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INTERNATIONAL GUEST LECTURES AS A FORM OF HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALISATION: STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF PEDAGOGICAL BENEFITS, GLOBAL EXPERIENCE, AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract:

Since internationalisation has become an important tenet of higher education, universities seek to provide students with international academic perspectives. One of the cheapest and most convenient ways is a project that does not require physical mobility. International guest lecturer programme is such a project that allows integration of international perspectives, teaching practices, and cross-cultural experiences into students' regular learning. This study examined students' perceptions of an International Guest Lecturer Programme,

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focusing on its pedagogical impact, contribution to global and cross-cultural competency, implementation challenges, and potential for future curricular integration. A mixed-methods research design was used, with quantitative and qualitative data collected through self-administered questionnaires following students' participation in the programme. Quantitative responses were analysed using descriptive statistics, while the open-ended responses were thematically analysed. The findings showed solid positive perceptions of the programme. Students showed improved understanding of course content, exposure to new academic perspectives, effective teaching approaches, greater exposure to international academic practices, improved cross-cultural awareness, and the development of a broader global perspective. Qualitative findings also underscored clear explanations, real-life and country-specific examples, interaction, and international exposure as main benefits. Nevertheless, accent and language differences, limited discussion time, technical issues, and insufficient pre-session preparation are found to be the challenges faced. Overall, the findings indicate that international guest lecturer programmes can provide a valuable form of curriculum-based internationalisation when international exposure is supported by appropriate pedagogical, linguistic, technological, and organisational measures. The study proposes more structured curricular integration, greater opportunities for interaction, stronger pre-session scaffolding, and better technical preparation. The quantitative survey managed to elicit 61 responses from Malaysia and Indonesia, while 21 participants contributed qualitative feedback. These results represent the subjective respondents' self-reported perceptions rather than objectively measured improvements in academic or intercultural competence.

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Keyword:

ESL, COIL, Guest Lecturer, Pedagogical Impact, Global Competency



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Introduction

Internationalisation has become an important aspect of contemporary higher education as universities seek to prepare students to participate academically and socially in culturally interconnected environments. Current approaches extend beyond international student enrolment and physical academic mobility to include the internationalisation of teaching, learning, curricula, and students' educational experiences within their home institutions (de Wit & Altbach, 2021). This broader understanding is important because opportunities for physical international mobility are not equally accessible to all students. Universities therefore need approaches that allow a wider proportion of the student population to gain international experience as part of their regular academic learning.

Concomitantly, Internationalisation at Home (IaH) has been developed as one approach to address this concern. Rather than restricting international learning to students who travel abroad, IaH incorporates international and intercultural elements into formal and informal curricula within students' domestic learning environments. Research has shown that participation in internationally oriented campus activities can support students' perceived development of global, international, and intercultural competencies (Soria & Troisi, 2014). Likewise, Sercu (2023) highlights the potential of home-based internationalisation experiences to develop intercultural competence. Such approaches widen access to international learning by moving internationalisation beyond an activity available primarily to mobile students towards an educational experience that can benefit a larger proportion of the university population.

Advances in digital communication have further extended these possibilities. Mittelmeier et al. (2021) conceptualise technology-supported cross-border educational activities as internationalisation at a distance, recognising that students can remain geographically located at their home institutions while engaging academically with educators, institutions, or educational experiences in another country. International guest lecturer programmes delivered through online platforms can therefore provide a practical mechanism for bringing international academic expertise directly into existing courses without requiring students or lecturers to travel. Evidence from other forms of virtual international programming also suggests that global competency can be developed without physical mobility when students are provided with purposefully designed international learning experiences (Paradise et al., 2022).

Guest lecturers can also contribute pedagogically by expanding learning beyond the perspectives and instructional experiences normally available within a course. Alebaikan (2016), for example, found that students generally perceived both online and face-to-face guest lectures favourably and valued their potential to connect theoretical learning with practice. More recent research similarly argues that guest lectures can contribute meaningfully to student learning when they are deliberately integrated into the curriculum rather than treated as isolated supplementary events (Pepple et al., 2025). Guest speakers can introduce alternative explanations, professional experiences, practical examples, and perspectives shaped by different institutional or national contexts. These characteristics are particularly relevant to international guest lecturer programmes because their value may arise not only from the lecturer's expertise but also from the different cultural and academic perspectives brought into the classroom.

Nonetheless, international exposure alone does not necessarily produce meaningful student learning. A comprehensive review by Mittelmeier et al. (2024) found that internationalisation practices with stronger student outcomes tend to involve active learning, inclusion and connection, opportunities for reflection, and explicit scaffolding of intercultural learning rather than relying solely on exposure to international elements. Online delivery can also introduce connectivity, audio, platform, and time-management constraints. Effective internationalisation therefore requires attention not only to who delivers the international experience but also to how that experience is designed and supported.

