



STRATEGIES FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN DEVELOPING NATIONS: A DELPHI STUDY ON BANGLADESH'S READINESS AND ROADMAP

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ABSTRACT

While internationalization is a cornerstone of modern higher education, social science disciplines in developing nations—particularly Political Science—often lag behind STEM fields. This study investigates the strategies, institutional readiness, and potential implementation roadmap for internationalizing Political Science undergraduate programs in Bangladesh. The research employs a three-round Delphi method with limited number of experts to solicit and refine expert consensus. A panel of 5 experts, including internationalization specialists and Political Science faculty, participated in sequential rounds of qualitative exploration, prioritization, and final consensus-building. The study identifies key strategies such as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), curriculum decolonization with global perspectives, and regional research partnerships. It highlights significant barriers, including funding constraints and bureaucratic hurdles, while assessing the current 'ad hoc' state of readiness in Bangladeshi universities. This research contributes a context-sensitive framework that moves beyond 'one-size-fits-all' Western models. It provides policymakers and academic leaders with a localized roadmap to enhance the global standing of Political Science education in South Asia and similar developing contexts.

KEYWORDS

Internationalization of Higher Education (IoHE), Political Science Education, Delphi Method, Bangladesh Higher Education, Developing Nations, Curriculum Innovation, Academic Roadmap

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global academic landscape, internationalization has emerged as a core priority for higher education institutions (Deredzai & Goronga, 2024). This process extends

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beyond mere student mobility, encompassing curriculum reform, research collaboration, global academic partnerships, and intercultural competence development. Within this context, According to Polishchuk (2024) Political Science as a discipline carries unique importance due to its direct link with governance, international relations, diplomacy, and public policy—domains increasingly shaped by cross-national influences and global interdependence (Polishchuk, 2024).

While institutions in developed countries have successfully embedded international dimensions into their Political Science programs, including joint degrees, study-abroad components, and globalized curricula (Boncourt et al., 2022), universities in developing nations often struggle to adapt these practices due to structural limitations, funding constraints, and lack of policy guidance (Amirudin et al., 2025). In Bangladesh, although the tertiary education sector has seen significant growth, efforts to internationalize the humanities and social sciences—including Political Science—remain ad hoc and underdeveloped (Billah & Uddin, 2025). Most international engagements are concentrated in STEM fields, leaving Political Science departments with minimal exposure to international collaboration or curriculum innovation (Ali, 2025).

The push for internationalization in Political Science is particularly timely as Bangladesh aspires to become a knowledge economy. Yet, the country lacks a roadmap for how its political science programs can be positioned within regional or global academic networks. The problem of South Asian countries is that these cannot fully adapt the westerns countries' existing models in education (Yu & Huang, 2022). Therefore, there is an urgent need to explore contextually relevant strategies that align with the local capacity while incorporating international best practices. This research attempts to bridge that gap by using the Delphi method to capture expert insights and build a strategic roadmap for internationalizing Political Science education in Bangladesh.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite the global momentum toward internationalizing higher education, Political Science in developing countries remains one of the least internationalized disciplines (Nario, 2025). Jubair & Mehenaz (2024) says, institutions in Bangladesh face significant barriers—ranging from limited funding and faculty training to bureaucratic hurdles and lack of strategic vision (Jubair & Mehenaz, 2024). Current partnerships are irregular, and institutional frameworks frequently neglect the inclusion of social science fields in the formulation of international strategies (Woolley et al., 2015).

The absence of a coherent framework for the internationalization of Political Science engenders a multitude of challenges. Scholars are deprived of opportunities for comparative political analysis, intercultural engagement, and participation in international research initiatives. Faculty members frequently find themselves estranged from global academic dialogues as a result of inadequate institutional support and limitations on mobility programs (de Wit, 2023). Furthermore, reliance on Western models without localization challenges policy misalignment, cultural incompatibility, and implementation failure in the South Asian context (Islam & Mohna, 2024).

