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Governance and Academic Culture in Higher Education: Under the Influence of the SSCI Syndrome

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Abstract: *The trend towards neo-liberal policies which began in the 1980s has caused public finances around the world to be linked to market forces rather than state allocation. In consequence, the sharp reduction in public funding allotted to the education sector has affected both social values and educational quality. With the growing influence of globalization on higher education, many East Asian nations have enacted urgent university reforms designed to boost competitiveness of their domestic university systems. China's Projects 211 and 985; South Korea's BK21; Japan's National University Corporation Plan; and Taiwan's 'Five Year-Fifty Billion Plan have all been initiated in response to the process of globalization and the demand for global talent in academia. Elsewhere, governments in the Arab Middle East, the Americas, Europe, East and Southeast Asia have all initiated new policies to enhance the global competitiveness and international visibility of their flagship universities, and many of these focus in an unprecedented away on journal publication as the major performance criterion for faculty reward. The increasing extent to which government policies worldwide favour measurements derived from publication indexes such as SCI/SSCI has led to strengthened managerial governance over academic culture and the academic profession itself. This paper argues that a phenomenon of 'publish globally and perish locally' has emerged, especially in the humanities and social sciences which are most vulnerable to 'SSCI Syndrome', and that this trend is detrimental to academic effectiveness and diversity.*

Keywords: *academic culture, academic publication, governance, neo-liberalism, SSCI syndrome*

Introduction

Across the globe, public sector investment in education since the 1980s has been increasingly linked to the business and market sectors, rather than being directly allocated by state organs (Baker and Wiseman, 2008). In New Zealand (Roberts, 2009), Australia (Connell, 2013), Canada (Capano, 2015), and many countries in Latin America (Rhoads, Torres and Brewster, 2015), education funding has been transformed into a neoliberal model. Consequently, there has been a sharp reduction in budgets for education and social welfare in particular, which has had significant negative impact on education quality. As the influence of globalization has reached higher education, many countries not only in East Asia but elsewhere have adopted university reforms (Baker and Wiseman, 2008; Shin and Harman, 2009) to meet the new demands. National governments have adopted various benchmarking strategies and new forms of academic governance for their flagship universities in order to enhance their global competitiveness and international visibility (Chou, Lin and Chiu 2013), some of which have caused unprecedented changes to academic culture. Development programmes have been developed in response to globalization and the drive toward global competitiveness (Hazelkorn, 2008)

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which include: China's Project 211 and Project 985 (Yang and Welch, 2012); South Korea's Brain Korea 21 (BK21) Project (1999–2012), World-Class University (WCU) Project (2008–2013), and BK21 Plus Project (2013¬–2019); Taiwan's Five Year Fifty Billion Plan; Japan's National University Corporation Plan and Global 30 Program; and most recently Indonesia's World Class University (WCU) Program.

The author contends that the quest for global recognition has driven a new phenomenon of 'publish globally or perish locally', especially in the humanities and social sciences. The metrics of 'world class' status come at the expense of academic autonomy, effectiveness, justice, and diversity and is increasingly transforming university teaching into a second-class academic career behind research (Bentley, Goedegebuure and Meek, 2014). This study details several areas of policy change in Taiwan as a case study: the governance of education policy; the 'academic drift' resulting from a divergence between the new managerial criteria and traditional academic ones; the new systems of higher education financing at national and institutional levels; new evaluation systems for faculty which emphasize quantitative measures of research performance; and a flexible salary system which incentivizes the mass-production of research for journal publication above all other academic endeavour. It then examines the effects of SSCI Syndrome (Chou, 2014) on academic cultures around the world which have resulted from increased reliance on quantitative bibliometric measures in staff performance evaluations, tenure, promotion decisions, and salary awards (Bentley, Goedegebuure and Meek, 2014; Erkkilä, 2014; Dill and Soo, 2005).

The paper concludes that these systems have been implemented by authorities in both developing and developed nations with the good policy intention of improving quality and responsiveness but that they have had unintended and unexpected negative impacts (Arimoto, 2011; Locke, 2011). Academics in all disciplines and geographic regions have encountered similar problems resulting from the over-reliance on quantitative measures of journal publication (Morphew and Swanson, 2011), with those in the social sciences and humanities most negatively affected. These experiences provide important lessons for policy-making.

The SSCI Syndrome

Recent reforms of university governance policy resulted from the massification of higher education systems coupled with constrained public funding. A growing worldwide consensus on neoliberal, market-based reforms and the increased focus on international competition in higher education have had a dramatic effect on Taiwan's academic culture. Policies intended to promote quality and productivity have instead led to an intense focus by both institutions and individual academics on meeting quantitative metrics of journal publication, often at the expense of wider academic endeavours. This increasingly-narrow focus is what the author terms Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) Syndrome (Chou, 2014).

Origins

Citation indices were developed as tools for information retrieval to allow users to trace the adoption of scientific ideas by linking original research to citations and identifying topics of interest through a search of historic literature. Subsequently, they have been pressed into service beyond their original intended purpose (Thomson Reuters 2008; Garfield 1994a; Garner 1967; Price 1965) to provide proxy measures of the global impact of individual articles on the global research community. The role was further developed to evaluate and rank the performance of individual journals (Garfield, 2007) and today indicators derived from these indices are commonly used to measure the quality and impact of research and the performance of individual scholars. The most commonly-used indicators are derived from the Science Citation Index (SCI), Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI), and Engineering Index (EI) citation index databases owned by Thomson Reuters, a private, for-profit company from the United States whose data underpins several commonly-used university ranking systems.

Major universities in the English-speaking world have long used this data to measure their research output and faculty performance, particularly in science and engineering departments. However, these purely-quantitative measures serve only as proxy measures for quality; in theory, long-standing but now refuted research will still score well on quantitative measures, while the work which replaced it will score poorly until it gains widespread acceptance. Additionally, the mass-production of papers on popular but unoriginal themes may be rewarded by purely quantitative measures over painstaking, long-term devotion to a single piece of ground-breaking research.