Student perspectives are particularly valuable when evaluating these programmes because institutional internationalisation objectives may not always align with students' actual learning experiences. Students can provide important evidence about whether international guest lectures improve their understanding of course content, introduce meaningful new

perspectives, encourage participation, and increase their awareness of international academic practices. At the same time, student feedback can identify barriers that may be less visible from an institutional perspective, including linguistic difficulty, limited opportunities for interaction, technical problems, inadequate preparation, or hesitation when communicating with an international lecturer.

Current research tends to address guest lectures, internationalisation at home or at a distance, and intercultural learning as different subjects (Alebaikan, 2016; Mittelmeier et al., 2021, 2024; Pepple et al., 2025; Sercu, 2023). At the same time, the literature reviewed also provides limited empirical evidence on curriculum-embedded international guest lectures that examines perceived pedagogical value, cross-cultural and global exposure, and challenges of the project's implementation within the same study. Hence, the present study addresses this gap by examining these dimensions concurrently through student responses from Malaysia and Indonesia.

The present study therefore examines student perceptions of an International Guest Lecturer Programme by considering both its educational benefits and the challenges encountered during implementation. More specifically, it investigates students' understanding of internationalisation, the pedagogical effectiveness and engagement associated with the guest lectures, their exposure to global and cross-cultural perspectives, the logistical and communication challenges experienced, and their views on future integration of international guest lecturer sessions into university curricula. By combining quantitative response patterns with qualitative accounts of students' experiences, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how international guest lecturer programmes can contribute to meaningful curriculum-based internationalisation.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do students perceive the pedagogical impact and learning experience of the International Guest Lecturer Programme?
2. How do students perceive the contribution of the International Guest Lecturer Programme to their global perspectives, cross-cultural awareness, and exposure to international academic practices?
3. What linguistic, communicative, technological, and logistical challenges do students experience during the International Guest Lecturer Programme?
4. What are students' perceptions and recommendations regarding the future integration of international guest lectures into university curricula?

Literature Review

Internationalisation in Higher Education

Internationalization has become a new dimension of contemporary higher education. All tertiary institutions look forward to practicing it with the goal in helping students adapt to increasingly interconnected academic, professional, and social environments. Over time, this concept has undergone evolution as it is no longer limited to recruiting international students, launching overseas study programs, or facilitating cross-border physical mobility of faculty and students. Instead, it offers broader educational experience and increasingly integrates

international, intercultural, and global dimensions into teaching, learning, curriculum systems. In addition to this, a study by de Wit and Altbach (2021) supports this transformation by highlighting a growing general expectation in academic circles that higher education institutions should create opportunities for students to understand diverse perspectives beyond their own national contexts. This will help them engage effectively in multicultural academic and professional settings.

Although physical cross-border mobility remains an important part of internationalisation, not all students have the opportunity to study or exchange abroad. There are some rising issues such as financial constraints, academic conflicts, family responsibilities, geographic distance, and other practical considerations that prevent them from participating in this internationalisation experience. If physical cross-border mobility is the only way for them to study abroad, it will surely hinder the ability to elevate the cross-border learning experience. This has forced tertiary institutions such as colleges and universities to explore more inclusive approaches in order to make internationalized experience a regular part of students' university education.

One key approach to this challenge is Internationalization at Home (IaH). This approach integrates international and intercultural elements into the formal and informal learning experiences of local higher education institutions (Beelen & Jones, 2015). The core feature of Internationalization at Home is to embed a global perspective into the curriculum and campus environment of local colleges and universities, without requiring them to study abroad. Soria and Troisi (2014) found that students who participated in on-campus internationally focused activities perceived a link between the development of their global cross-cultural competencies and these activities. In 2023, Sercu also proposed that internationalization at home experiences can support students' cross-cultural growth, and that as long as colleges and universities provide opportunities for students to access perspectives and knowledge beyond the local language, substantial and meaningful internationalized learning can be carried out. Digital technology has further expanded these possibilities, giving rise to Internationalization at a Distance (IaD).

Meanwhile, Mittelmeier et al. (2021) defined IaD as internationalisation that enables collaborative operations without requiring instructors, students, or educational institutions to physically relocate across national borders. This model promotes using online platforms to connect local students with overseas educational resources (O'Dowd, 2018). It is particularly well-suited for international guest lectures, as it reduces the financial and logistical costs associated with cross-border travel and makes the learning experience more impactful.

Therefore, international guest lectures fall exactly at the intersection of Internationalization at Home (IaH) and Internationalization at a Distance (IaD). These lectures can integrate international academic resources and diverse perspectives into students' regular learning environments. More importantly, they break through the limitation of traditional internationalization that only reaches a small number of students participating in overseas study tours. By doing so, they expand the range of students who can take part, truly embed internationalization into the curriculum system, and enable more students to gain an international learning experience.

Pedagogical Benefits of International Guest Lectures

In the higher education system, guest lectures are a long-term supplementary measure to support regular classroom teaching. By bringing in external professional expertise with industry experience, practical cases, and diverse perspectives, guest lectures fill gaps in knowledge and experience that cannot be covered by internal regular courses. Moreover, Alebaikan (2016) depicts that regardless of online or offline mode, guest lectures consistently receive positive feedback from students. The core reason for this is that guest lectures build a bridge between classroom theories and real-world scenarios outside the university, helping students combine what they learn with practical application. The diversity of contents shared, different national context and cultural background have elevated the learning experience to another level that later opens the minds of the students. Clearly, international guest lectures have additional educational value that is worthy of in-depth exploration.

