2024). Additionally, foreign branch campuses can suspend operations without warning, as seen in the UAE, which leaves students without degree pathways (British Council, 2021). Besides hindering academic progression, this also marginalizes domestic universities. In addition, they may struggle to compete for students and funding (Knight, 2013).

Finally, our critical question is how to create a balance between internationalization and national interests. Even though internationalization of undergraduate education carries significant academic and economic benefits, developing countries must adopt a cautious and context-sensitive approach. Extenuating risks will only be possible when there will be investment in domestic education infrastructure. Besides, it should also be ensured that local universities are strengthened rather than sidelined. Policymakers should promote equity through targeted scholarships, support South-South collaborations, and use hybrid models that combine online learning with local delivery to reduce costs and improve access. Finally, applying robust policy and regulatory frameworks can most certainly prevent the entry of low-quality foreign programs and protect national education systems. By adopting these strategies, developing countries can successfully navigate the complex landscape of internationalization. At the same time they will be able to preserve their educational sovereignty and social equity spontaneously.

### **Models for Internationalizing Undergraduate Education in Developing Countries**

Based on the economic realities and structural limitations of developing countries, Bangladesh needs to adopt a customized, cost-effective, and geographically grounded approach to internationalizing its undergraduate education. It should focus particularly in disciplines like political science. Among several other global models, regional integration and cross-border partnerships present a viable strategy for Bangladesh. Bangladesh can obtain inspiration from the African Union's Pan-African University and the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and thus could strengthen collaboration within South Asia and ASEAN regions. Student mobility, joint research, and curriculum alignment play a role as the key procedures here (AUN, 2022; African Union, 2021). Additionally, digital and virtual internationalization models, such as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and partnerships with virtual universities, present Bangladesh with an affordable and scalable pathway to global exposure excluding the financial burden of physical mobility (Rubin & Guth, 2021; UNESCO, 2021). Owing to the fact that Bangladesh has a growing ICT infrastructure and youth population, these approaches are especially relevant.

Government-sponsored international scholarships, such as Pakistan's HEC Overseas Scholarships and Brazil's Ciência sem Fronteiras, have been successful in developing competencies on a global level. However, such programs may bring about risk of brain drain and the unsustainable financial load and thus Bangladesh should proceed cautiously (HEC Pakistan, 2022; Brazilian Ministry of Education, 2018). Instead, joint degree and twinning programs may be a more practical approach. Collaboration with regional and Western universities can ensure replication of the Malaysian experience involving 2+2 and 3+1 models. It would eventually allow Bangladeshi students to gain international qualifications at a fraction of the cost (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2021). Establishing foreign branch campuses is less viable due to cost and regulatory hurdles. Therefore, Bangladesh could consider inviting targeted, reputable institutions consisting of strict quality assurance frameworks. However, alignment with local academic goals should be guaranteed (Wilkins & Huisman, 2021).

Expansion of English-taught programs (ETPs) and multilingual offerings is involved in another strategic direction which is observed in Turkey, Indonesia, and parts of Africa. Attracting international students from neighboring countries and elevating Bangladesh's global academic presence stays the main motive here (OECD, 2022; World Bank, 2021). However, such expansion must be supported by investments in faculty development and language training. Overall, Bangladesh's internationalization efforts should emphasize regional collaboration, digital platforms and academic co-development over heavy financial commitments to outbound mobility or foreign campuses. These strategies mitigate both economic and geopolitical risks. Besides, it also promotes a more inclusive, accessible, and resilient higher education system in line with national development goals. To summarize these strategies the following table may be referred to.

Strategy/Model	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Regional Integration and Cross-Border Partnerships	Affordable, scalable, culturally relevant	Limited global exposure; quality variation across institutions	promote South-South cooperation; enhance regional mobility	Regional political instability; uneven institutional capacity
Digital and Virtual Internationalization (COIL, AVU)	Low cost, scalable, accessible without physical mobility	Dependent on stable internet; lacks real international immersion	Broaden access in remote areas; support blended learning	Digital divide; cybersecurity and data concerns
Government-Sponsored International Scholarships	Promotes talent development and global exposure	Risk of brain drain; heavy reliance on national funding	Create global alumni networks; improve innovation capacity	Unsustainable without continuous funding; inequitable access
Joint Degree and Twinning Programs	Cost-effective access to international degrees; raises prestige	May face discontinuity due to regulatory or financial shifts	Build lasting international academic ties; increase mobility	Dependence on foreign institutions and policy alignment
International Branch Campuses	Improves access to world-class education domestically	High operational costs; possible curriculum misfit with local needs	Position Bangladesh as a regional education hub	Foreign campuses may withdraw; cultural dominance concerns
Multilingual and English-Taught Programs	Enhances global competitiveness; attracts international students	Requires investment in faculty language skills; costly	Expand regional influence by catering to linguistic	Language hegemony; risk of marginalizing local

		to implement	diversity	languages
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### **Future Research Using the Delphi Method for Internationalizing Political Science in Bangladesh**