The neo-liberal agenda of governments has been complemented by demand from students, parents, employers, academics and administrators for data-driven rankings which will allow them to compare objectively institutional performance (Garfield, 2007; Williams and Dyke 2004). In most cases, the requirement for objective measurement has skewed the criteria for institutional rankings heavily towards quantitative indicators of research output as the determinants of 'global excellence.' In the controversial 'Academic Ranking of World Universities' published by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, for example, the main indicator of research quality is the number of articles published in the natural science-focused SCI Expanded and SSCI, and has a weight of 20% (Institute of Higher Education 2012). Similarly, in "Asia's Best Universities", published by Asia Week, an important indicator of research performance is citations in those academic journals tracked by the Journal Citation Index (Asia Week, 2000). Citation data from the Essential Science Indicators of Thomson Reuters are also used in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings published in the U.K. (Ching, 2014) where they account for 30% of the overall score for an institution; while the Quacarelli-Symonds (QS) rankings assume respondents to their academic reputation survey (40% of the total score) to be more familiar with the research outputs of other institutions than their teaching. As a result, 'best' research is increasingly conflated with that published in natural sciences journals and indexed in the Citation Indexes.

Higher education institutions around the world have been eager to increase their research output in order to rank higher globally. Countries that have viewed the issue with a particular urgency are often non-English-speaking emerging economies that have the potential to achieve these aims, have centralized education systems, have placed heavy emphasis on education historically, and have prioritized achieving national development by increasing global economic competitiveness. Although these neo-liberal values have been the driving influence for many countries, the globalization of scientific knowledge has also been an important factor. As knowledge in the natural and applied sciences (as opposed to the humanities and social sciences) has become globalized, scientific discoveries, inventions, or other findings require appraisal in the context of a body of knowledge that is international in scope. Because national boundaries have become increasingly irrelevant in the natural and applied sciences and researchers in these fields tend to benefit from the pressure to publish more than their peers, it could be suggested that the SSCI Syndrome is less problematic for these fields. For the humanities and social sciences, the impacts are much more severe. Traditionally, researchers in these fields have been able to focus on social and cultural phenomena that are local in scope and significance. Research in the humanities and social sciences can generate awareness and knowledge of local issues and has the potential to bring about solutions to local challenges. However, such research is much less likely to be considered for publication by journals under pressure to include articles with the potential to garner the most citations.

Global Impacts

The trend towards linking faculty rewards and performance criteria to indexed-journal publication has become globally-dominant over the last decade in nearly all academic disciplines (Bentley, Goedegebuure and Meek, 2014). In the USA, selection committees will increasingly take the impact factors of a candidate's research into account when dealing with hiring and promotion (Guthrie et al., 2012; Ortinau, 2011; KSB, 2010; Woodside, 2009; Reed, 1995). Indeed the prevalence of these metrics prompted The American Society for Cell Biology to propose a 'Code of Conduct' in December

2012 to stop 'impact factors' being used to judge individual performance (Alberts, 2013). Australia and the United Kingdom have used lists of 'approved' journals in assessing academia since the 1990s (Beattie and Goodacre, 2012). A study by The Australian Research Council concluded that the promotion prospects of faculty with strong research backgrounds surpass those who focus solely on teaching (Bentley, Goedegebuure and Meek, 2014). With the focus on ranking in the top 100 global universities, some Australian institutions have been driven to extremes of behaviour even when they only account for a small percentage of overall enrolments. The UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF) rates the research performance of universities and departments, and contributes to the allocation of research funding (Research Excellence Framework, 2014).

Spanish universities have begun using the number and impact of journal articles as factors in selection for promotion; in Italy, similar mechanisms have been introduced to complement the existing, less objective hiring process (Cameron, 2005); the Netherlands introduced SSCI indicators into their national science and technology assessments in the mid-1990s (de Weert and van der Kaap, 2011); Turkey adopted Institute for Scientific Information (ISI)-indexed publications as a component of its promotion and appointment system; and in Chile the top five research universities have dominated public funding since the early 1980s as a result of their performance in ISI-indexed publications (Altbach and Balán, 2007).

In China, Project 211 and Project 985 aimed to establish one hundred leading universities, research centres, and disciplines across China in the 21st century by developing a group of HEIs that can compete for the upper tiers of university rankings (Li and Tian, 2014; Li, 2010). As a result, quantitative academic publication indicators are a top priority for these universities, as measured by (1) the number of publications and/or (2) the number of SCI, EI, or SSCI journal articles. The impact factors of these journals have also become major criteria and sometimes vary between different disciplines (Li and Tian, 2014; Tang, 2008).

In Hong Kong, there is a long tradition of English-language publication in all HEIs resulting from the colonial period. SCI, SSCI, and EI are used as core indicators for faculty hiring, promotion, and reward; and many amongst the highly-internationalized faculty there see university rankings and impact factors as a way to promote further integration in the 'global' academic system (Li and Tian, 2014). South Africa operates a reward system where academics who publish in certain journals receive a bonus the equivalent of $12,000 USD per article. The journals approved the Department of Higher Education and Training for this purpose are exclusively ones accredited by ISI and the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) and they have been deliberately chosen as criteria for promotion purposes (Soudien, 2014). Professors in Pakistan are driven to achieve 'kill counts' regardless of ethical or moral considerations (Hoodbhoy, 2013); while across the Arab Middle East, academic governance has adopted a 'dependency path' on research publication in international journals (Baporikar, 2014; Hanafi, 2011).

These policies demonstrate that university officials worldwide have adopted policies for staff evaluation which emphasize the number of journal publications and their journal impact factors (Cummings and Shin, 2011) to incentivize academics into producing the sorts of research necessary to improve their university's international rankings; while academic staff have responded by increasingly seeing journal publication as the most important factor in a successful academic career. The use of publications in a few indexed journals as explicit criteria for promotion have greatly influenced academic cultures around the globe and consequently, has resulted in each country's academia developing a more compartmentalized research elite whose research aims towards acceptance by these journals and consequently lacks social responsiveness or local relevancy (Hanafi, 2011).

The widening debate in Japan over university internationalization highlights another detrimental effect of the pursuit of rankings. Ishikawa (2014; 2009) examines how the dependence on certain dominant models of research publication in academia has affected non-Western, non-English language universities. In Japan, pressure to achieve the world-class university status via rankings has challenged university traditions regarding national language education, the nature of research, and human resource self-sufficiency. The new Western academic models of research publication

threaten domestic academic hierarchies (sciences vs. humanities), autonomy of research, and the dynamics within institution. South Korea too has embraced rankings as a means to foster the rank and international visibility of their prestigious universities but while programs such as BK21 have dramatically boosted the number of publications in indexed journals, citation rates remain low (Suh, 2013; Michalski, Kołodziej and Piasecka, n.d.).