According to Bender-Slack (2019), internationalized classrooms can expand learning boundaries by bringing the students to view things from different academic and cultural lenses and perspectives. However, the value of international guest lectures does not merely rely on having foreign instructors from another country; instead, these lectures can provide students with diverse ways to understand familiar topics. This includes explaining professional practices in other countries and offering unique interpretations of local issues. Such exposure encourages students to break through their inherent cognitive limitations and embrace multiple perspectives.

International guest lectures carry educational value for both enriching course content and fostering students' critical thinking. In their 2025 study, Dhar and Chakraborty noted that course internationalization exposes learners to multicultural and multilingual perspectives and prepares them to enter a globally interconnected workplace. Integrating international professional expertise into standard curricula also allows students to move beyond the limitations of local case studies and expand their holistic understanding of their academic discipline. Furthermore, these lectures can break the monotony of conventional classrooms through new instructors, pedagogies, cases, and viewpoints, which stimulates students' curiosity and boosts their participation. However, novelty alone is not sufficient to support effective learning. The realization of their educational value depends heavily on the design of lecture sessions and their level of integration with the overall course curriculum.

Pepple et al. (2025) found that guest lectures only deliver maximum benefit when they are deliberately linked to a course's learning objectives, rather than being treated as isolated add-on activities. Based on this finding, the course's regular lead instructor must fulfill three core responsibilities: introduce relevant background context in advance, create connections between the guest lecture content and core course materials, and provide opportunities for students to apply what they learn after the lecture. Meanwhile, Mittelmeier et al. (2024) proposed that the core features of international education include active learning, reflection, interaction, inclusivity, and scaffolded instruction. By integrating the logic of these two studies, to unlock greater value from international guest lectures, instructors must guide students to complete four key actions: ask questions, discuss international case studies, compare different perspectives, and reflect on their new learning.

Global Experience and International Academic Exposure

The core advantage of international guest lectures is that they provide groups with limited access to study abroad or exchange programs with opportunities to engage in global academic experiences, without requiring students to cross national borders. These in-person interactions let students directly encounter diverse academic, professional, linguistic, and cultural perspectives. While this experience cannot fully replicate the depth of studying abroad, it integrates elements of international learning into the regular courses that students are currently taking. As early as 2014, Soria and Troisi proposed that internationalized experiences on a student's home campus can promote students' perceived growth in their own global and intercultural competencies. They also overturned the long-held assumption that international learning must involve cross-border travel, which demonstrates that well-designed local activities can similarly deliver international perspectives and enable students to engage with cultural and global diversity.

Similarly, a study by Lee and Cai (2019) highlighted that local online internationalization activities can use digital technology to build valuable cross-cultural learning scenarios, which allow students from different regions to access the same shared educational environment. International guest lectures follow this exact same technology-enabled logic: they not only let local students interact in real time with overseas scholars based in other locations, but also fully embed internationalized experiences into local school-based curricula. This type of international exposure can expand students' understanding of global academic practices. After encountering different presentation styles, communication norms, research cases, and classroom requirements, students can break the misconception that academic practices follow a single universal standard. This benefit is particularly valuable for students who go on to pursue graduate studies or enter the international job market.

As noted in a 2025 study by Dhar and Chakraborty, virtual international learning can promote multicultural and multilingual engagement and help learners adapt to globalized professional environments. On this basis, international guest lectures in virtual settings hold multiple unique educational values. As a carrier of international academic exchange, these lectures enable students to access perspectives and practices that are rarely encountered in the regular on-campus scenarios of their local universities. They help students learn about international institutions, professional practices, research communities, and potential academic collaboration opportunities, while also fostering intercultural awareness and a global mindset. More importantly, by introducing country-specific cases and problem-solving approaches from other regions, these lectures encourage students to compare local and foreign practices, and recognize that their own perspectives are rooted in specific cultural contexts, rather than being universally applicable.

Nevertheless, many people take it for granted that international exposure automatically leads to the development of intercultural competence, but this is actually a common misconception. Even simply attending guest lectures given by international scholars rarely brings lasting changes to students' attitudes, skills, and behaviors. A 2024 study by Mittelmeier et al. points out that effective internationalized learning requires students to have opportunities for interaction and reflection, as well as the ability to connect their experiences to their own academic and personal contexts (Hackett et al., 2023). These lectures only provide a chance for exposure, and are in no way proof of competence development.

Challenges of International Guest Lectures

Despite their notable potential educational value, international guest lectures still bring about challenges in four core areas, including linguistic communication, technical adaptation, and logistical support. These challenges directly affect the extent to which students can gain tangible benefits from cross-border academic exchanges, and the most prominent among these challenges is language and communication barriers. Research by Bijsmans et al. in 2022 notes that while international learning environments can broaden students' horizons, they may also push students into communication difficulties due to differences in language and academic culture. Such problems are especially impactful for students who use English as an additional language and have already adapted to the teaching pace of local instructors.

