

# Exploring the Impact of Experience, Department, and Course on the Perception of the Internationalization of Curriculum (IoC) Among Staff at UTAS-Salalah

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## Abstract

The internationalization of Curriculum (IoC) is a significant aspect of higher education to prepare graduates for a globalized world. This study explores academic staff perceptions of IoC at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Salalah (UTAS) in Sultanate of Oman, addressing a gap in the literature on IoC in non-Western contexts. Furthermore, the study explores the perspectives of academic staff regarding the implementation of IoC at different levels within the institution, department, and courses. Not only this, it also explores how these perspectives may vary based on the number of years of experience, as well as the differences in perceptions among different departments. Additionally, the study explores the perceptions of academic staff regarding the three fundamental levels of IoC, namely awareness, competence, and expertise. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among all academic staff at UTAS. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVAs, and paired t-tests. Results revealed that perceptions of IoC did not vary significantly based on years of experience or across departments. However, perceptions varied significantly across the three core levels, with expertise rated highest and awareness lowest. Strengths and weaknesses were identified within each level. This study contributes to the understanding of IoC in non-Western settings and informs institutional policies and practices. A holistic and contextually sensitive approach is needed, involving staff development, institutional support, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Finally, the findings represent a significant step towards a more inclusive understanding of IoC in the Omani context and beyond.

**Keywords:** internationalization of curriculum, higher education, Oman, academic staff perceptions, quantitative study, UTAS-Salalah, awareness, competence, expertise

## 1. Introduction

Internationalisation of higher education has become a significant global trend in recent decades, driven by factors such as increasing global connections, the need to prepare graduates for a globalized world, and the pursuit of additional revenue by universities (see, for example, Altbach & Knight, 2007; Hubais & Muftahu, 2022; Wit, 2020b). However, much of the research on internationalisation has originated from developed Western countries, with a dearth of studies from developing regions such as the Arab world (Al-Zoubi & Abu-Orabi, 2019; Alzadjali, 2018). Given the identified gaps in non-Western contexts, this study aims to investigate how academic staff at UTAS-Salalah perceive IoC, focusing on variations by experience and department, and evaluating the levels of awareness, competence, and expertise

Within the broader field of internationalisation, the (IoC) has emerged as a key area of focus. IoC refers to the incorporation of international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content, outcomes, delivery, and purpose of the curriculum (Leask, 2015). IoC is seen as a way to ensure all students, not just those who participate in mobility programs, develop the global perspectives and cross-cultural skills needed to live and work in an interconnected world (Beelen & Jones, 2015) Despite the growing importance placed on IoC, research suggests its implementation remains fragmented and ad hoc in many contexts (Green & Whitsed, 2015) . Particular gaps have been identified in

understanding academic staff's perceptions and experiences of IoC, as they play a central role in enacting curriculum changes (Kirk et al., 2018; Leask, 2013). Their engagement has been found to vary according to factors such as disciplinary cultures, institutional support, and personal backgrounds (Clifford & Montgomery, 2015; Sawir, 2013).

In the Omani higher education context, internationalisation is a relatively new but rapidly growing phenomenon (Al'Abri, 2019; Alzadjali, 2018; Hubais & Muftahu, 2022). Like other countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Oman has made significant investments in expanding its higher education sector and supporting Omani students to study abroad in recent decades (Vardhan, 2015). However, research on the understanding and practice of IoC within Omani institutions is limited. One of the few studies was conducted by Albusaidi, (2022), who examined academic staff perspectives on internationalisation at home at one private Omani college. The three interview participants reported a lack of clear understanding of the concept and its implications for curriculum and pedagogy. This suggests a strong need for further empirical research on IoC in the Omani context, encompassing a wider range of institutional types and stakeholders.

Having identified the aforementioned gap, the current study explores the academic staff perceptions of IoC at one of the largest public technological institutions in Oman, the University of Technology and Applied Sciences - Salalah (UTAS). Using a quantitative method design, it examined IoC strategies and practices across three levels: institution, department and course. Quantitative survey data was collected from 174 academic staff and analyzed descriptively and inferentially using ANOVA.