Higher Education Policy Changes in Taiwan

Expansion

Taiwan's HE governance reforms reflect global trends. Prior to 1994, higher education was heavily controlled by the state as a tool of national economic development and political stability (Mok, 2014). The mid-1990s saw a period of unprecedented expansion in Taiwan's higher education system in response to intensified global economic competition, a series of domestic political elections and rapid social change, resulting in the second highest rate of enrolment by the 18-22-year-old age cohort in the world, after South Korea (MOE, 2013). As a result, public spending on HEIs became relatively limited and the Ministry of Education (MOE) launched a series of new governance policies to hasten the deregulation, decentralization, democratization, and internationalization of the HE sector. The University Law, as amended in 1994, transformed governance of the sector to a more autonomous one which granted increased freedom in admissions, staffing, and fee policies (Mok, 2014; Chou and Ching, 2012). In return, HEIs were expected to become more competitive and responsive to individual, social and global demands.

However, the rapid expansion had several unexpected consequences. A significant enabler of the expansion was the upgrading of vocational/technical colleges to university status which caused them to abandon their original vocational and technical focus (Chou, 2008; Hayhoe, 2002). The introduction of market competition mechanisms accelerated the uneven distribution of resources between the public and private sectors and elite/non-elite institutions; and led to increasing social stratification of Taiwanese society (Chou and Wang 2012; Chen and Chen 2009). Taiwan's MOE responded by launching a further series reforms, including new university finance plans, revised university evaluation systems, and flexible salaries for academic staff at public universities (MOE, 2009), all of which set the stage for a sea-change in the ways in which academic careers were pursued.

The current public funding allocation systems emphasize 'global excellence' as measured by international rankings and have thus introduced a mechanism whereby university budgets are directly linked to the success of their faculty in producing large quantities of the sort of research accepted by journals used in the major citation indexes.

Evaluation and Remuneration Systems

The 2003 revision to the University Law stipulated routine external evaluations by the Higher Education and Accreditation Council as the main mechanisms for allocating funding and assuring quality in Higher Education (Wu, 2009). These included an internal and external evaluation system designed to monitor the publication rates of individual academics and used as their data source the Thomson-Reuters citation indices, SCI, SSCI, A&HCI, and EI. This was done in an effort to promote outward-looking scholarship which conformed to international standards and thus to increase the levels of awards and scholarly recognition but has shaped academic behaviour through establishing these metrics as the key criteria for hiring, promotion and salary. The aim of the plan was twofold: to retain the best local talent while also attracting overseas staff to Taiwan and it allows faculty salaries to be topped up from funds directed at improving international excellence such as the "Five Year Fifty Billion Plan" and the Teaching Excellence Award, which given in three-year intervals from 2005.

The results have been an unequal spread of salary increases between faculty of the sciences and those in the humanities/social sciences; between elite institutions and others; between public and

private institutions; and between individual academics focusing on research and on teaching (Chou and Ching, 2012; Yeh, Cheng and Chen, 2009). In a study of publication trends in two departments of National Chengchi University, the author found significant divergence between faculty hired under the new probation and evaluation system and those under older contracts. There was also evidence that academic discipline influenced both publication rates and medium of publication.

As Table 1 shows, the trend in publication had remained quite constant in both departments before 2003, when there were no policy incentives to publish in English or in key journals. After these were introduced, professors in Education started to publish more journal articles: for example, one senior professor, A, published 8 journal articles between 1993 and 2013, with 7 published after 2003: nearly 90% of his publication output took place between 2003 and 2013. The Five-year-fifty Billion Plan may have thus played a major role in shaping trends in journal publication in Education.

Table 1. Publication Rates in Two Departments at NCCU.

Year	Ethnography	Education
1993	0.78	1.48
2003	0.78	1.67
2013	1.3	4.17

All publications from Education were in Chinese in 1993 and 2003, but after 2003 this declined from 100% to 74% and publication in English language became increasingly prominent in Education. On the other hand, academic staff in Ethnography continued to publish in Chinese throughout the period and publication rates remained comparatively low throughout period of the survey (1.3 papers per person in 2013). Promotion rates at all academic ranks were also static over the last two decades. Only 28.3% of publication from the Department of Ethnology was with Taiwanese publishers in 1993, but this number soared to 71.4% in both 2003 and 2013. In contrast, academics at the Department of Education mainly published in Taiwan before 2003, and afterwards in other regions (26% in 2013).

Professor B specializes in Educational statistics and assessment and has been working since 1993. He has published 127 journal articles, among which 65 out of 127 were published between 2003 and 2013 (51.2% of his total research output). Another senior faculty, C, entered in 1992 and specialized in educational philosophy but has published only 41 journal articles up to 2013, a much lower rate than B. The results also support the contention that the academic culture in Taiwan uses “promotion” as the main incentive to stimulate journal publication regardless of discipline. The proportion of faculty who remained at the same rank in Ethnography outnumbered their counterparts in Education, indicating a correlation between research output and promotion success in these two departments.

Discussion

Despite the government’s best efforts to encourage academic excellence and improve university rankings, the highly-quantitative evaluation indicators used have had negative effects on higher education around the globe. As the importance of journal publication recognized by citation databases increased, SSCI Syndrome has permeated academic culture. Academics, especially junior ones, are forced to accept that journal publication is of paramount importance from both a personal and institutional perspective, and the “publish or perish” mindset prevails.

Publication figures are increasingly used as major criteria in university evaluation systems and thus influence the approval of research grants, university status, the granting of tenure, promotion, and even the awarding of government funding (Kao and Pao, 2009). Not surprisingly, these assessment

standards have led scholars to narrow their focus, especially in the humanities and social sciences, and to emphasize publication in English-language international journals, instead local languages. The need to have research accepted by a relatively small number of editor-gatekeepers has led to a preference for topics preferred by international journals over those with local relevance addressing national needs (Ching, 2014; Ishikawa, 2009; Chen and Qian, 2004).