In the context of international guest lectures, unfamiliar accents, overly fast speech rates, technical terms, idiomatic expressions, and divergent communication styles all hinder students' comprehension. Even when both instructors and students communicate in English, differences in language use still create additional cognitive load, making it difficult for students to process complex academic content in sync with the lecture.

However, we should not view linguistic diversity as a barrier in the international academic setting; it is in fact a core component of such experiences. Students who will enter international workplaces, academic conferences, graduate programs, or professional networks in the future will inevitably communicate with people from multilingual backgrounds. Our core challenge is not to eliminate linguistic differences, but to provide students with sufficient support to navigate these differences. This can be done through six specific measures: using a moderate speaking pace, explaining technical terms, using visual aids, adding subtitles, distributing pre-conference vocabulary packets, and sharing reading materials in advance. In addition, students also need to adapt to diverse teaching styles. International guest lecturers differ from regular lecturers across six dimensions, including their methods of posing questions. These differences can enrich learning experiences, but they may initially confuse students who are unfamiliar with them.

A 2026 study by Bagherzadeh et al. identified linguistic, academic, cultural, and social adaptation as core challenges in international education. While that study focused on international students, the present study centers its analysis on international guest lectures within international education contexts and extracts two unique core problems for this specific scenario. First, unfamiliar academic practices create learning opportunities while also generating adaptation barriers; this barrier can be mitigated, and students' participation confidence can be improved, by providing students with information about the guest lecturer, the lecture's objectives, relevant terminology, and participation requirements before the lecture. Second, students face interaction barriers limited by factors such as low English confidence, and virtual settings further exacerbate this problem; this issue can be addressed by allocating dedicated Q&A time to boost participation levels.

This study shows that although online international guest lectures serve as valuable learning experiences to the students, they also come with several challenges. Issues such as technical problem; unstable internet connections, poor audio quality, video delays and platform errors can negatively disrupt teaching and learning processes. The interaction between students and instructors will be hindered and indirectly it does not provide a high quality of learning experience. In addition, these difficulties become more challenging when students are also

trying to understand and adapt to the unfamiliar accents and complex academic terms. Thus, reliable technology and technical testing before the lesson are very important. Furthermore, differences in time zone also become one of the most challenging parts of conducting online international guest lectures as lecturers' availability and duration of the session should be considered. These issues may reduce the time available for meaningful interaction. Overall, a successful online international guest lecture requires more than simply inviting an international speaker. It also requires careful planning, student preparation, reliable technical support, and sufficient opportunities for students to interact with the guest lecturer.

Synthesis and Research Gap

Existing literature confirms that the internationalization of higher education has moved beyond the traditional model of cross-border mobility of people. Two mechanisms—internationalization at home and digital internationalization—enable students to gain global perspectives while staying at their home campuses. Within this framework, international guest lectures serve as a feasible pathway to integrate international academic resources into standard coursework. Meanwhile, studies by Alebaikan (2016) and Pepple et al. (2025) point out that regular guest lectures can improve teaching outcomes by drawing on external professional expertise and real industry cases. As for guest lectures delivered by international scholars, beyond bringing diverse academic and cultural impacts, they also hold the dual value of serving both as a teaching intervention and a carrier for course internationalization.

However, existing literature confirms that international exchange experiences cannot spontaneously produce effective learning. Studies by Bagherzadeh et al. (2026) and Bijsmans et al. (2022) note that six types of barriers, such as language differences, can hinder student participation. In addition, Mittelmeier et al. (2024) found that such experiences only generate value when paired with four types of support such as interaction, reflection, relevance and suitable scaffolding. Therefore, to study the effectiveness of international guest lectures, we must consider both educational benefits and the challenges encountered by students. Although global attention to the internationalisation of higher education keeps rising, there remains a clear gap in research on international guest lectures, which represent a specific form of curriculum-embedded internationalisation. Most existing studies split relevant topics into separate research areas, and they also fail to deeply explore the broad value of these lectures for students' internationalized learning experiences. This study is conducted specifically to fill this gap.

Current research has yet to fully examine international guest lecture programmes by considering their teaching benefits, international learning experiences, and implementation challenges together. While these programmes can expose students to different academic practices, language use, and perspectives, they may also create difficulties in understanding course content. Similarly, online delivery provides students with greater access to international experts and resources, but technical issues and limited interaction may affect their learning experience.

To address this gap, the present study examines an International Guest Lecturer Programme from the students' perspective. It explores students' perceptions of the programme's impact on teaching and learning, their international learning experiences, and its contribution to developing a broader global perspective. The study also examines the language, technical, and practical challenges students experience during the programme, as well as their views on

incorporating international guest lectures into future courses. Overall, the study seeks to provide a better understanding of the value and practicality of international guest lectures as an approach to supporting the internationalisation of higher education.

