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THE IMPACT OF FACULTY INTERNATIONAL COMPETENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON FACULTY ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONALIZATION AT PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN CHINA: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract:

In the process of internationalization at private universities in China, the level of faculty engagement remains challenged by various factors. This study integrates organizational support theory and the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity theory to propose a conceptual framework that assesses the impact mechanisms of faculty international competence and organizational support on faculty engagement in internationalization, with a particular focus on the mediating role of organizational support through international competence. The findings indicate that faculty international competence significantly influences their willingness and depth of participation in international activities; organizational support not only directly promotes faculty engagement in internationalization but also indirectly enhances their participation levels by improving their international competence. The constructed framework provides theoretical support for understanding the influencing factors of faculty engagement in internationalization at private universities in China and offers practical guidance on how institutions can optimize policies and resource allocation to promote faculty engagement. Future research could empirically test this framework to further explore the strength of relationships among variables and their mechanisms.

Keywords:

Chinese Private Universities, Faculty International Competence, Organizational Support, Engagement In Internationalization, Mediating Role

Introduction

With the deepening of globalization, the internationalization of higher education has become an important trend in the development of higher education worldwide. Internationalization is not only a crucial means for universities to enhance their competitiveness but also a key pathway for cultivating talents with an international perspective and cross-cultural competencies (Knight, 2003; de Wit & Altbach, 2021). In recent years, Chinese universities have made significant progress in promoting internationalization; however, the overall level of internationalization in Chinese higher education still lags behind that of developed countries, particularly in private universities, which face more challenges due to limited resources and a weak foundation for internationalization (Hou & Han, 2019).

As the core driving force behind university internationalization, the degree of faculty engagement directly determines the actual effectiveness of internationalization efforts (Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter, 2015). However, faculty members at private universities in China currently encounter multiple challenges in their engagement with internationalization: on one hand, they are inadequately prepared in areas such as cross-cultural communication and international teaching skills; on the other hand, the support system provided by institutions regarding policy support and resource investment is still lacking (Cheng et al., 2024). This situation not only limits individual faculty development but also constrains the overall level of internationalization in private universities. Therefore, enhancing faculty engagement in internationalization at private universities has become an important topic of current research.

In this context, faculty international competence and perceived organizational support are viewed as two key factors influencing their engagement in internationalization. International competence refers to the core qualities and skills of faculty members in areas such as cross-cultural communication, international project collaboration, and international curriculum design (Deardorff, 2020), while organizational support encompasses the assistance and guarantees provided by universities in terms of policies, resources, and systems for faculty participation in internationalization (Calikoglu et al., 2022). Existing research indicates that both international competence and organizational support play significant roles in faculty engagement in internationalization; however, studies focusing specifically on faculty members at private universities in China remain insufficient (Mananay et al., 2024). In particular, the mechanisms through which international competence and organizational support interact to influence faculty engagement in internationalization have yet to be fully elucidated.

Based on the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) Theory and Organizational Support Theory, this study aims to explore the impact mechanisms of organizational support and international competence on faculty engagement in internationalization at private universities in China and to construct a theoretical conceptual framework. Through literature analysis, this research will elucidate how international competence influences faculty engagement in internationalization, what the mechanisms of organizational support are regarding faculty engagement, and the mediating effects of organizational support on faculty engagement through international competence.

This study not only fills a gap where existing research has focused more on internationalization policies rather than individual faculty perspectives but also uniquely applies both AMO Theory and Organizational Support Theory to the study of faculty engagement in internationalization at private universities. From a practical perspective, the findings will provide a theoretical basis

for private universities to formulate policies that support faculty participation in internationalization, thereby promoting the overall level of internationalization in Chinese higher education.

