

Perceived benefits of internationalization programs among BEEd students and faculty

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Abstract

This study assessed the perceived benefits gained by Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) students and faculty of the Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA) from participating in internationalization programs from 2022 to 2024. It examined their perceived benefits in terms of the following: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, technology literacy, learning experiences, cultural growth, personal and professional growth, and institutional support. A quantitative-descriptive design was used, employing a researcher-made Likert-scale questionnaire. It was administered to 12 BEEd students and 12 faculty members. Findings showed that both groups strongly agreed that internationalization led to meaningful academic and professional gains. Students reported the highest benefits in technology literacy (86.07%), learning experiences (83.33%), and cultural growth (80.53%). Faculty identified creativity (78.77%), critical thinking (75.73%), and cultural growth (72.7%) as their most enhanced competencies. Collaboration emerged as the lowest-rated indicator for both groups, yet it still received a strongly agree interpretation. Overall, the perceived benefits were higher among students (77.14%) than faculty (66.56%). The study concludes that internationalization initiatives significantly strengthen 21st-century skills, intercultural understanding, and academic engagement. Continued enhancement of collaborative opportunities and institutional support is recommended to maximize the long-term impact of internationalization efforts.

Keywords: bachelor of elementary education, internationalization programs, home-based internationalization, mobility, student benefits, faculty benefits, global education

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1. Introduction

Internationalization has become an essential part of higher education as institutions work to prepare learners and educators for a more interconnected world. In the Philippines, this direction is supported by CHED through policies such as CMO 55, s. 2016, which defines internationalization as the integration of international, intercultural, or global perspectives into the core functions of teaching, research, and service. For many higher education institutions (HEIs), these efforts open opportunities to expand academic networks, strengthen institutional capacity, and learn from diverse teaching and learning environments (Ferrer, 2020; Cinches et al., 2017; Hoai et al., 2023). Internationalization also involves strategic and institution-wide efforts that integrate global perspectives into teaching, research, and campus activities, as highlighted by Özturgut et al. (2014), who emphasize the importance of activity-based, competency-driven, and process-oriented approaches in strengthening international engagement. Such initiatives also allow State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to engage more meaningfully with global standards and partner institutions (Vasquez-Rivera, 2019).

At the Central Bicol State University of Agriculture (CBSUA), internationalization has been gradually embedded in various programs, particularly in the College of Development Education (CDE). Through initiatives like the International Credit Transfer Program (ICTP), BEEd students and faculty have taken part in virtual exchanges, collaborative research activities, and intercultural learning experiences with universities abroad. CBSUA's efforts were recognized nationally when it was selected as one of the 16 recipients of the First Higher Education Internationalization Award in 2021. Despite the growing emphasis on internationalization, the benefits experienced by students and faculty may differ. For students, global academic exposure can strengthen critical thinking, creativity, communication skills, cultural awareness, and digital literacy. These are the competencies that future teachers are expected to develop. Faculty members, on the other hand, often describe benefits related to improved pedagogical approaches, expanded research engagement, and stronger academic networks.

This study draws on Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory (Kim, 2001; Shafaei & Abd Razak, 2016), which explains how individuals adjust to new cultural environments, and Global University Competition Theory (Marginson, 2006; Chirikov, 2016), which discusses how institutions respond to global pressures such as rankings and partnerships. These theories help frame the experiences of BEEd students and faculty who participated in CBSUA's internationalization initiatives from 2022 to 2024. By examining their perceived benefits, this study provides insights into how internationalization contributes to their academic, cultural, and professional development.

Objectives of the Study - This study aims to assess the benefits gained by BEEd students and faculty from their participation in internationalization programs during 2022–2024. Specifically, it seeks to:

- Examine the perceived benefits of internationalization programs on BEEd students in terms of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, technology literacy, learning experiences, cultural growth, personal growth, institutional support, and overall benefits.
- Determine the perceived benefits of internationalization programs on BEEd faculty with respect to critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, cultural growth, professional growth, institutional support, and overall benefits.

2. Methodology

Research Design - This study employed a quantitative-descriptive research design to assess the perceived benefits of internationalization programs among BEEd students and faculty of the Central Bicol State University

of Agriculture (CBSUA) from 2022 to 2024. This design is commonly used to systematically collect and analyze numerical data describing the characteristics or perceptions of a population without aiming to establish cause-and-effect relationships (Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2019; Qualtrics, 2022). The design was appropriate because it allowed the researchers to gather numerical data on respondents' experiences and perceptions and to describe patterns based on their responses.