By focusing on a previously under-researched context and foregrounding academic staff voices, the study makes an important empirical contribution to the emerging body of scholarship on IoC in non-Western higher education systems. Its findings provide insights into how IoC is perceived and experienced in a technological institution in Oman, including existing practices, challenges and development needs. This can help inform institutional leaders and policymakers seeking to better support academic staff to incorporate international dimensions into their curricula in contextually relevant ways. Overall, by shedding light on how IoC is perceived and practiced in a non-Western context, identifying key challenges and enablers, and proposing a contextualized model for implementation, the study contributes to advancing the still nascent field of IoC research and practice. Its findings can help guide institutions in Oman and other developing countries in their efforts to internationalize their curricula in ways that are both globally engaged and locally relevant. The following sections provide more details on the study's context, methodology, findings and implications.

In addition, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do academic staff at UTAS perceive IoC at the institutional, departmental, and course levels?
2. How do perceptions of IoC vary based on academic staff's years of experience at UTAS and in higher education?
3. How do perceptions of IoC at the departmental level vary across different departments?
4. How do academic staff perceive the three core levels of IoC (awareness, competence, and expertise)?

## 2. Literature Review

IoC has emerged as a key aspect of the broader internationalization of higher education. IoC is defined as the incorporation of international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the content, outcomes, delivery, and purpose of the curriculum (Leask, 2015). The Edwards et al. (2003) typology of IoC—awareness, competence, and expertise—provides a framework for this study, guiding the survey design to capture these dimensions and their contextual influences at UTAS-Salalah. By operationalizing these levels, we hypothesize that IoC perceptions will differ significantly across these levels, but not necessarily by years of experience or department. It aims to ensure that all students, not just those who participate in mobility programs, develop the global perspectives and cross-cultural competencies needed to live and work in an interconnected world (Beelen & Jones, 2015).

Several frameworks have been proposed to conceptualize and operationalize IoC. One influential framework is the typology developed by (Edwards et al., 2003), which identifies three levels of IoC engagement: awareness, competence, and expertise. Awareness involves recognizing the importance of international perspectives, competence involves integrating international content and skills into the curriculum, and expertise involves developing a comprehensive and strategic approach to IoC. This framework has been applied and extended in various contexts to guide IoC research and practice. Theoretically, the study draws on the typology of IoC developed by (Edwards et al., 2003), which identifies three levels of IoC: awareness, competence and expertise. This typology provided a useful

framework for conceptualizing and measuring different elements of IoC as perceived by staff. However, the study extends the original typology to consider contextual influences on these elements, such as disciplinary cultures, departmental support, and institutional policies. This helps to situate IoC within the complex realities of a particular university setting.

### *2.1 Benefits and Challenges of Implementing IoC*

IoC is seen as a way to enhance the quality and relevance of higher education in an increasingly globalized world. Research has identified several benefits of IoC, including developing students' intercultural competencies, preparing graduates for global employability, and fostering international collaboration and research (Moran et al., 2021; Wit, 2020a). IoC can also contribute to the broader goals of internationalization, such as building institutional reputation and attracting international students and staff (Yemini & Dvir, 2016).

However, implementing IoC also presents significant challenges. These include resistance from academic staff who may lack awareness or expertise in IoC, limited institutional support and resources, and tensions between global and local priorities (Albusaidi, 2022; Kirk et al., 2018; Leask, 2020). Studies have also highlighted the risk of IoC being implemented in a superficial or fragmented way, without a clear vision or assessment of learning outcomes (Knight & Wit, 2018; Renfors, 2021; Wit, 2020b; Wit & Leask, 2017).

### *2.2 Factors Influencing Perceptions of IoC*

IoC has become an increasingly important aspect of higher education in the context of globalization. The perceptions and implementation of IoC are influenced by various factors, which can be broadly categorized into individual and organizational factors. This literature review explores these key factors and their relevance to the current study, which investigates academic staff perceptions of IoC at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences - Salalah (UTAS) in Oman.