Literature Review

The Concept and Dimensions of Faculty Engagement in Internationalization
The internationalization of higher education has become one of the core issues in the era of globalization. Knight (2004) defines the internationalization of higher education as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of higher education." This definition emphasizes internationalization as a dynamic and comprehensive process, with its core being the embedding of international elements into various aspects of higher education. Within this framework, faculty members, as key stakeholders in universities, play a crucial role in the internationalization process, making their engagement in international activities a core component of higher education internationalization. Faculty engagement in internationalization can be defined as the internationalized behaviors exhibited by faculty in teaching, research/academic work, and social service, as well as their intentions and practices related to participating in international activities within these domains. Such engagement is closely related to the universities where faculty serve, specifically manifesting as faculty continually integrating international and cross-cultural dimensions into their primary academic functions during the implementation of university internationalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

In research on higher education internationalization, Knight identifies two major trends: "internationalization abroad" and "internationalization at home." The former primarily involves various forms of cross-border educational activities, including the mobility of students, scholars, curricula, and research projects; the latter emphasizes promoting global thinking, cross-cultural skills, and international understanding among faculty and students through curriculum design, campus cultural development, and teaching practices within a local context (Knight, 2008). These two trends are interdependent and jointly drive the comprehensive development of higher education internationalization. Existing studies categorize faculty engagement in internationalization into two dimensions: cross-border internationalization and internationalization at home. Faculty engagement can be reflected through overseas academic exchanges and collaborative research activities as well as through localized practices such as internationalized teaching and curriculum design on domestic campuses (Li & Tu, 2016; Ting & Kamarudin, 2023).

Based on this understanding, this study analyzes faculty engagement in internationalization according to the two dimensions of cross-border internationalization and internationalization at home. On one hand, from the perspective of cross-border internationalization, it focuses on faculty participation in multinational academic exchanges, collaborative research projects, and international programs; on the other hand, from the perspective of internationalization at home, it examines how faculty promote internationalization through curriculum internationalization and cross-cultural teaching practices within a local environment.

Cross-Border Internationalization

Cross-border internationalization is an essential component of higher education internationalization and refers to various forms of educational and academic activities that transcend national borders. For faculty members, participation in cross-border internationalization is primarily manifested through multinational academic exchanges, international research collaborations, overseas study visits, and involvement in international programs (Altbach & Knight, 2007). These activities not only provide faculty with opportunities to interact with the global academic community but also facilitate the transnational dissemination and exchange of knowledge, skills, and culture.

Specifically, faculty engagement in cross-border internationalization typically includes several aspects. First, by participating in international academic conferences, multinational collaborative research projects, and exchange programs, faculty can gain insights into the latest developments in the global academic landscape and enhance their professional competence (Qiang, 2003). Second, short-term visits for study or long-term overseas training provide faculty with direct experience working in an internationalized environment, enabling them to better understand and adapt to academic requirements within a global context (Huang, 2007). Additionally, faculty may directly engage in transnational educational practices by serving as instructors for international courses or leading international research projects to advance their professional development.

However, existing research also indicates that faculty members at private universities in China face numerous challenges regarding their participation in cross-border internationalization. Due to limited resources at private institutions, opportunities for faculty to engage in cross-border activities are relatively scarce. Furthermore, insufficient language proficiency and weak cross-cultural adaptability hinder some faculty from effectively participating in international activities (Rui, 2012). Therefore, providing more opportunities for cross-border exchanges while enhancing faculty's international competence has become a crucial issue for promoting cross-border internationalization.

Internationalization at Home

In contrast to cross-border internationalization, internationalization at home emphasizes promoting practices that advance internationalization within local educational environments. This dimension of engagement allows faculty to integrate into the process of globalization without leaving their home country while providing students with opportunities for cross-cultural learning through teaching practices, curriculum development, and campus cultural initiatives (Beelen & Jones, 2015). For faculty members, participation in this dimension is primarily reflected through curriculum internationalization, cross-cultural teaching practices, and support for building an internationally oriented campus environment.