Research Locale - The study was conducted at CBSUA–Pili Campus, particularly within the College of Development Education (CDE), which offers the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) program. This program was the focus of the study because of its active involvement in internationalization initiatives during the years covered.

Respondents of the Study - The respondents consisted of 12 BEEd students and 12 faculty members from the College of Development Education who participated in CBSUA's internationalization initiatives during the specified period. These participants were selected based on their direct involvement in programs such as virtual exchanges, collaborative learning activities, and academic partnerships with international institutions.

Research Instrument - Data were collected using a researcher-made survey questionnaire structured on a five-point Likert scale (5–Strongly Agree to 1–Strongly Disagree). The questionnaire was designed to measure perceived benefits across several domains, including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, technology literacy, learning experiences, cultural growth, personal or professional growth, and institutional support. The instrument underwent content validation by research experts and BEEd faculty members. Suggestions from the validators were incorporated prior to its administration.

Data Gathering Procedure - The researchers developed the questionnaire and subjected it to expert validation. Upon approval, permission to conduct the study was secured from university authorities and the program chairperson. The validated questionnaires were then distributed to qualified respondents. A cover letter accompanied the instrument, explaining the purpose of the study, assuring confidentiality, and emphasizing voluntary participation. Only those willing to participate were included in the study.

Statistical Treatment of Data - Data were analyzed using mode, percentage, and mode percentage. The mode identified the most frequent response for each item, while percentage analysis described the proportion of respondents who selected particular answers. Mode percentage was computed to determine the proportion of participants who chose the modal response, allowing clearer interpretation of trends across indicators.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Perceived Benefits of BEEd Students on Internationalization Programs

This part of the study examines the perceived benefits of internationalization programs on BEEd students and faculty. For students, the discussion covers the areas of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, technology literacy, learning experience, cultural growth, personal growth, institutional support, and overall benefits.

Table 1
Students' Overall Perceived Benefits of Internationalization Programs (2022–2024) ordered by rank

Indicator	Number of Statements (n)	Mode Percentage (%)	Mode Interpretation	Rank
Technology Literacy	3	86.07	5 Strongly Agree	1
Learning Experiences	3	83.33	5 Strongly Agree	2
Cultural Growth	3	80.53	5 Strongly Agree	3
Critical Thinking	3	77.77	5 Strongly Agree	5
Creativity	3	77.77	5 Strongly Agree	5

Indicator	Number of Statements (n)	Mode Percentage (%)	Mode	Interpretation	Rank
Personal Growth	3	77.77	5	Strongly Agree	5
Communication	3	72.20	5	Strongly Agree	7.5
Institutional Support	3	72.20	5	Strongly Agree	7.5
Collaboration	3	66.63	5	Strongly Agree	9

Technology Literacy - Technology literacy emerged as the highest-rated benefit of the internationalization program, with a mode percentage of 86.07%. Students strongly agreed that their ability to use digital tools improved, that they adapted quickly to new online platforms, and that they effectively used technology to accomplish academic tasks. These results highlight the central role of virtual mobility and online engagements in shaping students' digital competencies. As noted by Think Huynh (2024), technology-driven internationalization enhances learners' preparedness for digital learning environments and strengthens their confidence in navigating global online platforms. The consistently high ratings across indicators suggest that technology served not only as a medium but also as an important learning outcome of CBSUA's internationalization efforts.

Learning Experiences - Learning experiences ranked second, receiving a mode percentage of 83.33%. Students expressed that the program enriched their academic experience by offering unique learning opportunities, exposure to diverse perspectives, and interactions with international peers. They also felt that the knowledge gained from classmates of different cultural backgrounds contributed to a more meaningful and engaging learning environment. These outcomes align with Altbach and de Wit (2024), who emphasize that internationalization deepens academic engagement by fostering environments where students can explore diverse viewpoints and apply learning in more globally relevant contexts. The high level of agreement reflects that internationalization activities contributed to the creation of dynamic and transformative learning spaces for BEEd students.