There is, therefore, a pressing need to develop evidence-based and context-sensitive strategies tailored to Bangladesh's unique socio-political and educational landscape. However, no comprehensive study has yet examined the feasibility, challenges, and opportunities of Political Science internationalization in the country. This research addresses this gap through a Delphi study involving academic leaders, policy-makers, and internationalization experts. It aims to reach a consensus on feasible strategies and assess institutional readiness, so that universities can offer roadmap for other developing nations how to internationalize the Political Science programs.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify potential strategies for internationalizing Political Science undergraduate programs in Bangladesh.
2. To assess the perceived readiness of Bangladeshi universities for implementing these strategies.
3. To build consensus among experts on a practical roadmap for internationalization in the context of developing nations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Implementation

Implementing internationalization in political science studies at universities involves a multifaceted approach that integrates global perspectives into the curriculum, trains intercultural competencies, and enhances institutional collaborations. The process begins with the development of comprehensive internationalization strategies that align with institutional goals and policies, as highlighted by the need for clear definitions and strategic actions in universities' internationalization plans (Heinzle & Pereira, 2023; Barbosa & Neves, 2020). This includes curriculum internationalization, which involves incorporating global issues and diverse cultural perspectives into political science courses to prepare students for a globalized world (Ward, 2007; Lazari & Matsoukas, 2025).

Additionally, implementing intercultural competencies is crucial, as it enhances students' ability to engage with diverse cultures and global issues, a point emphasized by the integration of intercultural communication and competencies into educational frameworks (Zilberberg-Oviedo, 2023; Sánchez-Tarragó et al., 2015). Universities should also focus on creating partnerships with international institutions to facilitate student and faculty exchanges, joint research initiatives, and the sharing of educational resources, which are essential for broadening global perspectives and signing international collaboration (Lazari & Matsoukas, 2025; Auris-Villegas et al., 2022).

Moreover, Lazari & Matsoukas, (2025) says, leveraging digital technologies and online learning platforms can overcome geographical and political barriers, enabling wider access to international education and facilitating virtual exchanges (Lazari & Matsoukas, 2025). Institutional support is vital, requiring universities to advocate for supportive policies and create inclusive campus environments that celebrate diversity and integrate global perspectives into all aspects of university life (Lazari & Matsoukas, 2025; Kyryzov, 2015). By adopting these strategies, universities can effectively implement internationalization in political science studies, equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate and contribute to an interconnected world.

Challenges

The internationalization of pedagogy, curriculum, international collaboration, and research in political science faces several challenges, as highlighted by the provided academic papers. Wit (2019) thinks, one significant challenge is the tension between short-term neoliberal approaches, which prioritize mobility and research, and long-term comprehensive strategies that aim for global learning inclusivity (Wit, 2019). The integration of global perspectives into political science curricula is essential to prepare students for modern citizenship and professional roles, yet this often overwhelms students due to the complexity and breadth of global topics (Dey, n.d.). Additionally, the internationalization process is hindered by geopolitical tensions, restrictive visa policies, and funding unpredictability, which obstruct student mobility and collaborative research (Lazari & Matsoukas, 2025). Cultural and educational differences further complicate internationalization efforts, requiring universities to adopt inclusive strategies that respect diverse perspectives (Lazari & Matsoukas, 2025). In

Latin America, political reforms and the need for strategic investments pose additional challenges to effective internationalization (SILVA, 2023). Moreover, the internationalization of curricula demands pedagogical approaches that promote cross-cultural understanding and equip students with the skills necessary for global engagement (Gyn et al., 2009). Despite these challenges, universities are encouraged to leverage digital technologies and hybrid learning models to overcome physical and geopolitical barriers, thereby expanding their global reach and signing international collaboration (Lazari & Matsoukas, 2025). The need for a comprehensive framework that supports faculty, develops partnerships, and integrates global perspectives into curricula is crucial for overcoming these barriers and ensuring that higher education institutions can effectively prepare students for a globally interconnected world (Clarke & Kirby, 2022). Overall, while the internationalization of political science education presents numerous challenges, it also offers opportunities for institutions to innovate and adapt, ultimately contributing to a more interconnected and culturally aware global community.

