

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Faculty and Staff Perspectives: Internationalization Development in Chinese Private Universities

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has significantly impacted higher education institutions worldwide, prompting a growing emphasis on the internationalization of higher education. Nevertheless, there needs to be more scholarly investigations specifically examining the experiences of faculty and staff at Chinese private universities about internationalization, especially understanding how internationalization enhances global competitiveness. This study evaluates the internationalization functions of private universities across various dimensions, including promoting professionalism, personal development, and international engagement, relying on the Internationalization Theory for its framework. The research adopted a survey research design to elicit responses from faculty and staff of 20 selected private universities across 16 regions in China using an online questionnaire. Data was collected from November 1, 2023, to February 29, 2024, and analyzed using the R language software package using descriptive statistics and hierarchical analysis methods. The results from 473 respondents were analyzed, showing positive ratings across all dimensions, with mean scores ranging from 4.570 to 4.800 out of 5. The skewness values suggest a favorable skew towards higher ratings, indicating a positive perception among respondents. Enhancing professionalism received the highest mean score and the slightest *standard deviation*, indicating strong endorsement and minimal variability among respondents. The findings highlight the significance of academic and humanities exchanges and international exchange programs in shaping the internationalization landscape of private universities, indicating areas for further improvement. Future research can employ qualitative methods to gain deeper insights and compare public and private universities' staff experiences to find disparities and parallels.

INTRODUCTION

As has been observed over time, the principal expressions of the objective of internationalization programs in higher educational institutions include the mobility of scholars and students, including using such schemes to establish a robust institutional reputation and branding through global and regional rankings (such as those organized by the Times Higher Education global ranking of universities) and a shift in paradigm from collaboration to competition. International education has evolved into a thriving industry, generating substantial revenue and serving as a vehicle for strengthening credibility and exerting indirect influence (Alstete, 2020; Trinh, 2023; Ngcobo et al., 2024; Sapkota, 2021). Internationalization facilitates the development of researchers and students as globally conscious individuals, fostering collaboration in research to address urgent global challenges. It also enables the exchange of experiences to address local issues and benefit local communities (Tight, 2022; Tran et al., 2023; Wu, 2022). Thus, the dissemination of knowledge continues to be global. The level of cross-national research collaboration is steadily rising, and an upswing has also been seen with developments in technology and communication platforms. The consensus among university administrators is that offering students and researchers a worldwide outlook is crucial to attracting the brightest students and researchers.

The underlying justifications for internationalization are rooted in the desire of business enterprises to expand their operations beyond their domestic boundaries to gain insights from markets that ordinarily will be beyond their sphere of influence, exchange technical expertise with increasing advancements in technology, acquire cross-border collaborators, and expand their revenue streams, and in the process increase profitability which will mitigate vulnerabilities. Studies have hinted that the evolution of this process is contingent upon the ongoing generation of value for the enterprise through collaborative prospects (Al-Tabbaa and Zahoor, 2023; Calheiros-Lobo et al., 2023; D'Angelo et al., 2024; Usman and Sun, 2023). Drawing from this, universities are increasingly motivated to engage in internationalization efforts and seek

potential partners that can provide a broader range of opportunities for international exchanges, such as semesters or years abroad, dual degree programs, and professor exchanges, for their students and faculty members (Chen et al., 2024). Aside from the competitiveness within the sector and the necessity for universities to expand internationally, the labor market wants graduates with advanced skills in cross-cultural communication, global leadership, and open-mindedness. Hence, universities currently possess a distinctive opportunity to engage in internationalization efforts, aiming to enhance the global presence of their faculty, students, academic programs, and research initiatives.

The Chinese conservatism society has been radically influenced by internationalization; this has permeated into most sectors, including education, where it has become a fundamental aspect of urban life at Chinese universities. This can be evidenced through metrics such as joint undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs, exchange programs, abroad publications, and staff mobility plans. The universities in China have undergone a swift transformation, shifting from a condition of seclusion in their pursuit of national identity to a prominent global standing facilitated by globalization. The globalization of higher education has significantly transformed academic environments worldwide, leading institutions to prioritize internationalization projects (Galloway et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2023a; Tight, 2022). The significance of this global trend holds particular relevance for private institutions in China, given the growing emphasis on enhancing international competitiveness and relevance. This transformational shift transpired during a relatively short timeframe, aligning with the renaissance of Chinese higher education into a widespread system in the latter part of the 1990s. Chinese researchers currently exhibit exceptional scholarly productivity throughout several domains of science and research, benefiting from massive backing from the government and corporations (Chen, 2004; Jun Li, 2008; Wan, 2006). With the ongoing expansion of China's global impact, private institutions increasingly emphasize internationalization to bolster their academic standing and attract high-calibre students worldwide (Chen et al., 2024; Frezghi and Tsegay, 2019). The

internationalization of university education manifests in multiple dimensions, including the development of curriculum, the recruitment of faculty members, the implementation of student exchange programs, and the establishment of international research collaborations involving diverse academics and institutions. In response to global demands, Chinese private institutions have significantly emphasized implementing internationalization initiatives to bolster their academic reputation and institutional standing (Tian and Liu, 2021; Kattar and Diken, 2020; Maderazo, 2016; Wen et al., 2022). Within the dynamic educational landscape, the viewpoints of educators in Chinese private colleges substantially impact the development and advancement of initiatives about internationalization. Educators are crucial in offering valuable perspectives on the efficacy, challenges, and prospective avenues for extending internationalization within educational institutions (Liu, 2023; Qu and Dai, 2016; Kattar and Diken, 2020; Zhao et al., 2024a). Hence, it is essential to truly understand the perspectives of educators in order to ascertain the obstacles and prospects linked to the internationalization process within the private institutional space in China.

Scholars have opined that acknowledging various educators' perspectives on the advancement of internationalization is critical to effectively guide strategic decision-making and policy development inside Chinese private higher education institutions (Ma et al., 2023; Peng and Nair, 2022; Rashid et al., 2023). Examining teachers' experiences and perspectives can provide essential data into areas that require improvement, recognize obstacles to advancement, and inform the implementation of successful programs to foster internationalization within educational institutions (Khan et al., 2023).