Methodology

Research Design

A mixed-method research design was used to extensively investigate student perceptions of a student programme called International Guest Lecturer Programme, involving university students from two countries. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through two survey instruments (Google forms) to evaluate these four main themes: learning impact, cross-cultural skills, identified challenges, and overall institutional integration. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, it helps to provide comprehensive and in-depth findings, particularly the impact of internalisation programme for university students.

Participants and Research Context

The study targeted higher education students from Malaysia and Indonesia who participated in an international guest lecturer programme. Across the program, students attended multiple sessions led by guest lecturers from both countries. A total of 61 respondents ($N=61$) completed the quantitative survey, while a total of 21 respondents ($N=21$) respondents provided their feedback through the qualitative survey. Sampling was conducted using a purposive sampling strategy, selecting students directly exposed to internationalisation initiatives within their respective academic faculties and programs. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were assured of strict confidentiality and anonymity prior to data collection. 61 student-participants completed the 30-item survey while 21 students provided open-ended qualitative feedback. All respondents were students from Malaysia or Indonesia who had joined the sessions led by guest lecturers from the two countries.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected using two self-administered survey questionnaires upon completion of the international guest lecturer sessions.

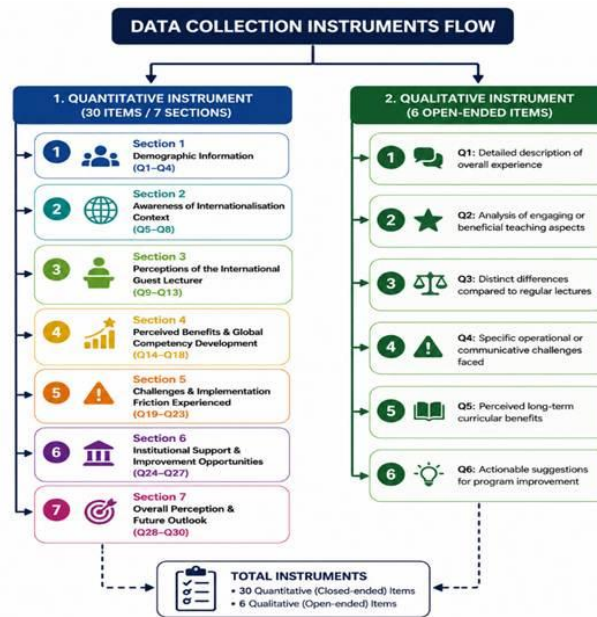


Figure 1: Data Collection Instruments

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings were presented using frequencies, percentages and response distributions across the 5-point Likert scale to identify specific trends across all 30 survey items. Scores of 4 ("Agree") and 5 ("Strongly Agree") were combined to highlight overall positive response rates across key thematic areas.

On the other hand, the qualitative data were analysed thematically to identify specific patterns and themes. These qualitative findings were synthesised with the quantitative results to explain key trends in language barriers, time constraints and pedagogical satisfaction.

Since the study used post-programme self-report surveys and descriptive analysis, the terms 'improved', 'enhanced', and 'developed' in the findings denote students' perceptions or reported experiences. They do not indicate objectively measured changes or causal effects of the items studied.

Findings and Discussion

Quantitative Findings

Conceptual Understanding and Awareness of Internationalisation

The survey results among 61 respondents demonstrate a high degree of pre-existing and post-programme conceptual understanding and awareness regarding higher education internationalisation. A total of 85.3% of participants reported a strong initial understanding (scores of 4 or 5) of internationalisation concepts. Additionally, 91.8% of students acknowledged that the institutions planned and conducted international guest lecturers programme as an effort toward internationalisation, reflecting strong student alignment with institutional strategy.

While 72.1% reported high prior awareness, 24.6% maintained a neutral stance and 3.3% indicated low prior awareness. 90.1% of respondents affirmed that attending the sessions significantly enhanced their understanding of internationalisation within higher education contexts.

Table 1: Understanding and Awareness of Internationalisation

Questionnaire item	Response Percentage	Summary
Conceptual Understanding	85.3% high understanding (scores 4–5)	Strong fundamental knowledge and understanding of internalisation concept
Strategic Awareness	91.8% aware of institutional intent	Students are able to relate guest lecturer programme to university goals.
Prior Collaboration Awareness	72.1% high, 24.6% neutral, 3.3% low awareness	Core knowledge existed but varied across students.
Post-Program Impact	90.1% reported improved understanding	The programme enhanced students' understanding of internalisation concept.

Pedagogical Experience and Engagement

Evaluations of instructional quality, participation and curriculum development were overwhelmingly positive across all evaluated criteria. Based on the survey, a high percentage (88.5%) of respondents reported that involvement in the programme helped them improve their understanding of the subject matter. Furthermore, 90.2% of respondents conveyed that the experience of learning from an international guest lecturer as engaging and interesting.

Moreover, a significant 91.8% of participants confirmed that international lecturers exposed them to new academic perspectives that are different from their usual classes. Meanwhile, 91.8% rated the teaching approaches used as highly effective. When asked about interaction, 80.4% felt comfortable interacting with the international guest lecturers.