Personal backgrounds and international experiences play a significant role in shaping academic staff's understanding and engagement with IoC. Staff who have studied or worked abroad may be more aware of the importance of IoC and more motivated to incorporate international perspectives into their teaching (Brewer & Leask, 2022; Renfors, 2021; Schuerholz-Lehr et al., 2007). This aligns with the study's focus on investigating how perceptions of IoC vary based on academic staff's years of experience at UTAS and in higher education. Disciplinary cultures also influence the openness to IoC, with business and social sciences being more receptive compared to natural sciences and engineering (Caniglia et al., 2018; Sawir, 2013). This factor is relevant to the study's research question on how perceptions of IoC at the departmental level vary across different departments.

Leadership support is crucial for the successful implementation of IoC. Strong leadership commitment can provide direction, resources, and motivation for academic staff to engage with IoC (van den Hende et al., 2023). Adequate financial and human resources are also essential, as limited resources can hinder the development of IoC initiatives and staff engagement (Ohajionu, 2021). The presence of clear institutional policies and structures, such as international offices and funding schemes, can create an enabling environment for IoC implementation (van den Hende et al., 2023). The absence of such support has been identified as a major barrier to IoC in many contexts (Ohajionu, 2021; Wimpenny et al., 2020). Professional development opportunities, such as training, workshops, and resources related to IoC, can help improve academic staff's awareness and competence levels (McKinnon et al., 2019). This factor aligns with the study's research question on how academic staff perceive the three core levels of IoC (awareness, competence, and expertise).

The factors discussed in this literature review are highly relevant to the current study, which investigates academic staff perceptions of IoC at UTAS in Oman. The study's research questions and methodology are designed to explore how individual factors (e.g., years of experience, department) and organizational factors (e.g., institutional support, resources) influence IoC perceptions and implementation in this specific context. The literature review highlights the limited research on IoC in the Middle East and Oman, particularly in public and technological institutions. By addressing this gap and investigating the factors influencing IoC perceptions and implementation at UTAS, the study contributes to a more contextualized understanding of IoC in non-Western settings. Understanding the factors that influence the perceptions and implementation of IoC is crucial for supporting internationalization efforts in higher education. The current study's findings can inform institutional policies and practices to support IoC implementation at UTAS, aligning with the broader goals of internationalization in higher education. By exploring both individual and organizational factors in the context of a public technological institution in Oman, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on IoC in diverse educational settings.

### *2.3 IoC in the Middle East and Oman context*

In recent years, there has been growing interest in IoC in the Middle East and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, as part of wider efforts to internationalize higher education and diversify economies (Alzadjali, 2018; Vardhan, 2015). However, research on IoC in these contexts remains limited, with most studies focusing on the broader challenges and strategies of internationalization (e.g., (Al'Abri, 2019; Altbach et al., 2017).

In Oman, internationalization is a relatively new but rapidly growing phenomenon, driven by government policies and investments in higher education (Al'Abri, 2019). One of the few studies on IoC in Oman was conducted by Albusaidi, (2022), who examined academic staff perspectives on internationalization at home in one private college. The study found a lack of clear understanding of IoC among the participants and limited institutional support for its implementation. This highlights the need for further research on IoC in the Omani context, particularly in public and technological institutions.

The current study addresses these gaps by exploring the academic staff perceptions of IoC at UTAS using a quantitative survey approach. The research questions and methodology are aligned with the existing literature and provide a rigorous and systematic approach to understanding IoC in this context. The findings of this study can contribute to the growing body of knowledge on IoC in non-Western settings and inform institutional policies and practices to support its implementation. As the internationalization of higher education continues to evolve and expand, ongoing research and action on IoC will be crucial in guiding the development of globally engaged and locally relevant curricula. This study represents an important step towards a more contextualized and inclusive understanding of IoC in the Omani higher education landscape.