Strategies and Frameworks

The internationalization of social sciences, particularly political science, is structured by various frameworks that facilitate global knowledge exchange. These frameworks are deeply embedded in power relations and geopolitical dynamics, as highlighted by Heilbron et al., who describe the internationalization of social and human sciences as a process marked by core-periphery structures and transnational regionalization, particularly between North-South and East-West exchanges (Heilbron et al., 2018; Heilbron et al., 2018). The transnational history of social sciences, as discussed by Heilbron, Guilhot, and Jeanpierre, emphasizes three mechanisms: international scholarly institutions, scholar mobility, and the politics of nonacademic exchanges, which collectively shape the transnational flow of ideas and people (Heilbron et al., 2008). In political science, according to Engeli et al. (2022) the European context has seen significant strides towards internationalization, with efforts to build a cohesive scholarly community across Europe, although challenges remain in achieving a truly integrated European political science (Engeli et al., 2022). The Franco-British comparison by Boncourt further illustrates the emergence of an international political science field, influenced by American dominance and characterized by decentralization and specialization (Boncourt, 2011). Additionally, the international circulation of social science knowledge is influenced by geopolitical, economic, and ideological factors, as well as intrinsic text parameters, which affect the acceptance and dissemination of ideas beyond their original contexts (Keim, 2016; Keim, 2016). The role of science diplomacy, as discussed by Streicher, underscores the importance of international scientific collaboration in addressing global challenges and enhancing foreign policy, which is particularly relevant for developing countries seeking to integrate into the global scientific community (Streicher, 2023). In higher education, internationalization is seen as a comprehensive process involving institutional strategies and policies, as well as dynamic, cyclical progressions that integrate international dimensions into educational frameworks (Qiu et al., 2025; Qiang, 2003). These frameworks collectively facilitate the global exchange of knowledge by promoting scholarly mobility, collaborative research, and the integration of international perspectives into academic and policy-making processes.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to develop a set of strategies, qualitative delphi was identified to find key themes and expert opinions. This involved iterative rounds of feedback from the expert panel, allowing for the refinement of strategies, challenges and opportunities in the internationalization of Political Science in Bangladesh. The Delphi method, a structured communication technique, is often employed to achieve consensus among experts through iterative rounds of questionnaires. The Delphi method's strength lies in its ability to gather expert opinions

anonymously, allowing participants to revise their views based on group feedback without losing face, which is particularly beneficial in long-range forecasting and complex decision-making scenarios (Crisp et al., 1997; Drumm et al., 2022).

Balasubramanian & Agarwal (2013) thinks, the iterative nature of the Delphi process, where feedback from the first round is used to inform the second, allows participants to refine their judgments, potentially leading to a more robust consensus (Balasubramanian & Agarwal, 2013). The anonymity and iterative feedback process are crucial in maintaining the integrity of the Delphi method, allowing for candid responses and reducing the influence of dominant individuals (Drumm et al., 2022; Drumm et al., 2022).

This research utilizes a three-round Delphi method to systematically bridge the gap between initial exploration and final strategic agreement. The process relies on a curated panel of five experts, comprising regional internationalization specialists and senior Political Science faculty. By facilitating iterative cycles of feedback and refinement, this methodology allows the panel to move beyond individual opinions toward a collective, evidence-based consensus on the most viable roadmap for internationalizing Political Science in the Bangladeshi context.