This study contributes to the ongoing academic conversation on internationalization in Chinese universities by offering empirical facts and informed observations based on instructors' viewpoints in private universities. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by examining teachers' perspectives, thereby enhancing our understanding of the complex factors that influence the internationalization process at Chinese private colleges. It provides information on how to move

staff strategically and develop plans to promote ongoing growth and innovation in this critical area of higher education. Based on the identified difficulties, this study investigates university staff members' perspectives regarding internationalization in Chinese private universities. This research exhaustively portrays the present condition of internationalization at Chinese private colleges and the fundamental variables that shape its course by analyzing educators' perspectives. While most of the prior literature identified has focused chiefly on public institutions, the gap this research examines explores the dynamics associated with internationalization from the perspective of private universities in China.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework

The research relied on the Internationalization Theory for its theoretical framework. The theory was proposed from the enterprise viewpoint, where several scholars have reviewed the inclination to internationalize in diverse industries, from the large corporations (Çela et al., 2022; Grøgaard et al., 2013), services industry (Andersson, 2004; Grøgaard et al., 2013), tech companies (Hemmert, 2004; Rönkkö and Peltonen, 2010) to educational institutions (Tran et al., 2023; Wu, 2022). The researchers found certain qualities related to entrepreneurship that serve as catalysts for success in challenging business environments. These attributes include having an international perspective, adopting an organized approach to business operations, and demonstrating the capacity to identify and exploit technical advantages. Zucchella (2021) argues that incorporating empirical data from organizational and business sector perspectives remains crucial to internationalization studies. Hence, it is imperative to undertake a more thorough examination of internationalization concepts to offer other perspectives on addressing this divide.

The Internationalization Theory owes its conception to the scholarly contributions from the Uppsala Internationalization Model that trace their origin from the studies of Scandinavian scholars (Carlson, 1975; Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975; Johanson and Vahlne, 2006). The Uppsala Internationalization Model, as hypothesized by Carlson (1975), infers

that the organization progressively expands its global engagement, but its limited understanding hinders its entry into culturally dissimilar sectors. Organizations adhere to a sequential progression from reduced to more excellent commitment models of operation, progressively increasing their psychological distance as they venture into unknown markets. This progression leads to the formation of business networks that can be leveraged to achieve a competitive advantage. The network perspective within the framework of internationalization theory places significant emphasis on the significance of relationships, which are progressively established within a specific sector in foreign networks by establishing local relationships through international extensions, penetrating existing relationships, and linking previous networks in diverse regions (Johanson and Mattsson, 2015). We can argue about Toyota's expansion into the U.S. automobile market by introducing the Lexus brand and marketing it and its flagship Toyota cars across different continents as a classic example. Scholars recognize that to achieve internationalization, firms must effectively exploit the many channels offered by their connections and online platforms (Bai et al., 2022; Verhoef et al., 2021). Businesses today utilize various opportunities and relationships to internationalize their personnel and operations. These modifications necessitate being versatile, adaptable, and responding more quickly to emerging circumstances like global health pandemics, new government policies, and financial market instabilities. This study aims to analyze the import of internationalization on private universities in China and how the Internationalization Theory can help create an understanding of the internationalization practices within the Chinese higher educational system.

Empirical literature

Following the implementation of economic liberalization measures in the 1980s, China has maintained a proactive stance in its efforts to internationalize higher education (Hsieh, 2020; Li and Xue, 2022; Xu, 2023). Guo (2023) identify five notable achievements in internationalizing higher education in China:

- International researchers visit China annually to participate in symposiums, academic

conferences, lectures, and cultural exchange programs.

- Chinese universities are experiencing a growing influx of international students.
- The execution of educational and research programs that conform to globally recognized standards and protocols.
- iv. The integration of international textbooks and courses into the curriculum of Chinese universities.
- Chinese institutions are increasingly hosting international academic conferences.

Throughout its history, internationalization has been characterized by a notable acquiescence to Western standards and practices (Wei and Nguyen, 2020; Wu, 2022; Zhao and Liu, 2023). The focus was establishing research universities of international repute within China, achieving a specific tier of success (Biney and Cheng, 2021; Ma, 2019; Marginson, 2021). The number of international students enrolled in Chinese universities is an illustrative example, highlighting the institutional capacity of Chinese universities to attract and accommodate overseas students (Raja et al., 2024). According to Wen et al. (2022), universities were driven to improve their reputation to obtain more government funding through research grants and scholarships. Recruiting overseas students is a realistic way for institutions to gain financial resources that correspond with their fundamental principles and educational situations, thereby promoting internationalization. Numerous non-research universities, characterized by their comparatively limited resources in comparison to leading research universities, have successfully developed the capacity to maintain the expansion of international student education; Lien and Miao (2023) note that providing government scholarships actively attract international students and facilitate the internationalization of higher education in China. It cites the Confucius Institute as a cultural and educational platform expected to impact China's influx of international students. Consistent with the postulations of Ma (2019), China's higher education quality is advanced, as evidenced by the global ranking of its universities, with two Chinese universities in the top 15 universities globally and at least 31 universities in the top 500 globally (Times Higher Education, 2024a, 2024b). Furthermore, scholars have opined

that the scholarly atmosphere in Chinese universities attracts students worldwide, making China one of the top destinations for international students (Dai et al., 2023; Ke et al., 2022; Tian and Liu, 2023).

Another example is the number of international collaborations and partnerships established by Chinese universities with institutions from other countries, indicating their engagement and integration into the global academic community (Dai et al., 2023; Jensen, 2023). Internationalization specifically enhances academic exchange, attracting highly skilled individuals from abroad and enhancing the quality of research at Chinese universities (Zhao et al., 2024b; Zhou et al., 2024). In general, the global standing of Chinese institutions has experienced a notable enhancement, as seen in the global rankings cited earlier. Scholars emphasize the need to emphasize international experiences and the relevance of prioritizing China's efforts to establish world-class universities. However, it is essential to note that the work of faculty members covers multiple dimensions, including global, national, and local aspects (Ahlers and Christmann-Budian, 2023; Chen et al., 2024; Guo et al., 2022; Singh and Kaur, 2023; Xu and Boudouaia, 2023).