Strategic internationalization of political science education in Bangladesh requires employment of the Delphi Method by future research. It is widely used for strategic decision-making, policy formulation along with forecasting in complex domains (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963). The Delphi Method is a structured communication technique that gathers insights from experts, policymakers, and educational leaders. Iterative round of surveys is used in the process which is targeted to reach a consensus on best strategies for internationalization (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). This method could be highly effective in the context of Bangladesh. However, resource constraints, socio-political considerations, and economic realities must be carefully estimated before implementation of an internationalization model.

Several Delphi panels consist of university administrators, policy experts, government officials and international academic partners. It is possible for the researchers to evaluate the feasibility, benefits, and risks of various internationalization strategies by using them effectively. The Delphi approach will allow policymakers to evaluate the most applicable models, such as:

1. Student exchange programs with regional universities (e.g., partnerships with South Asian and ASEAN countries).
2. Dual-degree programs with internationally recognized institutions.
3. Developing Bangladesh as an educational hub for political science students from neighboring countries.
4. Incorporating digital and virtual internationalization through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL).
5. Attracting international faculty and scholars through joint research collaborations.

Using the Delphi Method, Bangladesh can strategically figure out appropriate internationalization approaches for political science as well as other social sciences. Bangladesh can evolve as a regional leader in internationalized social science education if it takes on localized yet globally positioned education policies. Economic sustainability, academic excellence and cultural preservation can also be ensured at the same time.

### **Implication of this Paper**

The implications of this study extend beyond the internationalization of political science in Bangladesh. It also provides a strategic framework for other social science disciplines resembling sociology, psychology, anthropology, and economics. Utilization of systematic decision-making methods like the Delphi Method helps policymakers to identify the most effective internationalization models. Additionally, they actively align with Bangladesh's economic, cultural, and academic needs. This will integrate global fieldwork opportunities, research collaborations, and comparative social studies to understand cross-cultural interactions in favour of sociology and anthropology. In psychology, it would encourage incorporating international mental health frameworks. Besides, it will promote exchange programs that will find opportunities for students to adopt diverse psychological practices. The economics discipline, being inherently global, can benefit from joint degree programs, international policy research collaborations, and trade and finance internship opportunities with leading institutions like the World Bank and IMF. Additionally, implementing virtual internationalization tools, such as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), can enhance accessibility and affordability for students across disciplines, reducing reliance on expensive study-abroad programs. Through planned adaptation of internationalization

efforts, Bangladesh can transform its higher education system into a regional hub in the end. Benefits like attracting international students, retaining local talent, and promoting globally competitive graduates across the social sciences comes along the way.

## CONCLUSION

Internationalizing political science education at undergraduate level comes with both opportunities and challenges for Bangladesh. High-income countries have already successfully accomplished branch campuses, dual-degree programs along with transnational education models. Low-income and middle-income countries must follow their footsteps and adapt these approaches to local economic, cultural and infrastructural realities. Internationalization is said to have potential benefits in Bangladesh, comprising improved academic quality with international students being drawn into. Notable conveniences also include generating foreign exchange revenue and preventing domestic brain drain. Nevertheless, risks such as financial instability and cultural mismatches must be carefully managed. Drawbacks such as regulatory limitations and over-reliance on foreign institutions should not also be ignored.

Scope of this study extends beyond political science. It emphasizes the successful integration of international perspectives into other social science disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, and economics using combined efforts of collaborative research, student mobility programs, multilingual education, and field-based learning opportunities. This study provides a framework for Bangladeshi universities to develop context-sensitive internationalization strategies as well as ensures its alignment with national policy goals and economic sustainability.

The Delphi Method is suggested to be exercised by this study in order to ensure effective policy implementation. It effectively enables educational leaders and policymakers to reach a consensus on best practices for internationalizing political science and social sciences in Bangladesh. Bangladesh can strategically find its place as an emerging hub for higher education in South Asia by leveraging regional partnerships, digital internationalization tools and localized policy frameworks. Future research should explore the long-term impact of internationalization on employment trends and policy development. It should also examine the ability of global Bangladeshi graduates to compete in the long run.

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