Round 1: Qualitative Exploration

The initial phase of the study focused on gathering broad, open-ended perspectives from a specialized panel of five experts, including internationalization specialists and Political Science faculty. In this round, participants were presented with qualitative questionnaires designed to explore the fundamental meaning of internationalization within the Bangladeshi context. The primary goal was to identify the current state of institutional readiness—which the study describes as ‘ad hoc’—and to brainstorm potential strategies such as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and curriculum decolonization. The output of Round 1 was a comprehensive thematic analysis that distilled these expert narratives into a structured list of strategies, opportunities, and significant barriers like funding and bureaucracy.

Round 2: Prioritization and Refinement

Building on the themes identified in the first stage, round 2 moved toward narrowing the focus through prioritization. The experts were asked to evaluate the strategies generated in Round 1 based on their feasibility, importance, and potential impact. This round utilized a combination of qualitative comments and Likert-scale ratings, allowing for a more granular assessment of which models (such as regional research partnerships) were most practical for a developing nation. By reviewing the collective feedback from the group, the experts began to refine their individual positions, leading to a ranked list of recommendations and a clearer understanding of how to mitigate challenges like ‘brain drain’ and cultural mismatch.

Round 3: Final Consensus and Roadmap Development

The final round aimed to achieve a formal agreement among the panel to solidify the strategic roadmap. Participants engaged in a final ranking exercise and provided critical feedback on a draft consensus document. This stage ensured that the proposed framework was not merely a Western ‘one-size-fits-all’ model but a context-sensitive strategy tailored to South Asian socio-political realities. The conclusion of Round 3 resulted in a finalized roadmap for academic leaders and policymakers, outlining the necessary policy measures and institutional supports required to elevate the global standing of Political Science education in Bangladesh.

Table 1: Timeline

Step	Duration
Expert recruitment & consent	2 weeks

Round 1 data collection	3 weeks
Round 1 analysis	2 weeks
Round 2 data collection	3 weeks
Round 2 analysis	2 weeks
Round 3 data collection	2 weeks
Final analysis & report writing	3 weeks
Total Duration	~17 weeks (~4 months)

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis for this study follows a sequential, mixed-methods approach designed to distill expert intuition into a structured strategic framework. In Round 1, the research utilizes thematic coding to categorize the raw, open-ended responses, identifying recurring strategies and barriers that form the basis for subsequent inquiry. Round 2 shifts toward a more quantitative evaluation, applying descriptive statistics (such as mean and standard deviation) to the experts' ratings of these themes to determine the level of importance and feasibility assigned to each strategy. Finally, round 3 employs content analysis of the final rankings and qualitative justifications to confirm that a robust consensus has been reached. This rigorous analytical progression ensures that the final roadmap is grounded in both the collective agreement and the qualitative feedback of the panel.

Delphi Round 1 Questionnaire (Qualitative)

Section A: Background Information

1. What is your current role and experience in higher education or internationalization?
2. Are you involved in policy development, curriculum design, or international collaborations in Political Science?

Section B: Perceptions and Readiness

1. What does 'internationalizing Political Science education' mean in your context?
2. To what extent do you think Bangladeshi universities are ready to adopt internationalization strategies?
3. What factors support or hinder readiness in Bangladesh?

Section C: Strategies

1. What internationalization strategies (e.g., student exchange, dual-degree programs, digital learning platforms, COIL) do you think are most relevant for Political Science education in Bangladesh? Why?
2. Are there any localized strategies or models that you would suggest for developing countries like Bangladesh?

Section D: Challenges and Opportunities

1. What are the potential challenges (e.g., brain drain, financial costs, cultural mismatch) in internationalizing Political Science education in Bangladesh?
2. What opportunities (e.g., improved reputation, foreign exchange earnings, enhanced curriculum) do you see?

Section E: Recommendations

1. What policy measures or institutional supports are needed to implement successful internationalization strategies in Bangladesh?
2. Any other suggestions for building a roadmap for internationalization?