This study makes significant contributions to the existing knowledge on IoC in higher education. It provides empirical evidence of IoC perceptions and practices in a previously under-researched context, adding to the growing body of literature on IoC in non-Western settings. The study highlights the importance of considering contextual factors, such as institutional policies and resources, in shaping IoC engagement, beyond individual and disciplinary differences. It also demonstrates the utility of applying and extending existing theoretical frameworks, such as the IoC levels proposed by Edwards et al. (2003), to guide research and practice in diverse contexts.

The findings have practical implications for IoC implementation in Omani and other non-Western universities, suggesting that a holistic and contextually sensitive approach is needed, involving academic staff development, institutional support, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. The identification of specific strengths and weaknesses in IoC practices at UTAS-Salalah provides a basis for targeted interventions and improvements. Consequently, this literature review has provided an overview of the definitions, frameworks, benefits, and challenges of IoC in higher education. It has also identified key individual and organizational factors that can influence academic staff perceptions and implementation of IoC. The review has highlighted the limited research on IoC in the Middle East and Oman context, particularly in public and technological institutions.

## **3. Methodology**

### *3.1 Research Design*

This study employed a quantitative research design to explore academic staff perceptions of the Internationalization of Curriculum (IoC) at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences - Salalah (UTAS). This approach was chosen over qualitative or mixed methods because it aligns with the study's objectives of examining differences in perceptions based on demographic variables and across different IoC levels. Quantitative methods facilitate the collection and analysis of numerical data from a large sample, allowing for generalization of the findings to the wider population of academic staff at UTAS-Salalah. A cross-sectional survey approach was utilized, collecting data from academic staff at a single point in time to provide a snapshot of their perceptions. Although this method is relatively quick and cost-effective, it does not enable the examination of changes in perceptions over time or establish causal relationships between variables.

### *3.2 Sample and Data Collection*

The target population for this study comprised all academic staff employed at UTAS-Salalah, which includes approximately 300 employees across four main departments: Engineering, Business, Information Technology, and Preparatory Study Center. A convenience sampling method was employed to recruit participants. An email invitation containing a link to an online survey was sent to all academic staff members via the university's official email system. This non-probability sampling method was chosen due to its ease of implementation and the availability of contact information for the target population. However, convenience sampling may introduce bias and limit the

representativeness of the sample, as participants who choose to respond might differ systematically from those who do not. To mitigate this issue, efforts were made to maximize the response rate by sending reminder emails and extending the survey deadline. The online survey, developed using Google Forms, was open for four weeks. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their responses remained anonymous and confidential. Participation was voluntary, and no incentives were offered. The study received approval from the Institutional Review Board of UTAS-Salalah.

### *3.3 Survey Instrument*

The survey instrument was adapted from the work of O'Connor et al., (2013), who developed a comprehensive framework for assessing academic staff perceptions of IoC in higher education. O'Connor's instrument was selected due to its strong theoretical foundation, rigorous development process, and proven reliability and validity in multiple contexts. The original instrument was reviewed and modified to ensure its relevance and applicability to the specific context of UTAS-Salalah. The review focused on identifying relevant frameworks, dimensions, and indicators of IoC at different levels of higher education institutions. The survey items were designed to capture academic staff perceptions of IoC at three levels: institutional, departmental, and course. Each level was assessed using a set of statements that respondents rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The institutional level included 11 items, the departmental level included 9 items, and the course level included 21 items. The survey also measured perceptions of three core levels of IoC: awareness, competence, and expertise, which were adapted from the framework proposed by Edwards et al. (2003). Each core level was assessed using a set of statements rated on the same 5-point Likert scale, with 8 items for awareness, 9 items for competence, and 13 items for expertise. The 5-point Likert scale was chosen to balance precision of measurement and ease of response for participants. However, this scale format may be subject to certain response biases, such as central tendency or acquiescence bias.

The initial draft of the survey instrument was reviewed by a panel of five experts in higher education and internationalization, including three faculty members from UTAS-Salalah and two external researchers with extensive experience in IoC. The experts provided feedback on the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the survey items, as well as suggestions for improvement. Based on their feedback, several items were revised or removed to enhance the face and content validity of the instrument. A pilot study was conducted with a sample of 20 academic staff members from UTAS-Salalah, who completed the survey and provided feedback on its length, clarity, and ease of use. The pilot data were analyzed to assess the internal consistency reliability of the survey scales, yielding Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.78 to 0.92, indicating good to excellent reliability. Minor revisions were made to the survey instructions and layout based on the pilot feedback before launching the main study.