Curriculum internationalization is one important manifestation of faculty engagement in this dimension. By incorporating internationally oriented content into courses and adopting multicultural teaching methods while integrating global issues into their instruction, faculty can help students develop a global perspective while enhancing their own capabilities for teaching internationally (Leask, 2009). Furthermore, faculty's cross-cultural teaching practices—including interactions with international students in classrooms and understanding

diverse student needs—also represent significant aspects of engagement in this dimension. Research shows that such practices not only enhance students' cross-cultural competencies but also improve faculty's own skills in cross-cultural communication and teaching (Larsen & Vincent-Lancrin, 2016).

However, effectively promoting this dimension requires universities to provide appropriate policy and resource support. For private universities in China specifically, participation by faculty members in local-level engagement remains constrained by factors such as a lack of systematic training for curriculum design focused on international perspectives and insufficient resources for internationally oriented teaching. Additionally, there is often inadequate understanding among faculty regarding concepts related to local-level engagement (Wang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2016). Therefore, enhancing awareness and capabilities regarding local-level engagement through policy initiatives and resource allocation has become key to improving this dimension's effectiveness.

Key Factors Influencing Faculty Engagement in Internationalization

Various factors influencing faculty engagement in internationalization are significant for enhancing faculty participation and advancing the internationalization processes within higher education institutions. The following sections will explore two key elements: international competence and organizational support, focusing on their roles in promoting faculty engagement in internationalization.

International Competence

Faculty international competence refers to the comprehensive qualities and professional skills required by faculty members during the processes of international teaching, research, and communication, serving as a core prerequisite for effective participation in higher education internationalization activities. International competence is a multidimensional construct that primarily includes international teaching competence, cross-cultural communication skills, international academic research abilities, and foreign language proficiency. Among these, international teaching competence refers to the ability of faculty to integrate international perspectives and multicultural content into course design and teaching practices. This capability not only enhances students' international learning experiences but also promotes faculty's own academic development (Paige, 2005). Cross-cultural communication skills are essential for faculty when interacting with students, scholars, or partners from diverse cultural backgrounds; these skills help faculty overcome challenges posed by cultural differences and establish effective international collaborative relationships (Childress, 2010). Additionally, international academic research abilities encompass participation in international academic networks, conducting collaborative research projects, and publishing papers in international journals; this competence directly influences faculty's standing and impact within the global academic community (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Lastly, foreign language proficiency is a fundamental condition for faculty engaging in international teaching, research, and communication. Particularly in the context where English serves as the international academic language, the level of foreign language ability often determines whether faculty can participate effectively in international activities (Hammer, 2012). By applying these competencies in teaching, research, and campus life activities, faculty can integrate an international dimension into educational practices on a broader scale, thereby advancing the deepening of university internationalization.

Organizational Support

Organizational support refers to the assurances and assistance provided by universities through human resources, policies, and administrative systems for faculty participation in international activities. When employees perceive that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, they are more likely to engage in their work and exhibit positive behaviors (Eisenberger et al., 1999). In the context of higher education internationalization, organizational support may manifest as providing opportunities for international training, establishing incentive mechanisms for international teaching and research, funding faculty participation in international exchange programs, and optimizing relevant policy environments (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Research indicates that although some faculty members have the willingness to engage in international activities, their capacity to do so is limited due to inadequate institutional planning, resource shortages, and deficiencies in promotion and tenure policies (Beatty, 2013). For instance, some universities fail to adequately consider faculty's actual needs in their internationalization plans, resulting in a lack of necessary funding and time support for faculty when participating in international activities (Childress, 2010). Furthermore, faculty engagement is also influenced by administrative systems within universities; for example, whether flexible teaching schedules are provided to allow faculty to participate in collaborative research or overseas exchange activities (Rui, 2012). Therefore, when formulating strategies for international development, universities need to take into account faculty needs and provide multi-level support through policy adjustments and resource optimization to enhance faculty's capabilities for engagement in internationalization processes.