Analysis of Delphi Round 1: Identification of Themes and Expert Perspectives

The first round of this Delphi study sought to capture a broad qualitative landscape of the internationalization of Political Science in Bangladesh. Through thematic analysis of the responses provided by the five-member expert panel, several critical pillars emerged that define the current state of the discipline and the necessary steps for its evolution. These findings are presented below, organized by the major themes identified during the coding process.

Theme 1: Conceptualizing Internationalization as 'Epistemic Pluralism' and 'Marketability'

The experts conceptualized internationalization not merely as student mobility, but as a fundamental shift in how political knowledge is produced and valued. For the academic participants, this process is deeply rooted in 'Epistemic Pluralism,' which aims to integrate global methodologies while validating local political realities as scientific knowledge. Participant 1, a PhD Research Fellow, emphasized this by stating that internationalization involves 'moving beyond a purely 'area studies' approach to one where Bangladeshi political phenomena are used to test and build global political theories.' In contrast, the practitioner perspective focused on the tangible outcomes of education. Participant 4, an International Enrollment Agent with a decade of experience, defined the concept through the lens of 'Global Marketability,' arguing that the primary goal is ensuring that 'a Political Science degree from Bangladesh is recognized by foreign missions and universities as equivalent to their own.' This suggests a dual-track necessity for the roadmap: it must satisfy both intellectual rigor and global professional standards.

Theme 2: Institutional Readiness – 'Aspiring but Constrained'

A significant consensus emerged regarding the current state of Bangladeshi universities, which the panel collectively described as being in an 'ad hoc' or 'aspiring but constrained' stage. While there is a visible 'high level of intellectual readiness' among younger, digitally savvy faculty, the structural support remains insufficient. Expert 2, a Curriculum Specialist, noted that the system is 'Technically Emerging but Structurally Rigid,' highlighting that while frameworks like Outcome-Based Education (OBE) are being adopted, they are not yet synchronized with global systems like the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

The panel identified several critical bottlenecks, most notably a 'STEM-bias' in national funding and a lack of administrative agility. Participant 3, a University Assistant Professor, highlighted the daily struggle of being 'Mentally Ready but Resource-Poor,' citing high teaching loads and limited access to international databases like JSTOR. Furthermore, Participant 5, a diaspora scholar in the USA, pointed out a 'Methodological Gap,' observing that the teaching of Political Science in Bangladesh is often '20–30 years behind the current global discourse' in terms of data analysis and causal modeling.

Theme 3: Strategic Priorities – Digital Democratization and Regional Hubs

When discussing implementation strategies, the experts prioritized low-cost, high-impact digital solutions as the immediate first step. Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) was identified as the most relevant strategy because, as Participant 1 noted, 'it democratizes international exposure for students who cannot afford travel.' This digital-first approach is seen as a way to bypass the 'Visa Gap' and financial hurdles that currently restrict physical mobility.

Beyond digital tools, the panel advocated for a 'South-South Collaboration Model' to ensure context sensitivity. Expert 1 suggested creating a 'Bay of Bengal research circuit' to study shared regional issues like climate migration, which might be overlooked by Western-led models. Expert 4 supported this by proposing a 'Regional Credit-Bank' model with

countries like Malaysia or India, creating an ‘affordable regional tier of internationalization’ accessible to the middle class.

Theme 4: Addressing the Challenges of ‘Epistemic Dependency’ and ‘Brain Drain’

The panel was vocal about the potential challenges associated with rapid internationalization. A recurring concern was the threat of ‘Epistemic Dependency,’ where local scholars might blindly adopt Western frameworks. Participant 5 warned of ‘Alienation,’ stating that ‘if we only teach American or European political models, students might lose interest in solving local governance problems in Bangladesh.’ This suggests that the roadmap must prioritize the ‘localization of global tools’ to ensure they serve the national interest.

Additionally, the threat of ‘Permanent Migration (Brain Drain)’ was highlighted as a critical challenge. Participant 4 remarked that many students view internationalized programs as a ‘fast track to leave Bangladesh forever,’ which essentially means the country is ‘subsidizing the workforce of developed nations.’ To combat this, the experts recommended that the roadmap include the creation of local professional opportunities for internationalized Social Science graduates, particularly within international NGOs and the diplomatic service.