Table 2: Experience and Engagement

Questionnaire item	Response Percentage	Summary
Course Content Enhancement	88.5% agreement	Enhanced course comprehension.
Engagement & Interest	90.2% engaged	Learning experience was interesting and engaging.
Novel Perspectives	91.8% agreed	New perspectives in classes.
Teaching Effectiveness	91.8% high effectiveness	Teaching approach matched student learning needs.

Student-Lecturer Interaction	80.4% comfortable	Positive communication and effective engagement.
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Global and Cultural Competency Development

Overall, 96.7% of respondents reported increased exposure to international academic practices, with 50.8% strongly agreeing with this statement. Additionally, 90.2% of students indicated that the programme has improved their cross-cultural awareness.

A total of 91.8% of respondents noted that the programme helped them build a global perspective. Consequently, 88.5% of students reported increased motivation to participate in future international academic activities, and 88.6% agreed that the programme added significant value to their overall educational experience.

Table 3: Global and Cultural Competency

Questionnaire item	Response Percentage	Summary
Academic Practice Exposure	96.7% total agreement (50.8% strongly agree)	Increased exposure to internalisation.
Cross-Cultural Awareness	90.2% improved awareness	Positive impact on cultural competencies.
Global Perspective Growth	91.8% agreement	Broadened global perspectives.
Future Activity Motivation	88.5% motivated	Highly motivated for future international initiatives.
Overall Value Addition	88.6% total agreement	Meaningful educational experience.

Logistical, Technical, and Communication Challenges

Despite major positive feedback, the findings highlight notable operational and communicative challenges. Linguistic differences presented the primary barrier, with 62.3% of students reporting that accent or language variations made lectures difficult to fully comprehend. Additionally, 55.7% felt that underlying cultural differences influenced communication during the live sessions.

While a total of 59.0% of respondents felt that limited interaction time restricted their engagement with the guest speaker. Furthermore, 57.4% indicated that technical issues such as platform connectivity or audio quality negatively impacted session delivery. Finally, 60.7% of students expressed a need for greater pre-lecture preparation.

Table 4: Technical and Communicative Challenges

Questionnaire item	Response Percentage	Summary
Language & Accent Barriers	62.3% experienced comprehension difficulty	Highlights the necessity of linguistic accommodations.
Temporal Constraints	59.0% felt constrained	Session allocations were insufficient for deep dialogue.
Technical Infrastructure	57.4% reported technical disruption	Digital delivery requires improved platform reliability.
Student Scaffolding/Prep	60.7% requested more pre-session preparation	Points to a requirement for preparatory study materials.
Cultural Nuances	55.7% observed communication impacts	Indicates a need for cross-cultural communication orientation.

Institutional Assessment and Future Programmatic Outlook

Prior to session execution, 83.6% of respondents felt adequately informed by university administration. Overall organizational execution was approved by 86.8% of participants. In-class environment management was similarly strong, with 90.1% feeling actively encouraged to participate during sessions (59.0% strongly agreeing).

Moreover, the findings suggest that overall positive sentiment toward internationalisation stood at 91.8%. Additionally, 85.2% recommended similar programme in future curricula, and 91.8% would recommend the programme to peers. Ultimately, 91.8% of respondents concluded that guest lecturer sessions should be integrated as part of the university courses.

Table 5: Institutional Assessment and Future Recommendation

Questionnaire item	Response Percentage	Summary
Pre-Session Information	83.6% felt well-informed	Sufficient pre-programme information.
Program Organisation	86.8% rated as well-organised	High satisfaction with programme management.
Participation Encouragement	90.1% felt encouraged (59.0% strongly agree)	Foster positive student engagement.
Program Expansion	85.2% favour increased session frequency	Highly suggested for broader academic integration.
General Perception	91.8% positive sentiment	Positive view of internalisation programme.
Student Recommendation Rate	91.8% recommend	Strong peer-to-peer endorsement.

Program Institutionalization	91.8% favour permanent integration	Encourage to embed guest lectures into regular curricula.
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Qualitative Findings

Student Perceptions of the International Guest Lecturer Programme

To supplement the quantitative survey data, open-ended qualitative responses ($N = 21$) were collected to capture in-depth insights regarding students' experiences, perceived educational benefit, challenges, and recommendations for future programme improvement. Responses were processed through thematic analysis, resulting in six primary thematic clusters corresponding to the qualitative inquiry domains.

Table 6: Distribution of Overall Experiential Ratings

Classification	Descriptors	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Positive	Good, interesting, highly informative, educational, enhanced core understanding	11	52.4%
Highly Positive	Great, amazing, fantastic, awesome, highly fun and enjoyable experience	9	42.9%
Neutral / Mixed	"Not bad," acceptable, but required extra cognitive focus due to accent or slang	1	4.8%

The vast majority of participants identified the programme as a motivating shift from the usual classroom practice. Students who expressed *Highly Positive* feedback (42.9%, $n = 9$) frequently used enthusiastic and engaging tone, noting that the sessions made learning "fun," "enjoyable," and "eye-opening." Those falling into the *Positive* category (52.4%, $n = 11$) emphasized the functional benefits of the guest lectures, noting that the content helps reinforced their comprehension of complex academic topics. Only a single respondent (4.8%) reported a *Neutral/Mixed* experience.