Theoretical Foundations

This study primarily constructs a conceptual framework based on Organizational Support Theory and Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) Theory. Organizational Support Theory emphasizes the significant impact of organizational commitment and support on employee behavior while AMO Theory explains individual behavior influences from three dimensions: individual capability, behavioral motivation, and external opportunities. The integration of these two theories not only aids in understanding the mechanisms through which organizational support affects faculty engagement but also provides a theoretical foundation for analyzing the interactions between individual characteristics of faculty members and organizational environments.

Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO)Theory

The Ability-Motivation-Opportunity Theory (AMO Theory) was initially proposed by Blumberg and Pringle (1982) and further developed by Appelbaum into an important theoretical framework within the performance domain. This theory posits that individual or organizational performance is jointly determined by three key elements: capability, motivation, and opportunity (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Herein, Ability refers to the knowledge and skills required for individuals to complete tasks; motivation denotes the willingness or drive of individuals to perform actions; opportunity refers to the support or resources provided by the organizational environment that enable individuals to utilize their capabilities and achieve their goals (Chen & Chen ,2017). These three elements are interrelated and complementary; for instance, capability requires motivational drive while also depending on external opportunities for support (Siemsen et al., 2008). AMO Theory emphasizes the bidirectional interaction between individual behavior and external environments from an individual-situation interaction perspective; this makes it applicable across various fields such as performance management and organizational behavior.
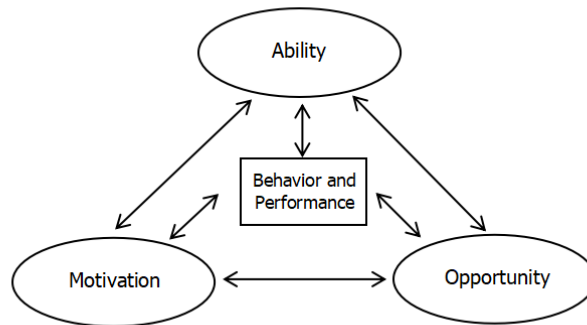
Figure 1:AMO Theory Model

In educational research contexts, AMO Theory similarly holds significant application value. Utilizing the AMO theoretical framework, Runhaar et al. (2010) explored factors influencing teachers' proactive learning; findings indicated that teachers' pedagogical expertise along with knowledge reserves, work engagement levels with self-awareness as well as resources provided by schools are all critical factors promoting proactive learning. Perdomo et al. (2021) further empirically demonstrated that incentive measures based on AMO Theory can promote academic research development. Specifically regarding faculty engagement in internationalization behaviors, AMO Theory effectively explains how capability, motivation, and opportunity operate within participation contexts. For example, teachers' international competence—including cross-cultural communication skills, foreign language proficiency, and capabilities for conducting international academic research—serves as a foundation for engaging in high-level international activities; policy support along with resource allocation provides external opportunities (such as access to international research projects or academic exchange platforms); while positive motivations (such as career goals or aspirations toward internationalization) encourage teachers to actively engage in such activities (Yu et al., 2020). This study will analyze the interactions among these three elements—faculty's capabilities for internationalization—motivation—and opportunities—based on AMO Theory to elucidate how universities can create more opportunities through resource support and policy measures to promote faculty engagement in international activities while enhancing overall levels of internationalization.

Organizational Support Theory
Organizational Support Theory was proposed by American psychologist Robert Eisenberger (1986) aiming to overcome previous research limitations that overly focused on employee commitment towards organizations while shifting attention towards organizational commitment to employees and its effects on employee behavior. The core of this theory lies within employees' perceptions of organizational support; specifically how employees perceive whether their organization values their contributions or cares about their welfare through organizational behaviors or actions. Research indicates that when employees receive sufficient emotional support (such as care or recognition) alongside instrumental support (such as resources or policy guarantees), both their work engagement levels and loyalty towards the organization significantly improve (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Such perceived

organizational support not only fosters employee involvement in daily work but also motivates them to take on additional responsibilities that create greater value for organizations.