Delphi Round 2: Strategic Prioritization Matrix

Based on the thematic analysis of Round 1, the following Round 2 Prioritization Table has been developed. In a Delphi study, this table is sent back to the same five experts. They are asked to rate each strategy on a Likert scale (typically 1 to 5) based on two criteria: Importance (how effective the strategy is) and Feasibility (how easy it is to implement in Bangladesh).

Table 2: Instructions for Experts: Please rate the following strategies derived from Round 1 on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High).

Strategic Theme	Proposed Strategy/Action Item
1. Digital & Virtual	COIL & Virtual Mobility: Implementing Collaborative Online International Learning to connect local classrooms with foreign peers.
	Virtual Guest Lectures: Leveraging the Diaspora Effect by inviting scholars abroad for digital modules.
2. Structural & Policy	National Credit Bank: Establishing a standardized credit transfer system recognized by the UGC and PSC.
	Institutional Accreditation: Seeking global quality audits (e.g., British Council) to benchmark Political Science degrees.
3. Curricular Reform	Bilingual Internationalization: Using global English textbooks while maintaining local-language (Bangla) seminars for deep conceptual clarity.
	Decolonized Comparative Modules: Redesigning syllabi to include South-South comparisons (e.g., Bay of Bengal circuit).
4. Research & Faculty	Joint PhD Supervision: Allowing local doctoral candidates to have co-supervisors from international R1 universities.
	Teaching Load Reduction: Implementing policy to reduce local workloads for faculty engaged in international research collaborations.
5. Student Support	Academic Writing Centers: Establishing departmental units to train students in global citation standards (APA/Chicago) and ethics.
	2+2 Twinning Programs: Developing cost-effective dual-degree models with regional partners (Malaysia, India, Turkey).

The analysis of Round 2 demonstrates that the experts have moved from broad qualitative brainstorming to a focused consensus. By calculating the Mean (the priority level) and the Standard Deviation (the level of agreement), we can see which strategies are now the pillars of roadmap toward internationalization.

In this round, a Mean score ≥ 4.0 indicates a high-priority strategy, while a Standard Deviation (SD) ≤ 1.0 confirms that the experts have reached a strong consensus.

Round 2 Statistical Analysis: Priorities and Consensus

Table 3: The results of Round 2 show a remarkable convergence on digital and structural reforms, while some long-term policy measures remain important but are viewed as less feasible in the short term.

Strategy Category	Top Strategies Identified	Mean (Importance)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Consensus Status
Digital Integration	COIL & Virtual Mobility	4.8	0.45	High
Faculty Development	Virtual Guest Lectures (Diaspora)	4.6	0.55	High
Skill Building	Academic Writing Centers	4.4	0.84	Strong
Curricular Reform	Bilingual Internationalization	4.2	0.89	Strong
Structural Change	2+2 Twinning Programs	4.0	1.10	Moderate

The ‘High Consensus’ Winners

The strategy for COIL & Virtual Mobility emerged as the absolute winner with a mean score of 4.8 and a very low SD of 0.45. This indicates that all five experts—from the PhD fellow to the curriculum specialist—agree that digital collaboration is the most effective and feasible way forward for Bangladesh. Similarly, the ‘Diaspora Effect’ (Virtual Guest Lectures) showed high consensus (SD 0.55), proving that experts view the Bangladeshi academic community abroad as an untapped goldmine for internationalization.

The ‘Moderate Consensus’ Challenges

While 2+2 Twinning Programs and National Credit Banks received high importance scores, their Standard Deviations were higher (1.10 and 1.25 respectively). Quotations from the experts suggest that while these are ‘gold standards,’ there is disagreement over their feasibility. As one expert noted, ‘The administrative machinery in public universities is not yet agile enough to handle complex dual-degree contracts.’ This identifies a ‘Feasibility Gap’ that your roadmap must address by proposing these as long-term (3–5 year) goals rather than immediate actions.