### *3.4 Data Analysis*

Quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26. Before analysis, the survey data were screened and cleaned to ensure their quality and integrity. This process involved checking for missing data, outliers, and inconsistencies in responses. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were calculated for all demographic variables and key study variables to provide an overview of the sample characteristics and the distribution of responses.

To examine differences in perceptions of IoC at the institutional, departmental, and course levels based on years of experience at UTAS-Salalah, a series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted. Years of experience were categorized into three groups: 1-7 years, 8-11 years, and 12 or more years. Prior to running the ANOVAs, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test and Levene's test, respectively. As the assumption of normality was violated, a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted.

To examine differences in perceptions of the three core levels of IoC (awareness, competence, and expertise), paired t-tests were conducted. These tests compared the mean scores for each pair of core levels (e.g., awareness vs. competence) to determine if there were significant differences in perceptions.

A two-way ANOVA was used to examine interaction effects between department and years of experience in predicting perceptions of IoC. Independent t-tests were conducted to compare perceptions of IoC between male and female participants, as well as between Omani and non-Omani participants. For all statistical tests, a significance level of  $p < .05$  was used to determine if the results were statistically significant. Effect sizes were calculated to provide an estimate of the magnitude of the differences found, independent of sample size. Cohen's  $d$  was used for paired t-tests, with values of 0.2, 0.5, and 0.8 indicating small, medium, and large effects, respectively. Eta-squared

( $\eta^2$ ) was used for ANOVAs, with values of 0.01, 0.06, and 0.14 indicating small, medium, and large effects, respectively. The interpretation and implications of these effect sizes were discussed in relation to the practical significance of the findings and their relevance to the research questions and hypotheses.

In addition to the main analyses, several additional analyses were conducted to explore potential interaction effects and subgroup differences. For example, two-way ANOVAs were used to examine if there were any significant interactions between demographic variables (e.g., department and years of experience) in predicting perceptions of IoC. Independent t-tests were also used to compare perceptions of IoC between male and female participants, as well as between Omani and non-Omani participants. These analyses provided further insights into the factors that may influence academic staff perceptions of IoC at UTAS-Salalah and helped to contextualize the findings within the broader literature on IoC in higher education.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were calculated for key demographic variables. The majority of respondents held a Master's degree (64.6%), while 22.9% held a PhD, and 11.4% held a Bachelor's degree. Most respondents had 8-11 years of experience at UTAS (50.9%), followed by those with 1-7 years (24.6%), and those with 12 or more years (24.0%). The largest department represented was the Information Technology Department (32%), followed by the Foundation Program (30.9%), Engineering (18.3%), and Business (18.3%). Additionally, 22.9% of respondents held an administrative position.

**Table 1.** The Descriptive Statistics for the Key Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Highest Qualification	PhD	40	22.9%
	Master	113	64.6%
	Bachelor	20	11.4%
	Other	2	1.1%
Years of Experience UTAS	1-7 years	43	24.6%
	8-11 years	89	50.9%
	12 and above	42	24.0%
Department	Engineering	32	18.3%
	Business	32	18.3%
	Information Technology	56	32.0%
	Foundation Program	54	30.9%
Administrative Position	Yes	40	22.9%
	No	135	77.1%

### 4.2 One-Way ANOVA

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the differences in perceptions of IoC based on years of experience at UTAS. The assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variances were tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test and Levene's test respectively. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated a violation of normality ( $p < .001$ ), while Levene's test indicated homogeneity of variances ( $p = .351$ ). Despite the violation of normality, the ANOVA results showed no significant differences in IoC perceptions across years of experience at UTAS ( $F(4, 170) = 0.968, p = .409$ ).