In higher education contexts specifically concerning faculty members' professional development and academic behaviors—organizational support plays an important role. Faculty members are not only independent knowledge producers but also integral parts of organizations (i.e., universities), relying on resource allocation from organizations during teaching practices as well as research endeavors alongside social services provided by institutions. For example emotional support can enhance teachers' professional identity along with sense of belongingness while institutional supports such as promotion policies or academic evaluation systems along with material supports like research funding or facility guarantees provide necessary conditions for professional development (Beatty ,2013). Specifically regarding participation in internationalization efforts—faculty require reliance upon resources offered by universities such as platforms for exchange opportunities along with foreign language training programs or chances for collaboration internationally—to enhance their abilities while increasing willingness towards engaging with such initiatives (Childress ,2010). Thus Organizational Support Theory provides significant theoretical grounding for understanding university teachers' behaviors related to engagement with global initiatives. This study will explore how policies resources emotional supports provided by universities facilitate teachers' participation within globalized activities through enhancing both capabilities alongside motivations toward fostering active involvement within higher education's ongoing process of globalization.

Research on Variable Relationships

This section explores the direct effects and mediating mechanisms between international competence, organizational support, and participation in internationalization from different perspectives, providing important foundations for the conceptual framework of this study.

International Competence and Participation in Internationalization

Faculty international competence serves as a crucial foundation for their engagement in international activities. This competence plays a central role in faculty's involvement in international teaching, research, and cross-cultural communication. Research indicates that the stronger a faculty member's international competence, the higher the likelihood and depth of their participation in internationalization (Deardorff, 2006). Specifically, international competence encompasses cross-cultural communication skills, foreign language proficiency, international teaching abilities, and capabilities for conducting international academic research. These competencies collectively constitute the prerequisites for faculty participation in international activities. For instance, foreign language proficiency is fundamental for faculty to attend international conferences, publish papers internationally, and establish connections within the global academic community, while cross-cultural communication skills help faculty overcome cultural differences during collaborative efforts (Paige, 2005). Furthermore, international teaching abilities enable faculty to integrate global perspectives into their teaching practices and design curricula with global characteristics, thereby promoting the advancement of higher education internationalization (Childress, 2010). Existing studies show that faculty's international competence not only affects the quantity of their participation in international activities but also determines the quality and depth of that participation. For example, faculty with higher levels of international competence are more likely to engage proactively in international academic exchange programs and play significant roles in collaborative research

(Altbach & Knight, 2007). Therefore, international competence is a key driving factor for faculty engagement in internationalization; enhancing faculty capabilities can effectively promote their international behaviors in teaching, research, and social service.

The role of faculty's international competence is critical in their participation in international activities. Research suggests that widespread support for internationalization among faculty is not entirely endogenous but closely related to their individual levels of international competence (Childress, 2010). Specifically, this competence includes foreign language proficiency, cross-cultural communication skills, international teaching abilities, and capabilities for conducting international academic research—these directly influence whether faculty can participate effectively in international activities (Ellingboe, 1998). For example, language skills are foundational for engaging in international academic exchanges. Most forms of international education and research collaborations primarily utilize English; even if a faculty member possesses some English proficiency, applying it within specific disciplinary methodologies or international research contexts may still pose challenges (Beelen & Leask, 2010). Additionally, cross-cultural communication skills enable faculty to engage effectively within multicultural contexts while international teaching abilities allow them to incorporate global perspectives into course design and teaching practices—enhancing students' global outlooks (Paige, 2005). However, studies have also found that faculty lacking cross-cultural experiences often struggle to adapt to international tasks such as integrating global and cross-cultural viewpoints into their teaching and research (Bond, 2003). Schwitz's research further indicates that faculty with higher levels of international experience tend to exhibit stronger cross-cultural communication skills and foreign language proficiency while holding more positive attitudes and beliefs about internationalization. Conversely, those without overseas experience or educational backgrounds may experience noticeable stress due to inadequate capabilities—for instance worrying about communicating with foreign colleagues and students in English or being unable to publish articles in international journals (Childress, 2010). Thus, international competence is a core driving factor for faculty engagement in internationalization; lacking this capability may pose significant barriers to their participation in such activities (Çalıkoğlu, 2017).