Consequently, they need help achieving an optimal blend of global, national, and local aspects while also dealing with clearly defined duties and productivity expectations set by the government or organizations they employ (Larbi and Fu, 2017; Ruan et al., 2024; Marginson, 2023). Wang (2022) informs that over 15 years, from 2003 to 2018, the Chinese Government Scholarship Program provided financial support to over 420,000 international students for their studies at Chinese universities while they increasingly adopted government-led internationalization efforts by implementing incentive mechanisms, such as monetary rewards and academic evaluation, for international publications, primarily in English-

language journals (Shen et al., 2023b; Wang, 2019; Zhang, 2022a; Song et al., 2023).

Studies have highlighted that the consequences of globalization are evident in various aspects, such as the incorporation of research, the adoption of English as the primary language for scientific communication, the expansion of the international job market for scholars and scientists, the rise of communication firms and multinational and technology publishing companies, and the utilization of information technology (Guo et al., 2022; Sang, 2023; Shen et al., 2023a; Singh and Kaur, 2023; Wang et al., 2023; Zeng and Yang, 2024). A crucial factor identified by researchers in the process of internationalizing higher education in each country is how it articulates its national identity. This is because a country's distinct historical background, indigenous cultures, available resources, priorities, and other relevant factors influence its approach to and interactions with other nations; national identity and culture play a crucial role in the process of internationalizing higher education (Buckner, 2019; Crăciun, 2018; Hsieh, 2020; Moon, 2016; Tight, 2022; Uralov, 2020; Zhang, 2022b).

METHODOLOGY

The study utilizes a quantitative survey research design to understand the most direct cognition of the faculty and staff of China's private universities on international development. The research population includes faculty and staff at Chinese private universities. There are approximately 939 private universities in China, according to UniRank (2023). Because of the large population, sampling was utilized to select a subset. Using the simple random sampling technique, 500 faculty and staff from 20 private universities in 16 provinces (see Table 1) in China were selected using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size method.

Table 1: List of private universities and their regions used for the study

No	Private University	No	Regions
1	Chongqing College of Mobile Communication	1	Chongqing
2	Chengdu Jincheng College	2	Sichuan
3	Wuchang University of Technology	3	Hubei
4	Wuhan Donghu University		Hubei

Source: Authors

Cont.....

No	Private University	No	Regions
5	Wenhua College		Hubei
6	Kede College of Capital Normal University	4	Beijing
7	Xijing University	5	Shaanxi
8	Zhuhai College of Science and Technology	6	Guangdong
9	Zhejiang Shuren University	7	Zhejiang
1	University of Sanya	8	Hainan
11	Communication University of China, Nanjing	9	Jiangsu
12	Wuxi Taihu University		Jiangsu
13	Sanjiang University		Jiangsu
14	Jilin International Studies University	10	Jilin
15	Heilongjiang College of Business and Technology	11	Heilongjiang
16	Nanchang Institute of Technology	12	Jiangxi
17	Qilu Institute of Technology	13	Shandong
18	Dalian Neusoft University of Information	14	Liaoning
19	Changsha Medical University	15	Hunan
20	Guizhou Institute of Technology (GZIT)	16	Guizhou

Source: Authors

The following category of faculty and staff were selected - teachers, administrators, and management personnel; to understand their basic situation, their evaluation of internationalization function, their overall cognitive evaluation of internationalization, their cognitive evaluation of teachers' internationalization, and their cognitive evaluation of teaching internationalization. The cognitions and evaluations of the faculty on the internationalization of scientific research; on the internationalization of management and the construction of international universities—the study's data collection period from November 1, 2023, to February 29, 2024. Respondents completed a structured questionnaire prepared in English Language. Google Forms was used to disseminate the questionnaire online in order to gather data. To distribute the questionnaire, the researchers had contact persons in each institution who shared the links to the questionnaire among their university network. As part of the inclusion criteria, it was a prerequisite that respondents had to be employees or faculty at a private university in China.

This paper mainly adopts descriptive statistics and hierarchical analysis methods for research analysis. Descriptive statistics is used primarily to organize and analyze the questionnaire data and to evaluate and describe the distribution status, numerical characteristics, and the relationship between random variables. Hierarchical analysis is mainly used to explore teachers' internationalization knowledge

and make step-by-step scientific arguments. The data were analyzed using the R language software package. The literature review served as the basis for the latent variables in this study, ensuring that they matched the intended objectives of the investigation. The measuring items were created based on prior research and then adjusted to fit the unique context of internationalization of development at Chinese private universities, with the guidance of three experts who validated the research instrument.

The questionnaire was in three sections. The first part contained respondents' demographic information, and gender, age, and academic qualification were the focus. The second part evaluated the internationalization in private universities, while the third section contained questions on the judgment matrix. There were 32 questions; the first part had three questions, the second part had 15 questions, and the third contained 14. The scales used in the instrument preparation were derived from published studies; the scale assessing the need for internationalization was derived from Tight (2022) and Wang (2019). The scales for "Urgency of Internationalization Development in Universities" were derived from Guo et al. (2022) and Lin (2019). The Internationalization Level of Universities was developed using scales derived from Larbi and Fu (2017) and Wang (2019). The scale that evaluated the internationalization function of private universities was developed by Zhao and Liu (2023). The specific function of the

internationalization of higher education to enhance professional literacy was assessed with scales derived from Bedenlier and Zawacki-Richter (2015) and Ardakani et al. (2011). The scale evaluating the extent to which private university faculty influence internationalization developments was developed by Amblee and Dhayanithy (2018) and Orechova (2019). The questions for the judgment matrix on the internationalization level of teachers were derived from Shen et al. (2023b) and Zhang (2022b). Huang (2006) and Tight (2022) provided the scales for the judgment matrix of internationalization level of teaching and learning, while the scales for the judgment matrix of internationalization level of university management were adapted from Qiang (2003) and Middlehurst (2018). Finally, the judgment matrix for the level of constructionization of universities was modified and adapted from Zapp and Lerch (2020), Ting (2022) and Lannert and Derényi (2020).