Cultural Growth - Cultural growth ranked third, with students perceiving substantial gains in cultural understanding, openness, and respect for diversity. Indicators showed strong agreement, with mode percentages ranging from 75% to 83.3%. Students reported becoming more aware of cultural differences and more appreciative of the value of cultural awareness in global interactions. These findings support those of Kapfudzaruwa (2024) and Stefaniuk et al. (2025), who highlight that exposure to international peers nurtures intercultural sensitivity and adaptability. The results suggest that CBSUA's internationalization initiatives succeeded in fostering cultural competence, an essential skill in preparing future elementary teachers for culturally diverse classrooms.

Critical Thinking - Students perceived significant improvements in their critical thinking skills, with results showing strong agreement across all indicators. They expressed that the program helped them evaluate ideas more effectively and enhanced their logical reasoning capabilities. The structured interactions with international learning partners required them to reflect, analyze, and consider multiple viewpoints, resulting in deeper cognitive engagement. These findings are consistent with Chwialkowska (2020), who found that international learning experiences improve higher-order thinking skills and problem-solving abilities. The results demonstrate that BEEd students benefitted from intellectually challenging environments created within international academic collaborations.

Creativity - Creativity also ranked high, with students strongly agreeing that the program encouraged creative thinking, expression of ideas, and the application of creative approaches to tasks. These experiences helped students experiment with diverse methods of presenting and processing information, contributing to the development of innovative thinking habits. As highlighted by Mareque et al. (2021), cross-cultural engagements stimulate creative reasoning by exposing learners to new contexts and instructional practices. The students' responses indicate that internationalization helped cultivate creativity, a key 21st-century skill essential to effective teaching and learning.

Personal Growth - Students also perceived meaningful personal growth as a result of their participation in internationalization activities. They reported improvements in confidence, independence in academic tasks, and

resilience when facing new or challenging situations. Engagement in international activities required them to manage responsibilities more independently and adapt to unfamiliar environments. These findings echo Lominchar et al. (2024), who noted that internationalization-at-home initiatives enhance students' self-efficacy and personal maturity. The results suggest that CBSUA's program supported not only academic development but also holistic personal growth.

Communication Skills - Communication skills ranked next, with students reporting greater confidence in speaking and writing in English, expressing ideas during discussions, and communicating with international students. These skills are crucial for future educators, particularly in multilingual and multicultural contexts. The results reflect La-Ongsri and Alcoba's (2024) finding that internationalization enhances linguistic proficiency and intercultural communication competencies. Although strong, the slightly lower percentage compared to other indicators suggests that students may still benefit from increased opportunities for real-time interaction and dialogue with international peers.

Institutional Support - Institutional support also received strong agreement, with students acknowledging assistance from faculty, staff, and university initiatives that facilitated their participation. However, aspects related to technology access and facilities received relatively lower ratings. This aligns with Kyaw San et al. (2022), who found that institutional support is essential in maximizing student experiences in international programs. The results indicate that CBSUA provided meaningful guidance and administrative support, though continued improvements in technological infrastructure may further strengthen future initiatives.

Collaboration - Collaboration ranked lowest among the indicators, though still within the "strongly agree" range. Students agreed that they contributed actively to group discussions and worked effectively with peers, but collaboration with international faculty and more structured teamwork opportunities appeared less frequent. The online nature of activities may have limited spontaneous interaction. Frank (2019) noted that collaboration is strengthened when programs offer intentional structures that facilitate teamwork across borders. The results suggest that while students were willing and able to collaborate, additional program designs may enhance deeper global teamwork experiences.

3.2 Perceived Benefits of faculty on Internationalization Programs

While students reported strong benefits from their participation in internationalization activities, it is equally important to examine how these initiatives contributed to the professional and academic development of BEEd faculty members. Faculty play a central role in sustaining and strengthening internationalization efforts, and their experiences provide valuable insight into how global engagement supports teaching innovation, research productivity, and intercultural competence. The following section presents the perceived benefits among faculty, organized according to their overall ranking, and discusses how international exposure has influenced their skills, perspectives, and professional growth.