Organizational Support and Participation in Internationalization
Simultaneously, organizational support significantly facilitates faculty participation in internationalization. Organizational support not only provides resources and conditions necessary for conducting international activities but also stimulates faculty motivation to engage through policies and incentive mechanisms. Bartell (2003) notes that a university's culture and operational structure serve as important contextual conditions shaping faculty behaviors related to internationalization; organizational support fosters positive beliefs and situational factors that ignite faculty enthusiasm for participation (Nyangau, 2018). For example, providing essential infrastructure, incentive mechanisms, and communication channels can effectively assist faculty in incorporating elements of internationalization into their teaching and research (Childress, 2010). However, studies have also identified a lack of financial resources as one of the primary obstacles hindering faculty engagement in international activities (Green & Olson, 2003). Many higher education institutions are unable to provide sufficient travel support or opportunities for collaboration due to budget constraints—this further marginalizes faculty involvement in such initiatives (Childress, 2010). Additionally, institutional barriers such as restrictive tenure and promotion policies along with

insufficient personnel dedicated to advancing international initiatives also limit faculty engagement (Dewey & Duff, 2009). Practical evidence indicates that faculty members who actively participate in internationalization often benefit positively from academic title rewards, financial support, and external incentives (Goddard & Puukka, 2008). Therefore, universities need to create more opportunities for faculty participation in international activities by optimizing policies, increasing resource investments, and providing diversified support mechanisms—thereby fully unleashing their potential (Li & Tu ,2016).

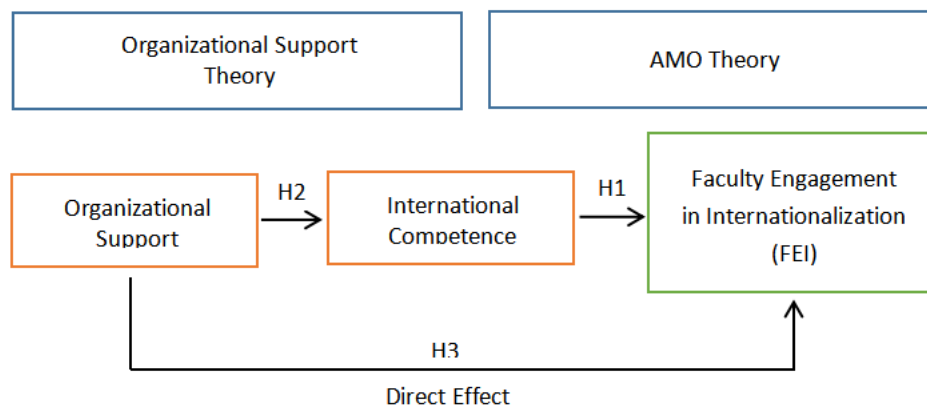### *International Competence and Organizational Support*