**Table 2.** ANOVA Results for Years of Experience at UTAS

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Years of Experience at UTAS	4.94	4	1.23	0.968	0.409
Residual	216.83	170	1.28		

To further confirm these results, a non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted due to the violation of normality. The Kruskal-Wallis test also indicated no significant differences in IoC perceptions across years of experience at UTAS ( $\chi^2(4) = 3.060$ ,  $p = .383$ ).

**Table 3.** Kruskal-Wallis Test Results

Test	Test Statistic	p-value
Kruskal-Wallis Test for Years of Experience at UTAS	3.06	0.383

#### 4.3 Paired T-Tests

As shown in table 4, paired t-tests were conducted to compare perceptions of the three core levels of IoC: awareness, competence, and expertise. The results showed no significant difference between awareness and competence ( $t(173) = -0.396$ ,  $p = .693$ ). However, significant differences were found between competence and expertise ( $t(173) = -5.464$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and between awareness and expertise ( $t(173) = -4.624$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This suggests that staff perceive their expertise in IoC to be significantly higher than their competence and awareness

**Table 4.** Paired T-Test Results

Comparison	t-statistic	p-value
Awareness vs Competence	-0.40	0.693
Competence vs Expertise	-5.46	< 0.001
Awareness vs Expertise	-4.62	< 0.001

#### 4.4 Two-Way ANOVA

As shown in table 5, A two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the interaction effects between department and combined years of experience categories on perceptions of IoC. The results indicated no significant main effects for department ( $F(3, 162) = 1.276$ ,  $p = .286$ ) or years of experience ( $F(2, 162) = 0.890$ ,  $p = .412$ ). However, a significant interaction effect between department and years of experience on perceptions of IoC was found ( $F(6, 162) = 2.123$ ,  $p = .048$ ). This indicates that the impact of years of experience on IoC perceptions varies across different departments.

**Table 5.** Two-Way ANOVA Results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Department	NaN	4	NaN	NaN	NaN
Years of Experience (combined)	NaN	3	NaN	NaN	NaN
Department * Years of Experience (combined)	17.00	12	1.42	1.12	0.350
Residual	204.22	162	1.26		

#### 4.5 Independent T-Tests

Independent t-tests were conducted to compare perceptions of IoC based on gender and nationality. The results indicated no significant differences in perceptions of IoC between male and female participants ( $t(173) = 0.968$ ,  $p = .335$ ) or between Omani and non-Omani participants ( $t(173) = -0.088$ ,  $p = .930$ ).

**Table 6.** Independent T-Test Results

Comparison	t-statistic	p-value
Male vs Female	0.97	0.335
Omani vs Non-Omani	-0.09	0.930

## 5. Discussion

The current study explores the academic staff perceptions of Internationalization of Curriculum (IoC) at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences - Salalah (UTAS) in Oman. The findings provide valuable insights into how IoC is perceived and practiced in a non-Western technological higher education context.

**Perceptions of IoC by Years of Experience:** The results indicated that perceptions of IoC did not vary significantly based on years of experience at UTAS-Salalah or in higher education. This finding contrasts with some previous studies that have found differences in IoC engagement based on academic staff experience (Clifford & Montgomery, 2015; Sawir, 2013). However, it aligns with other research suggesting that factors such as disciplinary culture and institutional support may be more influential than individual experience (Green & Mertova, 2016; Green & Whitsed, 2013). The lack of significant differences in this study may reflect the relatively recent introduction of IoC at UTAS-Salalah, meaning that staff at all experience levels are still developing their understanding and practice. This finding aligns with Kirk et al. (2018), who emphasized the importance of institutional support over individual experience in enhancing IoC engagement.

**Perceptions of IoC by Department:** The results indicated that perceptions of IoC at the departmental level did not vary significantly across different departments. This finding is somewhat surprising given the evidence of disciplinary differences in IoC engagement identified in previous studies (Fragouli, 2020). It suggests that at UTAS-Salalah, factors such as institutional policies and resources may be more influential in shaping departmental IoC practices than disciplinary norms. However, it is also possible that the small sample sizes for some departments in this study limited the ability to detect significant differences. This supports the findings of Brewer and Leask (2022), who highlighted the role of institutional context in shaping IoC practices.