These items captured the structures that were the subject of the analysis. Careful modifications were performed to ensure that the items measured were relevant and appropriate in the research context. Ethical considerations were considered when designing the questionnaire questions; the authors ensured that the study did not include personally identifying data or questions intruding on participants' privacy. This was confirmed by three experts who scrutinized the questionnaire, thus giving it face validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of the 500 distributed, 473 valid copies of the questionnaire were retrieved, representing a 94.6% retrieval rate. The descriptive statistics of the respondents are shown in Figure 1.

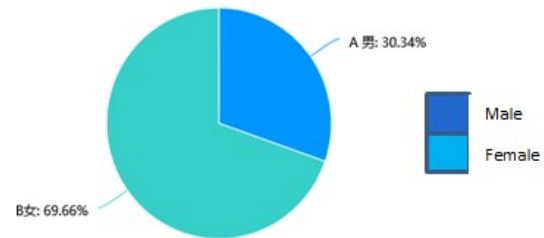


Figure 1: Respondents' gender information

There were more women than men among the respondents, with 329 female teachers (69.66%) and 144 male teachers (30.34%). The age of the interviewed teachers is concentrated in 31-50 years old, with 30.93% of the young teachers between 31-40 years old, 17.36% of the middle-aged teachers between 41-50 years old, and 48.29% of the young and middle-aged teachers in total; young teachers under 30 years old account for the most significant proportion of the teachers, which is 46.9%; and teachers between 51-60 years old account for 4.81%. This survey reflects that, as a side effect, private colleges and universities have a high proportion of young and middle-aged teachers. The age distribution of the teaching force in the school, in which young and middle-aged teachers are the main force, with fewer middle-aged and old-aged teachers, makes the teaching force relatively young. This is shown in Figure 2.

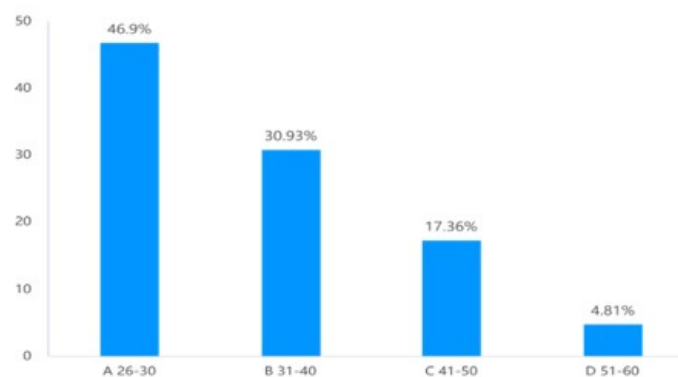


Figure 2: Age distribution of teachers

More than 90% of the respondents in the survey have a master's degree. Of the 473 participants surveyed, 23 had bachelor's degrees, accounting for 4.76%; 436 had master's degrees, accounting for 92.35%; 9 had doctoral degrees, accounting for 2.01%; and 5 had other degrees, accounting for 0.88%,

as shown in Figure 3. This survey result also reflects the distribution of the faculty and staff academic qualifications in Chinese private universities, with master's degrees accounting for the majority, followed by bachelor's and doctor's degrees.

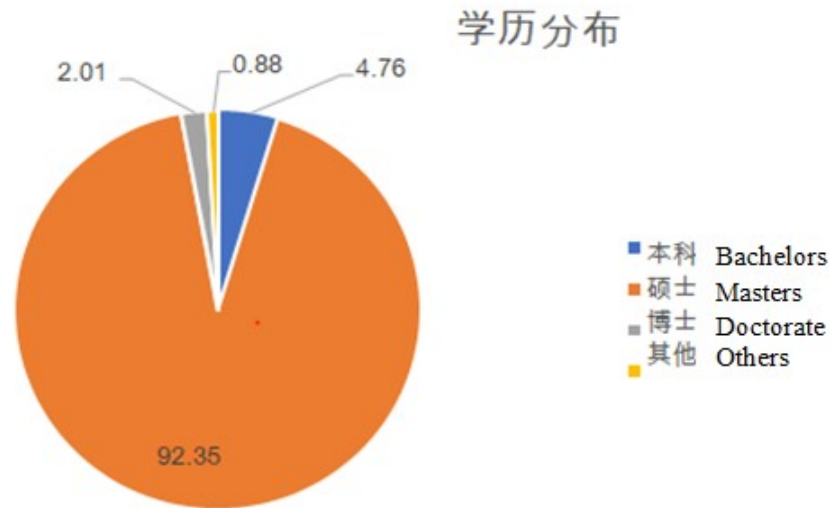


Figure 3: Distribution of respondents' academic qualifications

In the survey, 87.01% of the respondents answered whether Chinese private universities must develop internationally. Among the respondents who think that internationalization is necessary, the percentage of those who believe that it is essential to do so is 6.2%; the percentage of those who believe it is required is

42.3%; the percentage of those who think it is general is 8.9%; the percentage of those who believe it is not required is 2.19%; and the percentage of those who think it is not necessary is 1.9%, all are presented in Figure 4.

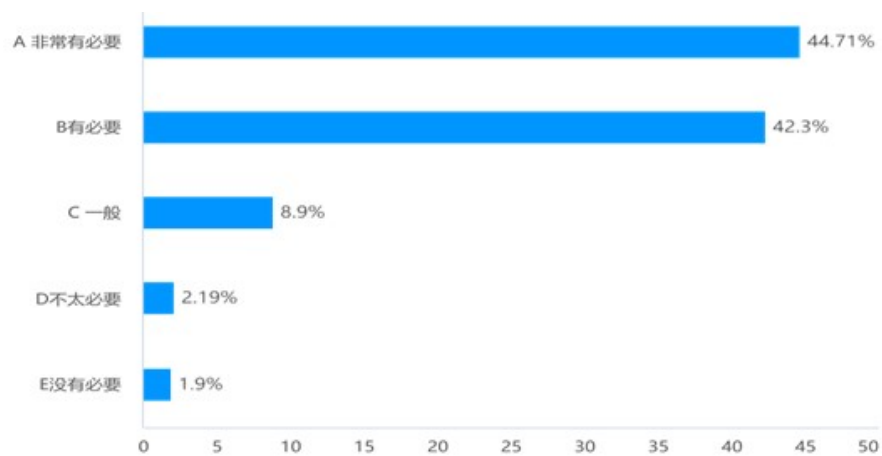


Figure 4: Distribution of respondents' overall evaluation of the need for internationalization development in private universities

Regarding the urgency of internationalization internationalizing the development of Chinese private universities at this stage, 145 respondents (30.05%) chose "very urgent," 199 respondents (42.09%) chose

"urgent," 23.63% chose "average," and 2.55% and 1.68% chose "not too urgent" and "not urgent." These are all depicted in Figure 5.