Moreover, organizational support not only has a direct impact on participation in internationalization but may also exert indirect effects by enhancing faculty's levels of international competence. Li and Eddy (2014) discuss how policy support and environmental factors influence teachers' behaviors regarding internationalization through mediating variables such as personal capabilities or willingness. This perspective suggests that organizational support can indirectly promote participation by enhancing teachers' competencies related to internationalization. For example, universities can help enhance teachers' language skills through funding opportunities for participating in exchange programs or providing foreign language training alongside support for developing cross-cultural curricula (Childress ,2010). This enhancement further reduces both psychological barriers and practical obstacles faced by teachers when engaging with global initiatives—thereby increasing their willingness and confidence to participate (Runhaar et al., 2010). Furthermore ,Li and Tu (2016) emphasize the critical role of internal factors when transmitting external influences onto behaviors related to participation . By improving internal support mechanisms ,faculty members are better positioned to receive ,internalize external policies alongside incentive measures . Research conducted by Ting and Kamarudin (2023) also indicates that well-structured policies regarding globalization alongside supportive service systems can significantly elevate teachers' willingness to engage ,awareness towards globalization ,and relevant skills—further encouraging active involvement across various globalization initiatives . Studies have shown that funding support is one of the key factors driving the globalization of teaching alongside research; compared with policy support or service provisions ,financial backing has an especially pronounced effect on teachers' engagement with globalization efforts (Fairweather & Rhoads ,1995). Additionally ,external incentives alongside supports such as establishing platforms for collaboration internationally work synergistically with teachers' intrinsic motivations—further propelling their engagement behaviors towards globalization initiatives (Perdomo et al., 2021). Therefore ,organizational support indirectly promotes participation through enhancing teachers' competencies via this mediating mechanism . When formulating strategies for globalization ,universities need to fully consider this mechanism—providing supportive measures through resource allocation alongside policy design aimed at elevating teachers' capacities—thus fostering broader engagement within globalization initiatives . Such strategies not only enhance individual levels of globalization among educators but also collectively improve institutional images along with competitiveness on an global scale.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

This study proposes an integrative conceptual framework to assess the impact of faculty international competence and organizational support on faculty engagement in internationalization at private universities in China, with a particular focus on the indirect effects of organizational support through enhancing faculty international competence.

Although previous studies have separately explored the impacts of faculty international competence and organizational support on engagement in internationalization, research that combines both elements within the context of private universities in China remains limited. This study aims to fill this research gap and provide theoretical support for understanding the mechanisms influencing faculty engagement in internationalization.

Based on Organizational Support Theory and Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) Theory, this study constructs an integrative conceptual framework. Organizational Support Theory emphasizes that an organization's support for its employees not only directly influences their behaviors and performance but also indirectly stimulates their work motivation by enhancing their sense of identity and belonging to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This theory provides a theoretical basis for analyzing the direct effects of organizational support on faculty engagement in internationalization. On the other hand, AMO Theory elucidates the key influencing factors of individual behavior from three dimensions: capability, motivation, and opportunity (Appelbaum et al., 2000). By integrating these two theories, a more comprehensive understanding can be achieved regarding the positive relationship between faculty international competence and faculty engagement in internationalization（H1, as well as the indirect effects of organizational support that enhance faculty engagement by improving their international competence（H2）while also exerting a direct influence on participation（H3）. The theoretical framework of this study (see Figure 2) includes three sets of variable relationships: organizational support as the independent variable, international competence as the mediating variable, and participation in internationalization as the dependent variable.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review and theoretical foundations discussed earlier, this study proposes the following research propositions:

Proposition 1: Faculty international competence has a significant positive effect on their participation in internationalization. Faculty members' foreign language proficiency, cross-cultural communication skills, and abilities in international teaching and research significantly enhance their likelihood and depth of participation in cross-border international activities (such as international academic exchanges and cross-border research collaborations) as well as localized international activities (such as curriculum internationalization and on-campus international practices) (Childress, 2010; Beelen & Leask, 2010).

Proposition 2: Organizational support has a significant positive effect on faculty participation in internationalization. Policy support, resource guarantees, and incentive mechanisms provided by universities can directly promote faculty engagement in international activities. Such support not only lowers the barriers for faculty to participate but also enhances their motivation and confidence regarding internationalization through emotional encouragement and material assistance (Bartell, 2003).

Proposition 3: Faculty international competence plays a significant mediating role between organizational support and participation in internationalization. Organizational support can indirectly promote faculty engagement by enhancing their levels of international competence. Specifically, universities can strengthen faculty's international competence by providing foreign language training, opportunities for international exchanges, and support for developing cross-cultural curricula, thereby further increasing their willingness and effectiveness to participate in international activities (Runhaar et al., 2010; Perdomo et al., 2021).The proposed conceptual framework provides a theoretical basis for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms influencing faculty engagement in internationalization at private universities in China while offering practical guidance for developing policies aimed at promoting faculty's international development. Future research could build upon this framework to empirically validate the strength of relationships among variables and their pathways.