Table 2
Faculty's Overall Perceived Benefits of Internationalization Programs (2022–2024), ordered by rank

Indicators	Number of Statements (n)	Mode Percentage (%)	Mode	Interpretation	Rank
Creativity	3	78.77	5	Strongly Agree	1
Critical Thinking	3	75.73	5	Strongly Agree	2
Cultural Growth	3	72.70	5	Strongly Agree	3
Professional Growth	5	69.06	5	Strongly Agree	5
Communication	3	60.57	5	Strongly Agree	4
Institutional Support	3	60.57	5	Strongly Agree	6
Collaboration	3	48.50	5	Strongly Agree	7

Table 2 presents the overall perceived benefits of the internationalization program among BEEd faculty from 2022 to 2024. Results show that faculty members strongly agreed with all indicators, reflecting consistently positive experiences in their professional and academic engagement. Creativity ranked as the highest benefit (78.77%), indicating that international exposure encouraged innovative teaching approaches and the development

of new ideas. Critical thinking (75.73%) and cultural growth (72.70%) also received high ratings, suggesting that faculty gained broader perspectives, improved analytical skills, and greater intercultural awareness through their participation. Professional growth, which includes skill enhancement, career advancement, and expanded academic networks, received strong agreement (69.06%). Communication skills and institutional support both obtained mode percentages of 60.57%, showing that while faculty appreciated the support and improvements in communication, these areas may still be strengthened. Collaboration ranked lowest (48.50%), though still within the “strongly agree” interpretation, indicating that faculty experienced collaborative benefits but to a lesser extent compared to other indicators. Overall, Table 2 demonstrates that internationalization meaningfully contributed to faculty development, particularly in fostering creativity, strengthening analytical thinking, and broadening global perspectives.

Creativity - Creativity emerged as the highest perceived benefit among faculty, with a mode percentage of 78.77%. Faculty members strongly agreed that internationalization encouraged them to explore innovative approaches in teaching, research, and curriculum development. Exposure to new instructional practices and diverse academic contexts helped them think more creatively and adapt fresh ideas into their own teaching strategies. This aligns with Hossein et al. (2021), who highlight that international experiences stimulate innovation by presenting educators with unfamiliar challenges and creative solutions. The consistently high ratings suggest that global engagement strengthened faculty creativity, enabling them to redesign learning activities and incorporate more culturally responsive and innovative practices into the BEEd program.

Critical Thinking - Critical thinking ranked second (75.73%), reflecting faculty perceptions that internationalization improved their ability to analyze information, evaluate ideas, and engage in higher-level academic reasoning. Faculty noted that interactions with international colleagues and exposure to diverse research outputs challenged them to reflect on their own assumptions and refine their analytical skills. These findings support Lemana et al. (2024), who argue that international academic exchanges sharpen educators’ critical thinking by immersing them in varied scholarly traditions and perspectives. The results indicate that internationalization did not only broaden faculty perspectives but also deepened their intellectual rigor and problem-solving capabilities.

Cultural Growth - Cultural growth ranked third with a mode percentage of 72.70%, showing that faculty gained substantial intercultural awareness and appreciation. Participation in international programs allowed them to interact with educators from different cultures, fostering open-mindedness and expanding their understanding of global educational practices. They reported becoming more sensitive to cultural diversity, a key competency for educators working in increasingly multicultural classrooms. These findings align with Akar (2020), who highlights that faculty benefit from enhanced intercultural competence through international exposure. This growth equips faculty to design more inclusive lessons that reflect diverse cultural perspectives.

Professional Growth - Professional growth also received strong agreement, with a mode percentage of 69.06%. Faculty noted improvements in their professional skills, including enhanced pedagogical practices, increased awareness of global education trends, and expanded academic networks. International engagements contributed to their career development by providing opportunities for collaboration, access to new knowledge, and participation in global discussions in their field. These results reflect those of Pius and Mane (2025), who found that internationalization strengthens faculty professionalism by exposing them to broader academic communities and research environments. The findings indicate that CBSUA’s initiatives played a meaningful role in supporting the ongoing professional development of BEEd faculty.

Communication Skills - Communication skills ranked fifth (60.57%), indicating that faculty benefited from improved ability to express ideas, engage in academic discussions, and communicate with international colleagues. These improvements were particularly evident in virtual meetings, written correspondence, and collaborative tasks. This is consistent with Ma (2025), who noted that international exchanges enhance educators’ linguistic proficiency and confidence in academic communication. Although the ratings were positive, they were moderately

lower than other indicators, suggesting that additional opportunities for real-time intercultural communication may further strengthen faculty communication competencies.

Institutional Support - Faculty also acknowledged institutional support, which received a mode percentage of 60.57%. They agreed that the university provided necessary assistance and resources that enabled their participation in international activities. This includes administrative support, guidance from university leaders, and access to platforms for engagement. However, some aspects, such as technological resources or workload adjustments, may require further improvement to maximize participation. These findings mirror Mananay et al. (2024), who emphasized that consistent institutional support enhances faculty engagement and the overall success of internationalization programs.