Moreover, there is considerable divergence between disciplines regarding expectations of publication. The emphasis placed on journal publication ignores the different characteristics of academic disciplines and has drawn complaints from professors in those departments who feel the criteria discriminate against them. The rationale for these evaluation procedures was to improve research quality but the metrics used do not account for the diverse natures of subjects or their social and cultural contexts (IREG, 2010). If citation indexes are to be applied fairly as metrics of academic success, each field should be scrutinized in light of its own unique circumstances in order to identify truly excellent scholarly work.

However, despite the purely-bibliographic purpose of citation indexes, university administrators and public funding agencies continue to employ them when hiring, promoting, and funding faculty (Kokko and Sutherland, 1999; Bauer and Bakkalbasi, 2005), a phenomenon evident in the many countries discussed above. There is, however, increasing scepticism about the utility of these tools to evaluate research performance (Bentley, Goedegebuure and Meek, 2014; Locke, 2011; Hazelkorn, 2008) and concern of the side effects of their use beyond the original intent. Even the founder of Thomson Reuters' Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), Eugene Garfield, holds that reading each article for its quality is actually essential for a reliable evaluation system despite its inevitably subjective nature (Garfield, 1994b). While citation rates can act as proxies for the impact of a piece of scholarship, (Lawani and Bayer, 1983), citation indices themselves are increasingly viewed as less than objective. Many underlying assumptions are deemed to no longer hold true in today's globalized academia, in particular that the influence of ISI-indexed journals is overstated and that the very word 'global' conceals the highly-localised master journal list (Cruz, 2007). The SSCI, SCIE, A&HCI, and EI are all dominated by English-language journals focusing on topics deemed of relevance in the major English-speaking countries, which introduces a significant language barrier and raises questions about the cultural irrelevancy of their publications to the majority of the world's nations. Although some research in the hard sciences can rely on the universal language of mathematics and scientific concepts, the humanities and social sciences lack such recourse. Li and Tian (2014) demonstrated that SSCI Syndrome has had a discriminatory effect of local publication and has served to reinforce the academic hegemony of native English-speaking countries.

These results are confirmed in the case of Taiwan where SSCI Syndrome has served to entrench the privileged status of the English language within the local academic community. Despite the vast majority of Taiwan's scholars and researchers being non-native speakers, the policies promulgated by government and university authorities themselves have encouraged them to align with and participate in the international academic community regardless of discipline and academic background. Higher Education policy-makers still believe that participating in a hegemonic English-based knowledge industry will allow Taiwan to be a voice from the periphery and bring about a paradigm shift within the local academic community (Liu, 2014; Wu and Bristow, 2014). However, unlike the natural sciences, humanities and social sciences deal in highly-local social and cultural issues and are expected to produce culturally responsive, locally-relevant research which addresses the needs of their local communities. The establishment of culturally-responsive, locally-grounded evaluation criteria for these disciplines is essential not just for the livelihoods of present academics and the hopes of attracting future generations to these fields, but in order to maintain the link between scholarly endeavour and the commonweal.

Many aspects of the situation in Taiwan are mirrored in other countries, but there are local variations in the ways these societies have responded to pressure for international rankings (Chou, 2014; Ishikawa, 2014; Li and Tian, 2014; Soudien, 2014). These mainly focus on the way they have institutionalized the so-called "Global Governance by Indicators" (Li and Tian, 2014). Despite the

increasing resistance in the last few decades from academics around the world, English-language research for publication in English-medium journals is now more encouraged than ever by hiring, reward and promotion mechanisms in Higher Education. Although the debate on the influence of global rankings is ongoing, government policies continue to dominate higher education with the single-minded pursuit of university rankings and other signs of international recognition.

Conclusion

The case studies in this paper indicate that higher education has been affected by the SSCI Syndrome in many different ways depending on the local and national contexts (Ishikawa, 2014). Globalization, the neoliberal shift, and the standardization of knowledge in the hard sciences have all contributed to these developments, and many education systems have been subject to the same dominating trend towards pursuing university rankings (Post and Chou, 2016). With the influence of the SSCI Syndrome having become pervasive in education systems and institutions around the world, several conclusions can be drawn as a result.

On the domestic level, increased reliance has been placed on quantitative bibliometric indicators in deciding faculty evaluations, including tenure, promotions, and salary. This trend is evident across all academic disciplines. Faculty members of widely-different fields have encountered similar changes in how they are evaluated, although the impact of these systemic changes may differ by discipline. In particular, those in the social sciences and humanities may be more negatively affected by over-reliance on quantitative indicators of journal article publication, owing to the specific natures of their fields.

On the international level, the non-English speaking world has been neglected and affected by language barriers due to the hegemony of the English language and the 'gatekeeper effect' exercised by editors of indexed international journals (Chou and Cherry, 2017). This trend is not limited to specific geographic areas. The evidence indicates that universities and governments in both advanced economies and developing countries have implemented similar systems for evaluation in pursuit of objectivity, competition, and 'global excellence.' For the most part, these changes were driven by good intentions but the actual impacts are often not as positive as anticipated.

Governance of higher education under the influence of the SSCI syndrome has altered academic culture across the globe. The impacts are mixed, but enduring, especially in the humanities and social sciences, where research outcomes are more culture-bound and require greater relevance to local society than in the physical and natural sciences.

These conclusions suggest that a critical review should be undertaken of current policies emphasizing a reliance on SCI and SSCI indexed journals. There are several possibilities in this regard. One policy option would be to eliminate the publication standards that emphasize quantity and impact as determined by bibliometric indices, replacing them with peer assessments of the work done by professors and researchers. This would have the benefits of placing greater value on achievements besides journal article publications and encouraging research with visible benefits for local communities. The drawbacks of such an approach are many, as it is time-consuming, costly, subjective, and would inevitably lead to resistance and appeals by those who did not benefit from the system.

Another possible solution would be the creation of a citation database for international journals specifically focusing on the Taiwan context. There should be a balance in the importance given to the impact factors from local and international citation indexes (Cheng, Jacob and Yang, 2013). It may also be worthwhile to expand the dimensionalities of citation indexes and value different types of academic endeavours as an alternative means of administering comprehensive evaluations of programmes in the social sciences and the humanities (Chou, Lin and Chiu, 2013).