Most Engaging and Beneficial Presentation Attributes

When asked to identify the specific teaching approach or delivery techniques that generated the highest learning impact, student feedback centred on four key themes, as presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Engaging and Beneficial Presentation Delivery Themes

Theme	Analytical Attributes	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Clear & Detailed Explanations	Step-by-step concept breakdowns, structured lecturing, systematic clarity	11	52.4
Real-Life & Country-Specific Examples	Practical industry applications, anecdotal insights from lecturer's home country	6	28.6
Interactive Elements & Q&A	Dedicated question-and-answer segments, direct dialogue, active engagement	3	14.3
Universal Pedagogical Value	Holistic appreciation; felt that "everything was beneficial" and well-delivered	3	14.3

A clear majority of respondents (52.4%, n = 11) affirmed the structural clarity and clarity of explanation provided by the international guest lecturer. Students emphasized that complex theoretical constructs were simplified into step-by-step explanations. Furthermore, 28.6% (n = 6) highlighted the integration of real-world, country-specific related examples into the teaching. Students also noted that learning about practical applications directly from an international expert bridged the gap between theories they learn in classes and the actual global industry scenarios. Moreover, the interactive Q&A sessions (14.3%, n=3) encouraged student participation and active learning.

Contrast Between Guest Lectures and Regular Coursework

To evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, participants reflected on how international guest lectures differed from their standard core university lectures. Five distinct comparative themes emerged as outlined in Table 8.

Table 8: Comparative Distinction Between Guest Lectures and Standard Coursework

Theme	Key Distinguishing Pedagogical Factors	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Pedagogical Approach & Delivery Style	Greater interactive focus, storytelling, discussion-based, less theory-heavy	8	38.1
Global & International Perspectives	Integration of foreign industry insights, cross-border comparative views	7	33.3
No Significant Difference	Comparable instructional quality to local senior faculty; standard academic rigor	3	14.3
Linguistic & Accent Variations	Distinct vocal cadence, novel regional dialects, unique rhetorical delivery	2	9.5
General Contextual Shifts	Unspecified contextual variations, broad overall improvement in perspectives	2	9.5

Based on the survey, respondents reported that the most distinctive attribute of the guest lecturer was the teaching approach (38.1%, $n = 8$). Participants noted that the international guest lecturer adopted a discussion-oriented and storytelling approaches rather than the traditional, lecture-heavy approaches. The second most prominent difference was the integration of global viewpoints (33.3%, $n = 7$). Conversely, 14.3% ($n = 3$) observed no substantial difference in teaching quality, affirming that their local university lecturers maintained a similarly high standard of academic delivery.

Operational, Communicative, and Technological Challenges

Despite positive overall feedback, qualitative survey identified operational and communicative challenges that impacted student comprehension and engagement during the sessions (Table 9).

Table 9: Categorization of Student-Reported Challenges

Identified Challenge	Operational & Communicative Obstacles	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Linguistic & Dialect Barriers	Accent variations, rapid speech pace, regional slang, unfamiliar terminology	9	42.9
Technical & Connectivity Issues	Internet instability, audio lag, video buffering, platform access issues	6	28.6
Psychological & Interactive Barriers	Shyness, hesitation during Q&A, fear of miscommunication in English	4	19.0
Unimpeded / No Challenges	Flawless session execution, seamless delivery, no barriers experienced	3	14.3
Logistical & Temporal Constraints	Challenge arising from international time zone alignment and tight scheduling	1	4.8

Language and accent differences contributed the most significant barrier, cited by 42.9% (n = 9) of respondents. Students reported that foreign accents, localized idioms, and fast-paced delivery forced students to listen with greater focus and attention. Technical issues (28.6%, n = 6) such as audio dropouts and bandwidth-related lag, made listening even more challenging. Additionally, 19.0% (n = 4) of students admitted that self-consciousness and fear of making mistakes in English kept them from asking questions to an international speaker. Meanwhile, 14.3% (n = 3) reported experiencing a smooth session without any technical or operational disruptions.

Perceived Long-Term Curricular Benefits of Internationalisation

Respondents demonstrated a clear understanding of how guest lecturer programs contribute to their broader academic development and global readiness. The data was categorized into four primary long-term benefits (Table 10).

Table 10: Perceived Long-Term Benefits of International Guest Lectures

Benefit	Perceived Long-Term Advantages	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Broad Knowledge Expansion	Gain updated global information, multi-country comparative knowledge	11	52.4
Exposure to Global Perspectives	Global worldviews, cross-cultural competence, open-mindedness	10	47.6
Pedagogical Diversity	Experiencing diverse educational approach and styles	6	28.6
Skill & Competency Enhancement	Developing critical thinking, awareness and communication skills	2	9.5

The findings revealed that 52.4% (n = 11) of respondents stated the programme helped them to increase knowledge and broaden their global outlook (47.6%, n = 10). Furthermore, 28.6% (n = 6) highlighted the value of exposure to diverse teaching approaches. They noted that adapting to different teaching styles builds flexibility and prepares students for global careers.