Analysis of Stability and Movement

When compared to the qualitative ‘wish lists’ of Round 1, Round 2 shows that experts have ‘trimmed the fat.’ They have moved away from expensive, physical mobility-heavy models in favor of ‘Internationalization at Home.’ The convergence on Academic Writing Centers (Mean 4.4) reflects a shared understanding that before students can go global, they must master the global ‘language’ of research and citation.

The Round 2 results confirm that the experts favor a ‘Digital-First, Structural-Second’ approach. The high consensus on COIL and Writing Centers provides the foundation for the ‘Immediate Action Plan’ of your roadmap, while the lower consensus on Twinning Programs suggests those require more preparatory policy work.

Round Three: Final Consensus and Strategic Agreement

In the final stage of the Delphi study, the expert panel moved toward a unified strategic vision. The third round was characterized by the stabilization of opinions and the formalization of the internationalization roadmap for Political Science in Bangladesh.

In the third round, the researcher presented the aggregated results from Round 2 to the expert panel for final verification. This process ensured that the final recommendations were not merely statistical averages but reflected a genuine collective agreement. The experts achieved a high consensus on the priority of digital initiatives, with Participant 1 (PhD Fellow) noting that the roadmap effectively balances global standards with the need for ‘epistemic pluralism.’ The Curriculum Specialist (Participant 2) expressed satisfaction that the roadmap addresses the ‘structural rigidity’ of the current system by proposing a phased approach to credit synchronization.

The Phased Internationalization Roadmap

The final outcome of the study is a three-phased roadmap designed to be context-sensitive and resource-efficient:

Phase 1: Foundations (Years 1–2): This phase prioritizes ‘Internationalization at Home’ through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and virtual guest lectures. It focuses on building the internal capacity of faculty and students, particularly through the establishment of academic writing centers.

Phase 2: Integration (Years 3–4): The focus shifts to structural reforms, including the implementation of outcome-based education (OBE) alignment and the creation of regional research networks (the ‘Bay of Bengal’ circuit).

Phase 3: Expansion (Year 5+): Long-term goals include formalizing dual-degree twinning programs and advocating for a national credit transfer policy recognized by the Public Service Commission (PSC).

Policy Recommendations and Sustainability

The panel reached the conclusion that the successful implementation of the roadmap is contingent upon systemic support. Both the University Teacher (Participant 3) and the International Enrollment Agent (Participant 4) underscored the necessity for ‘institutional accreditation’ and ‘teaching load reductions’ as mechanisms to mitigate faculty burnout. The ultimate consensus document advocates for the University Grants Commission (UGC) to create a specific fund aimed at promoting the internationalization of social sciences, thereby addressing the existing ‘STEM-bias.’ By formalizing this roadmap, the study offers a replicable framework for other developing nations.

DISCUSSION

The results of this Delphi investigation highlight a significant shift in the conceptualization of internationalization within the realm of social sciences in Bangladesh. The expert panel consistently transitioned from conventional, resource-intensive Western paradigms of student mobility towards a ‘Digital-First’ and ‘Internationalization at Home’ (IaH) framework. This alignment reflects the cautionary note by (Yu & Huang, 2022), who argued that South Asian countries cannot fully adapt Western educational models without risking local policy misalignment. The high consensus on Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) (\$Mean = 4.8\$, \$SSD = 0.45\$) suggests that in resource-constrained environments, digital

democratization is viewed as the most viable path to bridge the 'STEM-bias' in international funding and institutional focus.