Yet another policy option would be for governments to allow higher education institutions greater autonomy in determining their own evaluation criteria. This could encourage institutions to specialize in certain fields, seek out their own competitive advantage, and allow them to excel within

that specialization both locally and globally. However, this policy option would likely only be feasible in more decentralized education systems, complicate the process of government funds allocation to higher education, and lead to intense domestic competition between certain institutions.

A final policy option would be for quantitative indicators to be used to more comprehensively evaluate professor and researcher contributions beyond the narrow focus on indexed journal article publications. Evaluations could include the three categories that have traditionally been the goal of higher education – research, teaching, and service – and the relative weight given to each could vary depending on the field. This would encourage individuals to more broadly engage in their own field, focus on their own particular interests and strengths, and ensure that local needs are not overshadowed by the drive to publish in international journals. Although the approach would require an ongoing process of adjustment and would inevitably lead to some seeking to game the system, as is the case with current evaluation systems, it would likely be palatable for policymakers as well as professors and researchers of all fields.

Needless to say, any evaluation system must take the local context into account, and there is no one-size-fits-all system that would be universally applicable and fair for all countries or institutions. As higher education institutions and their professors and researchers grapple with the pressures of the SSCI syndrome, they will need to work with governments and other institutions to find a suitable balance that helps to achieve the aims of the government, which is often a major source of funding; the educational institutions; and individuals, including academics and students within those institutions as well as those from local communities.

Notes

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The Road Ahead for the Higher Education Sector in Vietnam

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Abstract: *Vietnam's higher education sector, which has expanded dramatically over the past 20 years, has now reached a point where it is ready to become more research-oriented and better networked internationally. There are, however, aspects of the sector that remain desperately in need of further reform. This paper provides a contemporary review of the state of the higher education sector in Vietnam. It is written from the perspective of the sector's need to become more research-focused and more internationally engaged. The paper identifies specific challenges for the sector. It also presents a glimpse of what the future of the sector might entail.*

Keywords: *Vietnam, higher education, universities, academic culture, academic identity, policy challenges*

Introduction

Vietnam has been the site of a remarkable economic transformation over the past 30 years. Sustained high rates of economic growth, together with a firm national resolve to eliminate poverty, have enabled the economy not only to achieve 'lower middle income' status on the World Bank's global classification of national economies, but also to reduce its poverty rate from almost 60% in the mid-1980s to less than 14% currently (World Bank, 2013; 2017). With continuing strong economic growth, and with a continuing determination to eliminate poverty, Vietnam will almost certainly attain 'high income' status on the World Bank's classification system by 2035 (World Bank, 2016).

Over this period, the higher education sector in Vietnam has also made extraordinary progress. The size of the sector has been increasing at a dramatic pace since at least the early 1990s. The gross enrolment rate in tertiary education (mainly comprised of higher education), which was very small in the early 1990s, and which in 1999 was only 10.59%, reached 28.84% in 2013 (UNESCO, 2017). There are now more than 2.2 million higher education students in Vietnam, and there are as many as 442 universities and colleges (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), 2016). Improvements in the quality of the sector are evident. An intensive building program since the early 2000s has resulted in significant improvements in the quality of higher education infrastructure. Research productivity is now also showing strong improvement, especially in the natural and applied sciences. And there has been a marked improvement over recent years in the qualifications profile of members of academic staff. However, many challenges remain. Vietnam aspires to have a more research-oriented higher education sector; but to achieve this goal there will need to be an intensification of the pace of reform.

Our purpose in this paper is to identify those aspects of the higher education sector where more rapid progress is urgently required. The paper begins with a brief review of the sector's history. Aspects of the sector that are delaying its development are then identified and discussed. These include: governance, funding, research and research training, academic standards, graduate

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unemployment, internationalisation, and conditions of academic employment. Finally, a glimpse of what the future might hold for Vietnam's higher education sector is briefly sketched.

The paper builds on a developing literature concerning the higher education sector in Vietnam (see, for example, Dao and Hayden, 2015; Harman, Hayden and Pham Thanh Nghi, 2010; Hayden and Ly, 2015; Pham Thi Ly and Hayden, 2015; Tran Thi Ly et al., 2014). The paper focuses primarily on the public higher education sector, which accounts for about 86% of all higher education enrolments (MOET, 2016). The private higher education sector remains mainly teaching-oriented. Though there are exceptions, private higher education institutions tend not to be as well regarded in Vietnam as their public-sector counterparts.

The Sector's History

Confucian academies, first established in the 11th century, played an important role in Vietnamese society for almost 900 years. They provided an educated class from which mandarins responsible for the country's governance could be selected (MOET, 2004; Pham Minh Hac, 1995). They also, as London (2011) explains: ". . . imbued much of the country's population with respect for intellectual tradition and certain methods of learning" (p.8). However, these academies catered for a social elite, and they were extremely narrow in terms of their curriculum.

The academies began disappearing during the late 19th century. By the early 20th century, they were replaced altogether by a French colonial system of *Coll***è***ges*. These new higher education institutions, established to serve the needs of the colonial administration, were also selective and exclusive, but, unlike the Confucian academies, they admitted female students, though in small numbers. The focus of their training programs also aligned much more appropriately with the contemporary technological and cultural needs of Vietnamese society. Over the first quarter of the 20th century, institutes specialising in areas of business, medicine, pharmacy, engineering, the arts, and so on, were established, first in Hanoi, and later in Saigon (Pham Minh Hac, 1995). Following the Second World War, with the French losing control of Vietnam as a colony, these institutions also disappeared.

Independence in 1954 was achieved at the cost of a political division between North and South Vietnam. In the North, a Soviet model of higher education was introduced. This model involved the establishment of teaching-only, mono-disciplinary institutes and colleges focused on training personnel for appointment to technical and managerial positions within government ministries. In the South, the French model of higher education was revived, though American-style community colleges and comprehensive universities also began to be established. Higher education enrolments grew more strongly in the South than in the North. By 1975, there were 150,000 higher education students in the South, compared with only 55,700 in the North (Pham Minh Hac 1995, p.55). Private higher education institutions were permitted in the South but prohibited in the North.

Reunification of North and South Vietnam in 1975 under a Communist Party government meant that the Soviet model was adopted nationally. Private-sector institutions in the South were abolished, and discipline-specific research institutes, detached completely from the higher education sector, were established across the country.