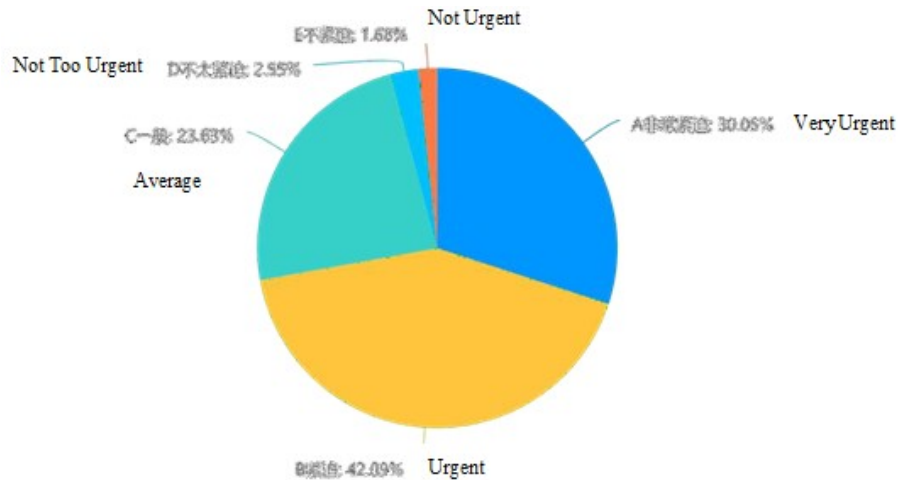


Figure 5: Distribution of respondents overall evaluation of the urgency of internationalization development in private universities

Most respondents answered the question of the general evaluation of the internationalization level of private universities as average, accounting for 38.51% (see Figure 6). The percentage of teachers who are very satisfied with the internationalization level of private universities is 19.11%; the percentage of teachers who are satisfied.

The percentage of teachers who are satisfied with the internationalization level of private universities is 36.11%; 5.25% were dissatisfied, and 1.02% were very dissatisfied. The dominant view that the internationalization level of Chinese universities is mostly average has been espoused in prior publications (Chen, 2024; Guo et al., 2022; Lin, 2019), and the findings of this study have affirmed this.

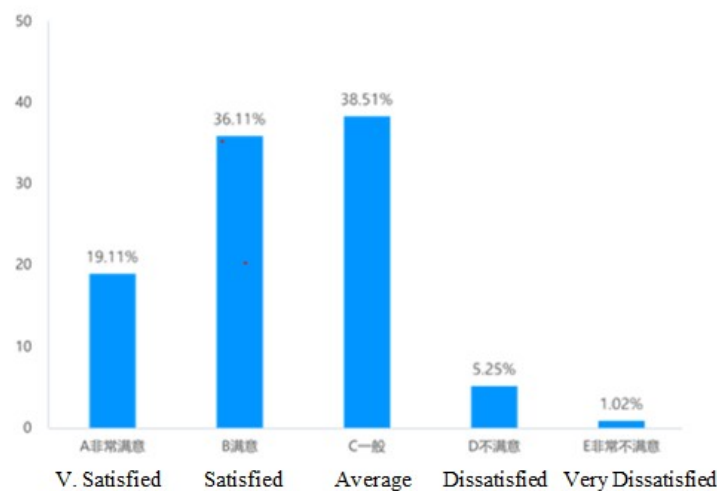


Figure 6: Distribution of Teachers' Overall Evaluation of the Internationalization Level of Private Universities

The following variable evaluated the respondents' evaluation of the internationalization function of private universities across three dimensions: promoting professionalism, promoting personal development, and promoting international engagement. The valid *N* (sample size) for each dimension is 473, indicating that all responses were included in the analysis. The provided data shows that the respondents rated all three dimensions of internationalization positively, with mean scores ranging from 4.570 to 4.800 out of 5. The *standard deviations* are relatively small, indicating that the responses are clustered closely around the mean for each dimension. The values for Skewness indicate that the distributions of responses are negatively skewed, suggesting that most respondents gave higher ratings for each dimension. The scores for enhancing professionalism had the most significant

mean, the minor *standard deviation* (0.673), a negative skewness, and the largest of the three absolute values. The distribution of the scores is skewed to the left, indicating that the majority of those who rated it gave it a high score. This result indicates that faculty and staff generally want to continuously improve their professional fields through the internationalization development of private universities and sincerely participate in the international cooperation of higher education through continuous exchanges and cooperation with international counterparts (Frezghi and Tsegay, 2019; Jensen, 2023; Larbi and Fu, 2017; Wang, 2019). Data in Table 2 suggests that respondents perceive private universities positively regarding their efforts to promote professionalism, personal development, and international engagement as part of their internationalization initiatives.

Table 2: Respondents' evaluation of the internationalization function of private universities

Function	N	Minimal Values	Extreme Values	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Standard Error
Promoting Professionalism	473	1	5	4.600	0.686	-1.927	0.158
Promoting Personal Development	473	1	5	4.800	0.736	-1.413	0.157
Promoting International Engagement	473	2	5	4.570	0.702	-1.667	0.159
Valid N (List State)				473			

The following variable assessed the specific functions of internationalization of higher education to enhance professional literacy. As shown in Table 3, among the specific functions of enhancing professionalism, the function that faculty and staff were most concerned about was broadening international perspectives. The data shows respondents rated them positively for each specific function, with mean scores ranging from 8.900 to 9.020 out of 10. The *standard deviations* are relatively small, indicating that the responses are clustered closely around the mean for each specific function. The Skewness of this option is negative and the largest. However, its *standard deviation* is not the smallest among the four options. However, the distribution of scores for this question is skewed to the right, indicating that many teachers scored

high in this option, which shows that the teachers have a high level of enthusiasm for educational exchanges, cooperation with the outside world, and participation in international cooperation in higher education. Zhao and Liu (2023) underpinned this as the internationalization of higher education, where English language proficiency is regarded as the hallmark of internationalization across Chinese higher institutions. The data suggests that the respondents favorably perceive these functions as enhancing international competition, promoting an international perspective, staying updated on international frontiers, and improving foreign language skills, as other scholars have recognized in their academic discourse (Ke et al., 2022; Tian and Liu, 2021; Wen et al., 2022).