Actionable Student Recommendations for Program Enhancement

For future improvement, student recommendations were collected and categorized into five actionable areas, detailed in Table 11.

Table 11: Student Recommendations for Future Program Optimization

Area	Recommendation	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Sustained Format / Absolute Satisfaction	Maintain existing framework; high satisfaction with zero changes requested	7	33.3
Amplifying Interactive Elements	Extend Q&A segments, incorporate breakout discussions, digital polling	6	28.6
Technical & Pre-Session Preparation	Mandatory platform dry-runs, pre-lecture reading distribution, camera usage	4	19.0
Delivery Pace & Speech Adjustments	Requesting slower speaking speed, simpler phrasing, clearer contextualization	3	14.3
Transition to In-Person Delivery	Transitioning from online webinars to physical, face-to-face campus visits	3	14.3

Based on the findings, 33.3% (n = 7) of respondents expressed complete satisfaction with the overall programme organisation. Respondents also suggested for improvement in term of interactive engagement (28.6%, n = 6). They suggested allocating more time for Q&A sessions and provide platform for small-group discussions. To address technical and linguistic challenges, 19.0% (n = 4) requested lecturers to provide pre-lecture reading materials to aid preparation, while 14.3% (n = 3) recommended that guest lecturers adjusted their speaking pace according to the students' level. Finally, 14.3% (n = 3) of respondents expressed their hopes that the virtual programme could be transformed to face-to-face, in-person campus visits.

Synthesis of Major Findings

The results can be divided into three main patterns. Firstly, students showed positive pedagogical experiences and broader international exposure with 88.5% perceived improved subject understanding, 96.7% reported increased exposure to international academic practices, and 91.8% perceived a broader global perspective. Secondly, respondents linked the programme's value with clear explanations, country-specific examples, and opportunities for interaction, while 91.8% supported its integration into university courses. Thirdly, students also suggested conditions that constrained participation and comprehension, especially language or accent differences (62.3%), insufficient interaction time (59.0%), technical problems (57.4%), and inadequate preparation (60.7%).

Generally, this study contributes a combined account of perceived pedagogical value, cross-cultural exposure, and implementation constraints within one curriculum-based internationalisation venture involving Malaysian and Indonesian students. Practically, it identifies curricular alignment, pre-session preparation, linguistic accessibility, structured interaction, and technical readiness as the main variables for integrating international guest lecturers into university courses.

Conclusion

Generally, it was found that students perceived the International Guest Lecturer Programme positively from the aspects of learning, international exposure, and global perspectives. Respondents reported improved understanding of various areas. These include course content, exposure to new academic perspectives and international academic practices, greater cross-cultural awareness, and broader global perspectives. Additionally, the qualitative findings help explain responses which involve students valuing clear explanations, real-life and country-specific examples together with opportunities for interaction. These findings support the view that internationalisation can be meaningfully incorporated into home-based or distance learning. This is more pertinent when international experiences are purposefully designed and connected to students' learning (Mittelmeier et al., 2021, 2024; Soria & Troisi, 2014).

On a different note, the programme still presented challenges, particularly accent and language differences, limited interaction time, technical disruptions, and insufficient preparation. The findings thus suggest that international guest lectures are most useful when it is supported by pedagogical scaffolding, linguistic and technical support, and adequate avenues for interaction. In sum, the programme was perceived as significant educationally. However, its benefits were restrictive on clear curricular links, sufficient preparation, comprehensible delivery, reliable technology, and meaningful interaction. The contribution of the study lies in transforming these student-reported patterns into practical guidance for curriculum-based international guest lectures or similar projects. It does not claim objective improvement in academic performance or intercultural competence. Future research may extend the study by having pre- and post-intervention measures, comparison groups, longitudinal designs, or validated competency instruments to examine longer-term outcomes.

Recommendations

It is recommended that future International Guest Lecturer Programmes should be integrated more deliberately into course learning. This will be different from current practices that treat this initiative as isolated activities. Guest lecturers should be selected for their relevance to course objectives. At the same time, course lecturers should provide links between the guest session and material taught before and after it. Programmes should also allocate sufficient time for interaction through structured Q&As, discussion activities, or small-group tasks (Mittelmeier et al., 2024; Pepple et al., 2025).

Other aspects such as pre-session scaffolding, linguistic accessibility, and technical readiness should also be strengthened. Students can be prepared through brief lecturer profiles, key terminology, guiding questions and background readings. For online sessions, organisers should test audio, connectivity, presentation sharing, and platform access before the actual events. Guest lecturers can further support comprehension by using a moderate speaking pace, explaining specialised terms, and providing key concepts visually. Further research should also examine whether repeated participation produces longer-term changes in intercultural competence, global perspectives, communication confidence, academic engagement, or learning outcomes.

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