In 1986, with Vietnam's economy nearing a state of collapse, the Communist Party of Vietnam took the momentous decision of abandoning Soviet-style centralised economic planning in favour of a socialist market system. The economic reform process, known as đổi mới, which also made provision for the return of private ownership of land and capital, created the conditions needed for rapid economic recovery.

Reform of the higher education sector began in earnest in the early 1990s. In a landmark Prime Ministerial decree (Decree No. 90/NĐ-TTg), issued in 1993, a process of moving away from the Soviet blueprint was initiated. This development was even more remarkable for the fact that, at the time, many Vietnamese academics were trained in Soviet Bloc countries and spoke Russian rather than English. Two national universities and three regional universities were established over

the period from 1993 to 1995 by means of mergers. Importantly, these institutions were authorised to provide a comprehensive range of study programs and to engage in research. Approval was provided on a trial basis for the existence of 'non-public' higher education institutions, that is, institutions owned by community organisations rather than by the State. Other significant changes included that the guarantee of State employment for all higher education graduates was removed; a national qualifications framework involving four-year degree-level programs for universities and three-year diploma-level programs for colleges was adopted; and tuition fees for higher education programs were introduced.

The next significant development was the adoption in 2005 of the Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA), a framework for reform of the sector through to 2020. HERA proposed a raft of changes, important among which was a commitment to remove line-management control of public higher education institutions by different government ministries and instrumentalities. HERA also proposed a significant expansion in the number of higher education enrolments, the creation of a tier of 'research-oriented' universities, and a significant increase in the proportion of academic staff members holding a PhD qualification. HERA also signalled the need for a stronger commitment to research and to internationalisation in public universities.

An unexpected provision in HERA was a commitment made that 40% of all higher education students should be enrolled in private universities and colleges by 2020. Given the Communist Party's traditional opposition to private higher education, and the extent of regulatory neglect up to that point of the needs of private higher education institutions (Hayden and Dao, 2010), this commitment came as a surprise. By 2015, however, less than 14% of all higher education students attended private-sector higher education institutions (MOET, 2016).

Since 2006, all new private higher education institutions have been required to be 'fully-private', meaning that they are privately-owned corporate entities. They receive no financial support from the Government, though recently the Government has indicated that it might provide some financial assistance for institutions which have clearly been established on a 'not-for-profit' basis. Most private higher education institutions are at a disadvantage in competing for students with public higher education providers because the cost of attending them is often two to three times higher than the cost of attending a public higher education institution. A small number of private higher education institutions have become extremely expensive to attend. These institutions have cultivated a reputation for being international in orientation, and they are also usually well connected with large private corporations in Vietnam.

A more recent development has been the adoption in 2012 of a Higher Education Law. This Law is significant because it acknowledged for the first time the distinctiveness within the education system of the higher education sector, and because it also brought together in one legal document much of the regulatory detail that had been approved incrementally by the Government over the previous two decades. The new Law prescribed that there should be a multi-tiered higher education sector, consisting of research-oriented, application-oriented and profession-oriented higher education institutions. It reinforced the need for public higher education institutions to have governing boards, referred to as university councils in the case of public universities. These councils were intended to become responsible for setting institutional objectives and strategies, developing guidelines for organisational structures, recruiting staff and implementing staff training programs, and approving guidelines for the utilisation of institutional finances, property, facilities and equipment. However, they were not given authority to appoint rectors, nor to set tuition fees for full-time degree programs.

Impediments to More Rapid Progress

If Vietnam is soon to achieve a more research-oriented and globally competitive higher education sector, then there are some pressing challenges that need to be addressed. Seven challenges are presented here as being among the most important.

Governance

Governance remains a highly problematic area for the sector. Indeed, it is one of the most problematic areas for the sector. As has been documented by Dao and Hayden (2015): "In Vietnam, public universities and colleges are not generally able to make their own decisions, especially about matters that are fundamentally important to them as academic communities" (p.323). They cannot, for example, exercise autonomy in making important decisions about organisational, financial, staffing and research matters; and a culture of academic freedom remains far from having been established.

The culture of centralised State control that was a feature of the Soviet model continues to affect the public higher education sector, even though the Higher Education Law and subsequent regulatory instruments have expressed the importance of individual public higher education institutions being able to function more independently. The Government is pressing rectors of public universities to establish university councils, but the response to date has not been enthusiastic. Many rectors of public universities are not convinced that university councils will ever be permitted to exercise a significant level of autonomy; and many are also concerned that the authority of the position of rector could be compromised by the introduction of a new accountability framework at the institutional level (Master Plan for Vietnam's Higher Education System 2012, pp.78-79). Importantly, though, having a university council is now one of the quality accreditation criteria that public universities must address as part of the national quality accreditation process, and so the pressure on rectors to establish university councils is intensifying.

The fundamental challenge is the removal of line-management control of public universities by different government ministries and instrumentalities. These authorities control the flow of funds to individual universities. More importantly, they control the appointment of rectors. The accountability felt by rectors to the ministries and instrumentalities responsible for their appointment will remain a significant obstacle to the development of the autonomy of university councils.

Funding

Public universities and colleges receive block grants from whichever ministry or public instrumentality is responsible for their line-management. The size of these grants is affected principally by student enrolments and the number of staff employees. About 2% of the funds for public universities are earmarked for use in supporting research. The block grants are made on a rolling three-year basis, with public higher education institutions able to carry forward any unallocated funds for up to three years. Public universities and colleges, other than those providing teacher education – which is subsidised by the Government, also receive income from tuition fees, which generally account for about one-half of their revenue. The larger research-oriented universities may also receive income from research and the sale of technical services remains small, but this source of income is relatively small. These universities have also been able to earn income from the delivery of non-formal programs, but the importance of this source of income is declining because of pressure on these universities to focus more on research. Private universities and colleges, in Vietnam, which account for only 14% of all higher education enrolments (MOET, 2016), rely almost entirely on tuition fees. They receive no public funding.