Table 3: Teachers' evaluation of the specific functions of internationalization of higher education to enhance professional literacy

Specific Functions	N	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Standard Error
Enhancing international competition force	473	2	10	8.900	1.764	-1.96	-0.156
Enhancement of the international perspective	473	2	10	9.020	1.589	-2.161	-0.156
Keeping abreast of the latest international Frontiers	473	2	10	9.010	1.483	-1.969	-0.156
Improvement of foreign language skills	473	2	10	8.980	1.497	-1.973	-0.156
Valid N (list state)	473						

The extent to which private university faculty influence internationalization development

The demands by the faculty and staff in private universities constitute the internal factors of internationalization development, and respondents' qualifications, teaching, research, management, and university construction constitute the external factors of internationalization of private universities, which have external influences and constraints on the internationalization development of the university. Therefore, understanding the perception of the external factors of internationalization development of private universities is an essential reference for improving and enhancing these factors' internationalization levels. Zhang (2022) acknowledges the significant role of international partnerships and collaborations in China's

internationalization strategies. These relationships are integral to China's approach to internationalizing higher education. Their presence is seen as a means to foster the development of Chinese-oriented aptitude for foreign nations and to bolster China's international position.

The extent to which the level of faculty internationalization affects the private universities' internationalization

Combined with the questionnaire data, this paper uses expert scoring to assign a judgment matrix and conduct the overall consistency test for the international cognitive evaluation of faculty and staff in private universities. The judgment matrix is obtained according to expert scoring, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Judgment matrix of internationalization level of teachers

Project	Overall Assessment	International Perspective	International Communication Skills	English Proficiency	Language
Assessment	1	4	3	3	
International Perspective	1/4	1	1/2	1/3	
International Communication Skills	1/3	2	1	1	
English Language Proficiency	1/3	3	1	1	

Table 4 presents a judgment matrix used to assess the internationalization level of teachers across four dimensions: overall Assessment, international perspective, international communication skills, and English language proficiency. Overall Assessment is considered the most important, as it has the highest value (4) in International Perspective and

International Communication Skills and a value of 3 in English Language Proficiency. The significance of International Perspective and International Communication Skills is regarded as equivalent, as they possess a value difference of 1. The significance of English Language Proficiency is considered to be relatively low in comparison to other dimensions since

it exhibits the lowest values among them (Wang et al., 2023). The matrix presented above offers a systematic approach for evaluating and ranking the many aspects of internationalization within the faculty and staff of private universities. It delineates the perceived significance of these dimensions about one another. Internationalization within educational institutions can be effectively enhanced through the utilization of this instrument as a means to allocate scarce resources and inform decision-making (Qiu, 2018; Shen et al., 2023b; Zhang, 2022b).

The study of R language software reveals that the weights of each indicator in the cognitive evaluation of internationalized faculty strength in private universities are 0.5098, 0.094, 0.1881, and 0.2081, respectively. The CR=CI/RI value is 0.023, which is less than 0.1. Given that C.R. is less than 0.1, this judgment matrix meets the consistency

requirement. The respondents' perception indicates that English proficiency significantly affects the internationalization development of academics in private universities, having a more influential effect on their internationalization growth. Improving the English proficiency of the faculty is an important guarantee to enhance the internationalization level of private universities.

The extent to which the level of internationalization of teaching and learning affects the private universities' internationalization

This study employs expert scoring to assess the value assignment and consistency of the judgment matrix for evaluating the internationalization of education and teaching at private colleges and universities. In conjunction with the questionnaire data, the judgment matrix is obtained according to expert scoring, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Judgment matrix of internationalization level of teaching and learning

Project	Assessment	Internationalization of the Curriculum	Internationalization of Teaching Materials	Facilities International Change
Overall Assessment	1	3	4	5
Internationalization of the curriculum	1/3	1	2	3
Internationalization of teaching materials	1/4	1/2	1	2
Teaching facilities international change	1/5	1/3	1/2	1

Table 5 presents a judgment matrix used to assess the internationalization level of teaching and learning across four dimensions: overall Assessment, internationalization of the curriculum, internationalization of teaching materials, and teaching facilities' international change. Teaching facilities' international change is considered the most important, as it has the highest value (5) concerning overall Assessment and decreasing values concerning the other dimensions. Internationalization of teaching materials is considered the second most important, as it has moderate values (2 to 1/4) about the other dimensions. Internationalization of the curriculum is considered less important than teaching materials but more important than overall Assessment, as it has values ranging from 3 to 1/3. Overall, Assessment is regarded as the least important compared to the other dimensions, as it has the lowest values about them.

R language software analysis found that the weight vector of each indicator of the cognitive evaluation of international teachers in private colleges and universities is (0.545, 0.232, 0.1385, 0.0387), CR=CI/RI=0.0189<0.1. Since C.R. <0.1, this judgment matrix passes the consistency test. After the consistency test, it is found that the internationalization level of teaching facilities has the lowest influence on the internationalization level of teaching in private colleges and universities among the weights of various indicators, indicating that teaching facilities do not have a particularly significant impact on or constraint on the internationalization development level of private colleges and universities in the internationalization of private colleges and universities. In contrast, the internationalization level of curricula and teaching materials has a more significant influence on the internationalization

level of private universities (Huang, 2006; Tight, 2022), consistent with teachers' evaluation of the internationalization level of teaching and universities in the survey questionnaire. This finding is consistent with the teachers' Assessment of the internationalization level of teaching in the questionnaire. Therefore, private universities should improve the internationalization of their curricula and teaching materials.