The proposed conceptual framework provides a theoretical basis for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms influencing faculty engagement in internationalization at private universities in China while offering practical guidance for developing policies aimed at promoting faculty's international development. Future research could build upon this framework to empirically validate the strength of relationships among variables and their pathways.

Concluding Comments

This study constructs a conceptual framework based on Organizational Support Theory and Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) Theory to understand how faculty international competence and organizational support influence faculty engagement in internationalization at private universities in China, particularly focusing on the mediating effects of organizational support through enhancing faculty's international competence. This research not only deepens theoretical understanding of the factors influencing faculty engagement but also provides important practical insights for policymakers within higher education institutions.

In terms of theoretical contributions, this study integrates Organizational Support Theory with AMO Theory to systematically analyze the mechanisms through which faculty international competence and organizational support operate, thereby expanding the applicability of both theories within educational research contexts. By treating international competence as a mediating variable, this study reveals the indirect pathways through which organizational support affects faculty engagement—filling previous gaps concerning variable integration—especially within the specific context of private universities—and enriching theoretical development in higher education internationalization.

From a practical perspective, this study offers concrete recommendations for how private universities in China can enhance faculty engagement levels in internationalization. First, institutions should directly promote faculty willingness and behaviors towards participating in global activities by providing more policy support, financial guarantees, and incentive measures. Second, universities should emphasize cultivating faculty's international competencies by offering foreign language training, cross-cultural exchange opportunities, and support for developing internationally-oriented curricula—thus laying a solid foundation for their engagement in global initiatives. Furthermore, research indicates that the effectiveness of organizational support largely depends on its ability to meet individual needs; hence university administrators must consider actual circumstances and requirements when formulating strategies for globalization.

While this study has established a conceptual framework based on faculty's international competence and organizational support to investigate engagement among private university educators, several limitations exist within this research. In exploring influencing factors, reliance on literature analysis may have overly focused on the core element of faculty's international competence while insufficiently addressing other potentially significant factors such as career development stages, disciplinary differences, or cross-cultural experiences that could play important roles. In constructing the theoretical model, only faculty's international competence was selected as a mediating variable; although this choice is theoretically supported, it may oversimplify how organizational support influences engagement behaviors. In reality, factors such as teachers' attitudes towards globalization, professional commitments, alignment with institutional strategies, or intrinsic motivations towards engaging internationally may also serve critical mediating roles during this process. Additionally, limiting research contexts to private universities in China raises questions about applicability across different types of institutions due to variations in operational conditions or management mechanisms; thus further validation is needed regarding the proposed conceptual framework's applicability and generalizability. Furthermore, external environmental factors impacting teachers' participation were not sufficiently considered.

Based on these limitations, future research could deepen and expand upon multiple aspects. In terms of exploring influencing factors more comprehensively designed empirical studies could incorporate elements such as educators' career development stages or disciplinary backgrounds alongside cross-cultural experiences into research frameworks while employing mixed-method approaches combining qualitative insights with quantitative data to investigate mechanisms behind different influences thoroughly. Regarding theoretical model construction ,structural equation modeling (SEM) could be utilized to analyze path strengths among organizational support ,international competence ,and participation while investigating multiple mediators like teachers' attitudes towards globalization ,professional commitments ,or strategic alignment . Moreover ,future studies could extend research frameworks beyond private universities into public institutions or vocational colleges—conducting cross-national comparative studies examining characteristics related to educators' engagement across diverse global contexts while analyzing contextual factors' moderating roles alongside regional policy environments. Such deepening efforts will contribute significantly toward fostering comprehensive understandings regarding mechanisms driving higher education globalization—providing robust theoretical foundations alongside practical guidance aimed at advancing educators' involvement within global initiatives .

Acknowledgement

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no competing interest.

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