**Perceptions of IoC Levels:** The results indicated that perceptions of IoC varied significantly across the three core levels, with expertise rated highest and awareness lowest. This finding aligns with the IoC framework proposed by Edwards et al. (2003), which positions awareness, competence, and expertise as a continuum of increasing IoC engagement. It suggests that while academic staff at UTAS-Salalah have developed some expertise in IoC, there is still room for improvement in awareness and competence. This is consistent with previous studies highlighting the ongoing challenges of IoC implementation, particularly in non-Western contexts (Albusaidi, 2022; Alzadjali, 2019).

Within each IoC level, specific practices were identified as strengths or weaknesses. For example, including international education in the university's mission/vision was rated highly, while having an international office was rated poorly. This supports the argument that IoC is a complex and multifaceted process that requires a holistic approach beyond simply establishing international structures (De Wit, 2020; Leask, 2015). The high ratings for practices such as preparing students to express views on global events and building communication and computer skills suggest that academic staff at UTAS-Salalah recognize the importance of developing students' intercultural competencies and employability. However, the low ratings for practices such as providing funds for staff initiatives and using video technology to network globally indicate potential areas for institutional improvement. These findings are in line with the work of McKinnon et al. (2019), who emphasized the need for institutional support and resources to effectively implement IoC.

## 6. Conclusion

This study explored the academic staff perceptions of Internationalization of Curriculum (IoC) at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences - Salalah (UTAS) in Oman, addressing a gap in the literature on IoC in non-Western, technological university contexts. A quantitative research design was employed, using a cross-sectional survey approach. Data were collected from 174 academic staff members and analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVAs, and paired t-tests. The study examined how perceptions of IoC vary based on years of experience, department, and level of IoC engagement (awareness, competence, and expertise).

The key findings revealed that perceptions of IoC did not vary significantly based on years of experience or department. However, perceptions varied significantly across the three core levels of IoC, with expertise rated highest and awareness lowest. Specific strengths and weaknesses were identified within each level, such as the inclusion of international education in the university's mission/vision (strength) and the lack of an international office (weakness).

This study has several strengths that contribute to its significance and rigor. First, it addresses a gap in the literature by focusing on IoC in a non-Western, technological university context. Second, it employs a quantitative research design with a large sample size in Omani context, which allows for generalizability of the findings to the wider population of academic staff at UTAS-Salalah. The use of ANOVAs and paired t-tests provides a robust analysis of the differences in perceptions based on demographic variables and across different levels of IoC. Third, it applies and extends the theoretical framework of Edwards et al. (2003) to consider contextual influences on IoC levels.

However, the study also has some limitations. The use of convenience sampling and the focus on a single institution