Vietnam's public higher education sector needs to be better funded, and the funding mechanisms employed, especially concerning the provision of support for research, need significant upgrading (Pham Thi Ly 2013, pp.144-145). As a 'lower middle income' country, Vietnam experiences severe capacity constraints on its ability to fund its public higher education sector. All the same, expenditure from all sources on higher education has been increasing significantly since the early 2000s. For example, expenditure on higher education increased from 0.36% of GDP in 2001 to 1.0% of GDP by 2012 (Communist Party Central Committee (CPCC), 2012). Expenditure on science and technology has also increased. In 2013, it accounted for 0.87% of GDP. By 2020, it is expected to account for 2% of GDP (Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), 2015).

These percentages are broadly comparable with benchmarks for the region (World Bank, 2017), but they are not sufficient to provide public universities with the quality of teaching and research infrastructure required to become globally competitive. As documented later in this paper, the salary levels of academic staff members at public universities remain low when compared with cost-of-living estimates.

The option of increasing tuition fees has been explored and recommended in a review funded by the World Bank concerning the higher education system's governance and regulation (Master Plan for Vietnam's Higher Education System 2012, p.57). The tuition fee levels charged by public universities in Vietnam are not widely considered to be excessive, but there exists a strong measure of political sensitivity about allowing them to increase too rapidly. One reason for this concern is that the affordability of supporting a child through an undergraduate degree at a public university is relatively limited for families on average and below-average levels of household income. For example, Nguyen Ngoc Anh (2012, p.269) has calculated that the cost of supporting a full-time student at a public higher education institution in Vietnam is equivalent to about 40% of an average household income.

The funding mechanisms for public higher education institutions are slowly evolving, with more encouragement now being given to individual institutions to manage their own budgets. In the past, public funds were allocated for specific purposes and for specified periods of time. The situation now is that public universities and colleges are permitted to make their own spending decisions, though within a framework of 'expenditure norms' that are controlled by the State.

Public higher education institutions are now also free to set tuition fee levels for the delivery of 'non-regular' training programs, that is, part-time training programs undertaken by students who may not have qualified for admission to a full-time training program. An effect of this policy, however, is that it is the country's leading public universities that are best able to attract large numbers of 'non-regular' students, which potentially diverts their focus from striving to meet official expectations that they should become internationally competitive 'research-intensive' universities (Lam Quang Thiep 2012, p.265). In 2015, 'non-regular' enrolments accounted for about 15% of all higher education enrolments (MOET, 2016).

Research and Research Training

Vietnam's research performance is poor by international standards. Bibliometric indicators, using the Scopus database, show how the gap in publishing performance between Vietnam and two of its neighbouring ASEAN member states, Thailand and Malaysia, has been widening since 2001 (Scimago, 2017). Vietnam produces a relatively small number of peer-refereed international publications per one million of population (Pham Duy Hien 2010, p.617). Contributing significantly to this problem is the fact that so few PhD-qualified academic staff members publish at an international standard. In 2014, for example, there were about 14,300 PhD-qualified academic staff members in Vietnam, but only 3,955 peer-reviewed publications were recorded in that year (Scimago, 2017). This problem is especially pronounced in the humanities and social sciences.

The implications of weak research performance are widely evident. Scimago ranks only four institutions in Vietnam as being noteworthy producers of new knowledge that has a technological impact, compared with 14 universities in Thailand that are recognised for these attributes (Scimago, 2017). Vietnam also scores poorly when compared with Thailand and Malaysia as a knowledge-based economy. Vietnam's performance in 2015-16 on the World Economic Forum's *Global Competitiveness Index*, and its performance in 2012 on the World Bank's *Knowledge Economy Index*, fell well below the performance levels achieved by Thailand and Malaysia (World Economic Forum 2016, p.xiii; World Bank, 2017).

Various constraints limiting Vietnam's research performance have been identified. One is the low proportion of academic staff members holding a doctoral qualification, which in 2016 was only 21.4% (MOET, 2017). Another is the modest level of national investment in research and development.

Yet another is the extent to which academic staff members at public universities in Vietnam see their role as being mainly concerned with teaching. Lam Quang Thiep (2012) reported, for example, how academics at major public universities in Vietnam identified more with undergraduate teaching than with postgraduate teaching or research.

The way that research is funded is also problematic. As Pham Thi Ly (2013) has documented, the mechanisms employed to allocate these funds within public universities are "bureaucratically fragmented and cumbersome" (p.142). The National Fund for Science and Technology Development (NAFOSTED), which became operational in 2008, has introduced a new approach to research funding, that is, one based on the rigorous assessment of grant applications for merit by employing peer review procedures. NAFOSTED now plays a significant role in fostering research in public universities, but less than 5% of the national research budget is allocated to NAFOSTED (MOST 2015, p.84). NAFOSTED's budget urgently needs to be increased. Its funding mechanisms might also require further review because at present they strongly favour research in the natural and applied sciences (MOST 2015, p.88). In assessing grant applications, NAFOSTED gives weight to international publications, but the interests of researchers in the humanities and social sciences are more likely to focus on matters of national or even local interest.

The poor quality of postgraduate education in Vietnam is also a constraint on the development of the research capacity of public universities. To overcome this problem, the Government has been investing heavily since 2005 in the provision of opportunities for academic staff members to obtain a PhD from abroad. The Government has also funded 37 'advanced programs' across 23 universities, involving accredited international partners. These programs, together with various other related initiatives, are intended to produce greater research and research training capacity (MOET, 2015). The positive impact of the Government's commitment is already being experienced: the proportion of academic staff members holding a doctoral qualification increased sharply from 11% in 2012 to 21.4% by 2016 (MOET, 2017).

The large number of research institutes is another challenge needing to be addressed. In 2011, there were over 1,600 research institutes of varying kinds operating in Vietnam (CPCC, 2012). Of these, only 55 were recognised by the Ministry of Education and Training as being eligible to provide PhD training (MOET, 2012). While some research institutes, including the Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) and the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS) are large and multi-disciplinary, most research institutes are small and mono-disciplinary. Links between research institutes and universities are rarely formalised, and so the benefits of collaboration with public universities are not fully exploited.

Academic Standards

Quality assurance is gaining momentum within the higher education sector in Vietnam. Most higher education institutions now have Centres for Quality Assurance. These Centres have responsibility for monitoring and evaluating academic standards and assessment practices within their institutions. All higher education institutions are required to complete an institutional self-assessment report, which is then followed by an external review and accreditation process. There are 10 quality standards and 61 quality criteria that have been identified by the Ministry of Education and Training as having to be met by individual higher education institutions (MOET, 2007). For the external review process, four accreditation centres have been established since 2013.