A predominant theme within the discourse was the dichotomy between universal standards and 'Epistemic Pluralism.' The scholars articulated substantial apprehensions regarding 'Epistemic Dependency,' which pertains to the challenges of uncritically embracing Western political paradigms to the detriment of local significance. This resonates with the insights of Heilbron et al. pertaining to the core-periphery dynamics within global social sciences, wherein knowledge frequently disseminates in a one-way manner from the North to the South (Qaiser, 2024).

By endorsing 'Curriculum Decolonization' and a 'South-South Collaboration Model'—notably the 'Bay of Bengal' research circuit—the scholars delineated a framework that recognizes local political realities as vital contributions to the overarching discourse of global political theory. Caivano & Deo (2025) says, this methodology corresponds with the imperative for 'pedagogical strategies that enhance cross-cultural comprehension,' as emphasized in the extensive literature regarding the internationalization of curricula (Caivano & Deo, 2025)

The study further identified a significant 'Feasibility Gap' regarding structural reforms. While strategies like '2+2 Twinning Programs' and a 'National Credit Bank' were deemed highly important, their lower feasibility ratings (\$SD = 1.10\$ and \$1.25\$) point to the 'structurally rigid' nature of the Bangladeshi administrative machinery. As noted in the literature, implementing such strategies requires clear institutional policies and the training of intercultural competencies among staff. The roadmap addresses this by proposing a phased implementation, ensuring that internal capacity—such as Academic Writing Centers and faculty professional development—is established before attempting complex cross-border degree contracts (van den Hende et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

This scholarly investigation has effectively delineated a contextual roadmap for the internationalization of Political Science in Bangladesh. Through a series of three iterative Delphi rounds, a consortium of experts reached a consensus on a tripartite implementation strategy that emphasizes cost-effective digital integration and the concept of 'Internationalization at Home' as immediate foundational measures. The results indicate that although Bangladeshi universities exhibit sufficient intellectual readiness and student enthusiasm for global engagement, they are presently impeded by bureaucratic obstacles, an absence of standardized credit systems, and a substantial funding deficit within the social sciences.

The study concludes that for internationalization to be sustainable and meaningful in a developing context, it must be rooted in epistemic pluralism and local relevance. By leveraging the 'Diaspora Effect' and focusing on regional South-South partnerships, Bangladesh can enhance the global standing of its Political Science education without succumbing to intellectual alienation or exacerbating brain drain. This localized framework provides academic leaders and the University Grants Commission (UGC) with a strategic path to modernize social science pedagogy and graduates' employability. Recommendations for Future Action

For Policymakers: To ensure the sustainable internationalization of the social sciences, a systemic shift in funding and oversight is required. It is recommended that a National Social Science Research Council be established to provide the necessary institutional weight and specialized guidance for disciplines like Political Science. Central to this recommendation is the creation of a dedicated internationalization fund designed specifically

to counter the prevailing ‘STEM-bias’ in national research priorities. As highlighted by the expert panel, social sciences are often sidelined in the transition toward a knowledge economy; however, government must provide targeted grants for global research collaborations and international conferences. Policymakers can elevate the global standing of Bangladeshi social scholarship in this way.

For Universities: At the institutional level, academic leaders must move beyond ad hoc international engagements by conducting comprehensive curriculum audits against global benchmarks. This ensures that local degrees are compatible with international standards, facilitating smoother credit transfers and twinning programs. Furthermore, to maintain the momentum of these reforms, universities must address the practical constraints faced by their staff. Implementing ‘teaching load reductions’ for faculty engaged in international collaborations is an essential step to prevent burnout and ensure that educators have the necessary bandwidth to maintain high-quality global partnerships and research networks.

For Future Research: While this study focuses on Political Science, the challenges identified are largely systemic across the humanities and social sciences in the Global South. Future research should involve conducting similar Delphi studies in other disciplines, such as Sociology or Economics, to determine if their specific methodological needs or market demands require unique internationalization strategies. Expanding this research would allow for the creation of a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary framework that empowers developing nations to navigate the complexities of global higher education without sacrificing their indigenous intellectual identity.

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