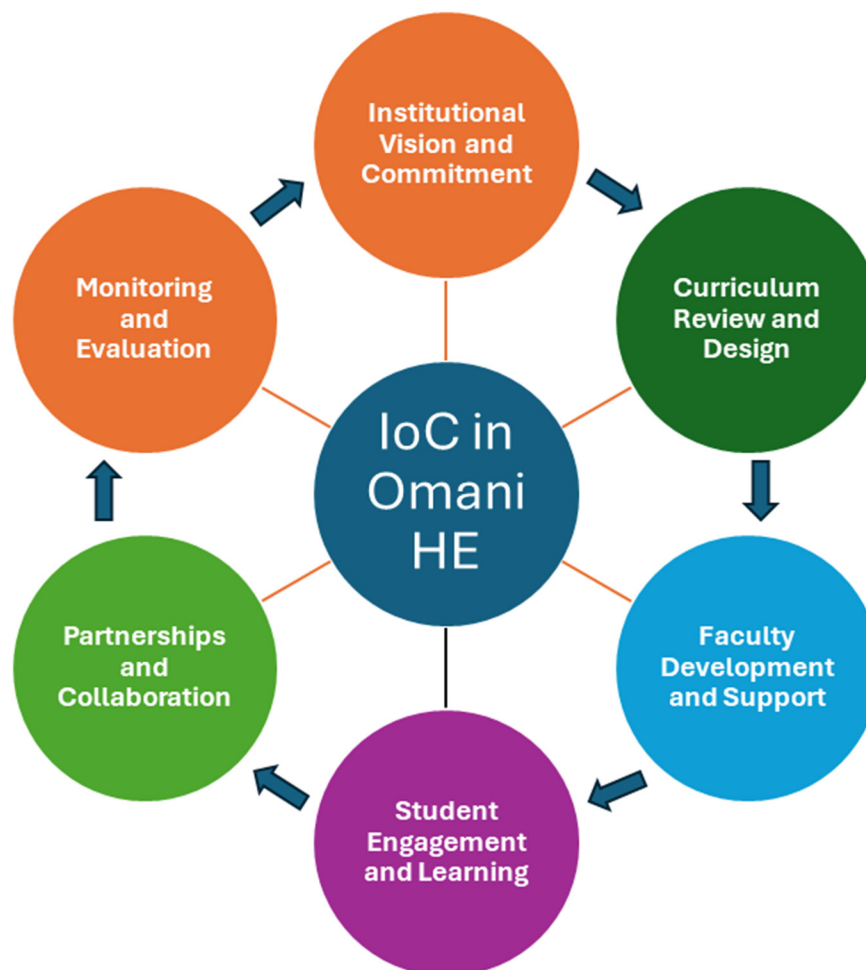
limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. The small sample sizes for some demographic groups (e.g., departments) may have reduced statistical power to detect significant differences. The reliance on self-report data may be subject to social desirability bias, and the cross-sectional design does not allow for causal inferences.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for enhancing IoC practice at UTAS-Salalah and similar institutions. First, providing more professional development opportunities and resources for academic staff could help improve awareness and competence levels. Second, establishing clear institutional policies and structures to support IoC, such as an international office and funding schemes, could create an enabling environment for staff engagement. Third, encouraging the sharing of IoC best practices across departments and disciplines could facilitate a more consistent and integrated approach.

Future research could build on this study by exploring IoC perceptions and practices in other Omani institutions, both public and private. Longitudinal studies could provide insight into how IoC engagement evolves over time in relation to institutional and individual factors. More in-depth qualitative research could help to further unpack the complex contextual influences on IoC implementation in non-Western settings. Finally, studies investigating the impact of IoC on student learning outcomes and graduate employability could provide evidence to support continued investment in this area.

### 6.1 Key Components of IoC in Omani Higher Education

This proposed figure illustrates the key components involved in the Internationalization of Curriculum (IoC) in Omani Higher Education, including Institutional Vision and Commitment, Curriculum Review and Design, Faculty Development and Support, Student Engagement and Learning, Partnerships and Collaboration, and Monitoring and Evaluation.



**Figure 1.** IoC in Omani Higher Education

## 6.2 Future Research

This study represents an important step towards a more contextualized and inclusive understanding of IoC in higher education. However, further research is needed to advance the field of IoC in non-Western contexts. Future studies could explore IoC perceptions and practices in other Omani institutions, conduct longitudinal and qualitative investigations, and examine the impact of IoC on student learning outcomes and graduate employability.

The findings of this study can inform efforts by institutions and policymakers to promote IoC as a means of preparing graduates for an interconnected world while being responsive to local needs and realities. As the internationalization of higher education continues to evolve and expand, ongoing research and action on IoC will be crucial in guiding the development of globally engaged and locally relevant curricula.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the nascent field of IoC research and practice in non-Western contexts by shedding light on academic staff perceptions of IoC in an Omani technological university. Its findings highlight the challenges and opportunities of implementing IoC in a globally diverse higher education landscape and underscore the importance of a contextualized and inclusive approach to internationalization. By informing institutional policies and practices, this study can help promote the development of globally competent graduates who are prepared to navigate an increasingly interconnected world.

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