The extent to which the level of internationalization of university management affects the private universities' internationalization

Combined with the questionnaire data, this paper uses the method of expert scoring to carry out the assignment of judgment matrix and the overall test of consistency for the internationalization cognitive evaluation of educational management in private colleges and universities. The judgment matrix is obtained according to expert scoring, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Judgment matrix of internationalization level of university management

Project	Overall Assessment	English Language Proficiency	Capacity To Work Internationally	International Communication Skills
Assessment	1	4	5	3
English Language Proficiency	1/4	1	1/2	1/3
Capacity to Work Internationally	1/5	2	1	1/2
International Communication Skills	1/3	3	2	1

Table 6 illustrates a judgment matrix used to assess the internationalization level of university management across four dimensions: overall Assessment, English language proficiency, capacity to work internationally, and international communication skills. The capacity to work internationally is considered the most important, as it has the highest value (5) in the overall Assessment and decreasing values in the other dimensions. English language proficiency is considered the second most important, as it has moderate values (4 to 1/4) about the other dimensions. International communication skills are considered less critical than English proficiency but more important than overall Assessment, as they have values ranging from 3 to 1/3. Overall, Assessment is considered the least important compared to the other dimensions, as it has the lowest values about them.

Through the R language software analysis, it is found that the weight vector of each indicator of the cognitive evaluation of international teachers in private colleges and universities is (0.5465, 0.0887, 0.1313, 0.2335), $CR=CI/RI=0.0377<0.1$. Because $C.R. <0.1$, this judgment matrix passes the consistency test. From the

results, it can be seen that the English level of school administration has a lower weight on the degree of influence on the perception of internationalization of management in private universities, indicating that the English level constrains the improvement of the level of internationalization of management, which is close to the situation of the respondents' feedback in the survey process, and once again verifies the critical influence of the English level of teaching and management personnel on the overall level of internationalization of private universities. These were aptly in alignment with the postulations of Qiang (2003) and Middlehurst (2018).

The extent to which the level of internationalization of university construction affects the private universities' internationalization

Based on a comprehensive analysis of relevant literature, this paper uses expert scoring to assign a judgment matrix and conduct the overall consistency test for the internationalization cognitive evaluation of private university education management. The judgment matrix is obtained according to expert scoring, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Judgment Matrix for the Level of Constructionization of Universities

Project	Overall Comments price	Development Orientation	The Current State of Development	Student Humanities Exchange Programs	Infrastructure Construction	International Exchanges Project
Overall Assessment	1	5	1	2	4	3
Development Orientation	1/5	1	1/5	1/3	1/2	1/2
The Current State of Development	1	5	1	2	4	3
Academic Humanities Exchange flow	1/2	3	1/2	1	2	2
Infrastructure development	1/4	2	1/4	1/2	1	1/2
International exchange programs	1/3	2	1/3	1/2	2	1

Table 7 shows a judgment matrix for assessing universities' level of constructionization (construction development) across various projects or aspects. The projects include overall Assessment, development orientation, the current state of development, student humanities exchange programs, infrastructure construction, and international exchange programs. The overall assessment row and column represent the overall evaluation of the constructionization efforts. The values indicate each project's perceived importance or strength in the overall Assessment. Broadly, it is considered the most important, as it has a value of 5 about the current state of development, indicating a strong correlation. A university's development orientation is its long-term plan for growth and improvement (Fonseca and Nieth, 2021; Giuri et al., 2019; Hamdani and Koubaa, 2021). The dimension in question exhibits comparatively lower values regarding the total Assessment, suggesting that it is regarded as less significant in the process of constructionization. The Current State of Development dimension evaluates the present state or advancement of development inside the university. The high number of five (5) indicates a close relationship with the overall Assessment. The student humanities exchange program focuses on exchange programs related to humanities disciplines. It has moderate values compared to the overall Assessment and the current state of development, indicating its importance in the constructionization efforts. Infrastructure

Construction evaluates the development of physical infrastructure in the university. It has varying degrees of importance compared to other projects, with higher values about overall Assessment and the current state of development. International Exchange Programs assess exchange programs with international institutions (Ting, 2022; Lannert and Derényi, 2020). It is considered moderately important, with values ranging from 1/2 to 2 about other projects. The judgment matrix provides a structured way to prioritize and evaluate different aspects of university construct ionization. It reflects the perceived importance of each project in contributing to the university's overall development and internationalization objectives. Through the analysis of R language software, we can obtain the various indicators of the cognitive evaluation of the international faculty of private colleges and universities. The multiple vector is (0.3014, 0.0525, 0.3014, 0.0163, 0.0762, 0.1056), $CR=CI/RI=0.00099<0.1$. Since $C.R.<0.1$, this judgment matrix passes the consistency test. According to the current measurement results, in addition to the development status, the internationalization level of academic and humanities exchanges and international exchange programs has a greater weight, which proves that these two items are important factors influencing the internationalization level of university construction. They are also factors with a greater degree of influence on the internationalization level of the private universities, which is consistent with

the results of the questionnaire analysis; that is to say, teachers believe that the internationalization level of academic and humanities exchanges and international exchange programs should be further improved. This result is consistent with the results of the questionnaire analysis.

Theoretical and practical implications

Theoretically, the research utilizing the framework of Internationalization Theory to investigate the experiences of faculty and staff at private universities in China contributes to the ongoing development and advancement of the theory. The results present empirical evidence supporting and extending the critical concepts in the Internationalization Theory discourse, like the function of humanities exchanges and academics in driving internationalization in universities. The study has also explored the functions of private universities across different regions in China, where they have been applied to promote salient points like personal development, professionalism, and international engagement. The research has also empirically validated theoretical constructs within the discourse of internationalization, including the relationship linking internationalization to global competitiveness, a theoretical notion amplified by the study. The study also integrated multiple theoretical contexts with higher education research by adopting a multidimensional process to assess internationalization functions. This interdisciplinary technique enriches our perception of the complex processes and dynamics associated with internationalization when considering the variables applicable to Chinese private universities.