Collaboration - Collaboration ranked lowest (48.50%), although it still fell within the “strongly agree” interpretation. Faculty reported that while they engaged in teamwork and participated in some collaborative activities, opportunities for sustained or deeper collaborative work with international partners were limited. This suggests that faculty may benefit from international projects designed with structured collaboration, such as joint research, co-teaching, or proposal development. As noted by Kayashima et al. (2024), intentional design of collaborative frameworks strengthens faculty-to-faculty partnerships and enhances the long-term impact of internationalization. The lower ranking indicates room for improvement in facilitating more meaningful, long-term collaborative engagements among BEEd faculty.

Table 3
Comparison of Overall Perceived Benefits: Students vs. Faculty

Respondents	Mode	Mode Percentage (%)	Interpretation
Students (n = 12)	5	77.14	Strongly Agree
Faculty (n = 12)	5	66.56	Strongly Agree

Table 3 compares the overall perceived benefits of the internationalization program between BEEd students and faculty. Results indicate that both groups strongly agreed that the program was beneficial, but students reported a notably higher overall mode percentage (77.14%) compared to faculty (66.56%). This suggests that the internationalization initiatives had a more immediate or pronounced impact on students, particularly in areas related to technology literacy, enriched learning experiences, and cultural exposure. Students may also feel the effects more directly because many activities, such as virtual exchanges, collaborative learning sessions, and intercultural dialogues, are designed with student engagement as the primary focus. In contrast, faculty members perceived comparatively lower benefits, though still within the “strongly agree” interpretation. This difference may be attributed to the nature of faculty involvement, which often requires balancing international participation with teaching responsibilities, research demands, and administrative tasks. Faculty engagement in internationalization also tends to yield long-term rather than immediate outcomes, such as improved research productivity, expanded professional networks, and instructional innovation. These benefits, while meaningful, may not manifest as quickly or as visibly as the academic and personal gains experienced by students. Despite these differences, the strong positive perceptions from both groups highlight the overall effectiveness of CBSUA’s internationalization efforts. The results suggest that the programs successfully supported the development of global competencies among students while also contributing to the professional and intercultural growth of faculty. Strengthening structured collaborative opportunities and enhancing institutional support mechanisms may help narrow the perceived benefit gap and further maximize the program’s impact on both groups.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion - This study examined the perceived benefits of the internationalization program among BEEd students and faculty of CBSUA from 2022 to 2024. The findings revealed that both groups strongly agreed that internationalization positively contributed to their academic, cultural, and personal or professional development. Students experienced the greatest benefits in technology literacy, learning experiences, and cultural growth, reflecting the effectiveness of virtual exchanges and international engagements in enhancing their 21st-century

skills. Faculty members reported the highest gains in creativity, critical thinking, and cultural competence, demonstrating that exposure to global academic environments enriched their teaching practices and broadened their perspectives. Although collaboration ranked lowest for both groups, it still fell within the “strongly agree” range, indicating that while collaborative opportunities existed, there remains potential for deeper engagement. Overall, the results affirm that CBSUA’s internationalization initiatives have been successful in promoting global readiness and meaningful learning experiences among BEEed stakeholders.

Recommendations - Based on these findings, the study recommends strengthening structured collaborative opportunities between students, faculty, and international partners through joint research, co-teaching, and project-based engagements. Enhancing institutional and technological support, particularly by improving access to digital resources and stable internet connectivity, would further facilitate successful participation. Increasing opportunities for intercultural communication, such as virtual dialogues and peer exchanges, may also enrich students’ and faculty’s global competencies. For faculty, expanded professional development programs focused on international research and innovative pedagogy can maximize long-term benefits. The university is encouraged to broaden student participation by ensuring inclusive and accessible internationalization activities. Additionally, sustaining and diversifying international partnerships will help provide a wider range of meaningful academic and cultural experiences. Finally, establishing continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms can guide ongoing improvements and ensure the relevance and effectiveness of internationalization initiatives.

AI Use Disclosure Statement - The authors declare that all substantive content, analysis, and interpretations in this manuscript were produced entirely by the authors and not generated by artificial intelligence tools. AI assistance was limited to grammar refinement and copyediting using Grammarly. No generative AI was used to create, analyze, or interpret the study’s data or findings.

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