The study also presents some exciting and insightful implications for practice. The results advise the development of institutional policies and strategies to foster internationalization in Chinese private universities. The findings can aid administrators and policymakers when designing and implementing internationalization programs that align with the needs and priorities of the concerned institution. The findings also practically show the need for adequate faculty and staff engagement to optimize competitiveness. Understanding the positive attributes of staff engagement can be channeled towards ensuring that faculty and staff

contribute progressively to internationalization initiatives to ensure the support and success of such programs. Thus, development programs and training opportunities that enhance intercultural and language competencies can be promoted to foster inclusiveness. The universities can use these to forge strategic partnerships with local, regional, and international counterparts, encouraging collaboration and knowledge exchange in areas of mutual benefit and interest to those involved. The findings can be utilized as a viable benchmark to evaluate the internationalization performance of Chinese private universities. They can serve as comparison parameters to help universities meet and maintain educational best practices and standards and set achievable improvement targets.

CONCLUSION

This study has expounded on the internationalization efforts of private universities, focusing on various dimensions, including faculty perception, specific internationalization functions, and the influence of teaching, management, and university construction. The analysis of respondent evaluations revealed a positive perception of private universities' efforts to promote professionalism, personal development, and international engagement. Faculty and staff showed keen interest in enhancing professional fields through internationalization initiatives, emphasizing the importance of continuous engagement with international counterparts. The questionnaire survey takes the perceptions, demands, and satisfaction as the entry point. It analyzes the subjective evaluation of the faculty and staff of private universities on the internationalization of higher education. The questionnaire was sent to faculty and staff from 20 private universities across 16 regions in China, and the perception presented in the questionnaire can, to a certain extent, represent the current trend of faculty and staff evaluation of the current situation and future development direction of internationalization of Chinese higher education.

Additionally, the Assessment of specific functions of internationalization highlighted the importance of faculty members' language proficiency, maintaining current knowledge of global issues, and extending their international viewpoints. These results highlight

the value of encouraging academic and humanities exchanges, improving proficiency in English, and introducing global viewpoints into curricular and instructional materials. The research contributes to the existing literature on the internationalization of higher education by providing empirical evidence and practical recommendations for enhancing the internationalization efforts of private universities. The results address the identified challenges, and thus, private universities can strengthen their global competitiveness and better prepare students for success in the increasingly interconnected and diverse global village.

The research encountered some limitations, the first of which is generalizability. The research was focused on the experiences of faculty and staff at private universities in China; this may limit the generalizability of the results to include public institutions or institutions outside China. This is because other considerations like culture and norms may critically affect the functioning of the institutions. There was also the limitation of self-report bias, as the data were collected through the questionnaire hosted on Google Forms, where respondents may provide socially desirable responses that may not reflect the actual internationalization experiences in the institution. The survey research methods also introduce some limitations as the design may need to capture the complexity of the internationalization experiences of faculty and staff at the private universities sampled. Qualitative methods may provide deeper insights that capture the vagaries associated with internationalization in each circumstance. The study sample may need to be more representative based on the diversity of the sample (selecting 20 institutions from over 900 institutions). However, the criteria for sample selection can unconsciously introduce sampling bias. The authors' recommendations for future studies include incorporating qualitative methods such as focus groups and interviews for a more detailed insight that may elude quantitative investigations. Future studies could also compare the staff experiences of public and private institutions to identify potential areas of divergence and alignment. This can help policymakers and university administrations address shortcomings

regarding internationalization in higher educational institutions. Further research and collaboration are warranted to explore additional factors influencing internationalization and to assess the long-term impact of internationalization efforts on private university outcomes and student experiences. Based on the investigation and analysis of the problem, the following recommendations are advanced for the internationalization development of Chinese private universities:

Firstly, internationalization development has become urgent for developing education in Chinese private universities. Internationalization development is a must. Chinese private universities need to recognize the significance of internationalization to their development. They should identify the direction of internationalization development, set the goal of internationalization development, and drive the internationalization development of all private universities by improving the internationalization level of talent cultivation, scientific research, academic discipline development, and faculty construction to meet the new requirements of private universities in the new era of opening up of education to the outside world.

Secondly, we should vigorously promote all kinds of international exchanges and cooperation to enhance internationalization comprehensively. According to the results of the questionnaire, the interviewed teachers' evaluation of the international communication ability of teaching and management staff, the internationalization level of scientific research, the internationalization level of academic and humanistic exchanges, and the international exchange programs are generally low, which indicates that the breadth and depth of the current external exchanges and cooperation of Chinese private colleges and universities still need to be further strengthened. Through international exchanges in talent cultivation, scientific research, academic exchanges, and other aspects, the enthusiasm of teachers and students can be fully mobilized, and teachers and students can become participants and beneficiaries so that Chinese private colleges and universities can realize internationalization and high-quality development.

Thirdly, the construction of an internationalized teaching system should be accelerated to promote

the internationalization of talent training. From the teachers' evaluation of the internationalization of teaching, the internationalization of teaching materials and courses is seriously short. Therefore, private universities should try their best to increase the proportion of internationalized elements in the selection of teaching materials and curricula and improve the internationalization of teaching materials by introducing high-quality foreign teaching materials or joint compilation of teaching materials at home and abroad. In terms of curriculum, efforts should be made to vigorously promote bilingual teaching or introduce international online courses to enrich the diversity of the curriculum and enhance the international competitiveness of Chinese students. Textbooks and curricula are two essential pillars of the internationalization of teaching, and only by continuously improving the internationalization of textbooks and curricula can the internationalization of Chinese teaching be genuinely realized.

Fourthly, teachers' foreign language skills must be strengthened to meet internationalization needs. In evaluating the internationalization ability of teaching and management personnel, the degree of dissatisfaction with the English language ability is pronounced, which reflects that the foreign language ability of the teaching staff of private universities still needs to be improved. As the most essential quality for international exchange and cooperation, English proficiency is an important factor that restricts the internationalization development of private colleges and universities. Chinese private colleges and universities should attach great importance to the enhancement of the English language ability of the teaching staff, take English as the primary language of teaching, management, and internationalization, and at the same time, introduce some other foreign languages in combination with the school running characteristics of the school, to enhance the internationalization level of teaching and management by strengthening the foreign language ability of the teaching staff and laying a solid foundation for the comprehensive promotion of the internationalization development.

Finally, regular Assessment of internationalization efforts, using judgment matrices or comparable instruments, is essential for pinpointing areas

of proficiency and prospects for improvement. Private universities should establish mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and enhancement of their internationalization strategies to remain competitive in the higher education environment.

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