To date, there has been no evaluation of the effectiveness of these processes. Concern has been expressed in the past that the processes are too heavily focused on inputs, rather than on outputs and outcomes (Nguyen Kim Dung, Oliver and Priddy 2009, p.130). Also of concern is that the processes focus exclusively on meeting minimum standards, with little room provided for assessing individual institutions on a 'fitness for purpose' basis. The processes are also constrained by limitations on the availability of quality-related data on key indicators, particularly globally acknowledged standards concerning students' experiences of their courses, graduate employment outcomes, research higher

degree completions, and details of research performance and impact. Generating the data required to enable the quality assurance processes to function effectively remains a challenge for the sector.

Graduate Unemployment

Graduate unemployment has recently emerged as an issue of significance for higher education in Vietnam. According to the World Bank (2014, p.27), a slowdown in the rate of economic growth in 2013 and 2014 triggered the problem, and a steep increase in the number of recent graduates searching for employment has added to the slowdown's extent and impact. Between 2013 and 2016, the number of university graduates who were unemployed increased significantly from 72,000 to 115,400, with many redundancies declared in the business administration, banking, finance and accounting professions (Institute of Labour Sciences and Social Affairs, 2016). Meanwhile, the proportion of the labour force with a university qualification has risen appreciably from 5.7% in 2010 to 7.6% in 2014 (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2016). At a time of declining demand for graduates in certain fields, therefore, there is an increasing supply of graduates available.

Employers typically report that recent graduates do not have sufficient practical experience to be able to step into a role and perform it without the need for a long period of induction, and that recent graduates are often deficient in terms of their 'soft skills', variously understood to include social skills, communication skills, character traits and personal ethics (Dân Trí Newspaper, 2016; Tuoi Tre Newspaper, 2015a). These issues were canvassed in a World Bank (2014) report that identified 'skills lag' and 'skills shortage' problems in the labour market for graduates: the former referred to university graduates lacking 'work-ready' skills required to be immediately productive when they enter the labour force, and the latter referred to the lack of graduates with the skills required by employers. From the evidence available, it appears that, though higher education institutions are trying to respond to the challenge, their capacity to do so is constrained by the centrally-controlled nature of the curriculum and the prevalence across the higher education system of a reliance on traditional teaching methods (Thi Tuyet Tran, 2013). Student passivity about doing anything to help themselves is also a matter of concern (Thi Tuyet Tran 2013, p.642).

Increasing graduate unemployment rates, and calls by employers for graduates to be more 'work ready', are not unique to Vietnam. Similar trends are evident elsewhere in Asia (see the report by Bothwell, 2016). Of significance in the context of Vietnam is that the increase has been so sharp, and has occurred against a background of a generally low national unemployment rate. Recent figures published by the General Statistics Office in Vietnam show that in in the first quarter of 2017, when the national unemployment rate was only 2.09%, the national rate of youth unemployment was a little over three times higher, while the rate of graduate unemployment was more than eight times higher. This situation is confronting for most of the population because of a national belief in the value of a degree as a passport to better employment and income-earning opportunities. It has also given rise to heated debate about the need for higher education programs to become more contemporary in terms of their training focus.

Internationalisation

International integration is a powerful force driving reform in the higher education sector in Vietnam. The Communist Party Central Committee (CPCC) of Vietnam has consistently affirmed the necessity of international integration, stating as long ago as 2002 that it wished to see "widening international collaboration in education; maximising projects funded by international organizations in education; opening various forms of cooperative . . . overseas providers' programs, organising on-shore study abroad programs" (CPCC, 2002). More recently, the 11th Party Congress in 2013 identified international integration to be one of seven guiding principles for the comprehensive and fundamental reform of the higher education sector, observing that: "education and training must meet the requirements for international integration for the country's development" (CPCC, 2013).

Many of the early initiatives that focused on the internationalisation of the higher education system relied heavily on development aid in one form or other (Welch 2010, p.203). As Vietnam's economic capacity develops, future support for internationalisation will need to depend more on budgetary support from the Government, and will, therefore, need to be strongly aligned with Vietnam's plans for the development of human resource capacity and international competitiveness. The Government appears from all indications to remain strongly committed to international integration in the higher education sector, as illustrated by its significant level of financial support for Project 911, concerning the strategic training of lecturers at PhD level for academic roles in universities and colleges over the period from 2010 to 2020. In 2013, however, the Ministry of Education and Training expressed concern that ". . . the international integration in higher education lacks . . . strategic direction . . .. There needs to be more quality assurance and accreditation processes over the partnership programs with international partners" (MOET 2013, pp.2-3). Whether anything has been done to date to apply quality assurance and accreditation processes to these programs remains unclear.

Conditions of Academic Employment

Higher education institutions in Vietnam are responsible for employing their own members of academic staff, and so employees of public higher education institutions are not civil servants. However, the conditions applying to academic employment at public higher education institutions are so tightly prescribed by the State that the absence of civil service status is not especially important.

The Higher Education Law of 2012 requires that academic staff members at public universities should teach, do research, and participate in professional development. Teaching refers here to the delivery of academic programs at the diploma, bachelor, master's and PhD levels. Article 15 of the Higher Education Law indicates that the teaching role also involves a commitment to self-improvement and to setting an example for students. Reflecting Confucian cultural values, Article 15 commits the State to providing the ". . . necessary material and spiritual conditions for teachers to fulfil their roles and responsibilities, preserving and developing the tradition of respecting teachers and honouring the teaching profession."

Research refers to the conduct and dissemination of scientific and technological investigations, both for improving educational quality and for contributing to the cultural, scientific and technological capacity of Vietnam. Article 18 of the Higher Education Law expressly refers to the service function of research, whereby priority should be given to research focused on the solution of problems relating to Vietnam's national and local socioeconomic development.

Professional development refers to attendance at courses intended to improve the capacity of academic staff members in terms of their political knowledge, their knowledge in an academic specialisation, and their knowledge of pedagogy, as prescribed by Article 55 of the Higher Education Law. Acquiring enhanced political knowledge about Marxism-Leninism and the thoughts of Ho Chi Minh is especially important in Vietnam for academic staff members seeking to achieve managerial and leadership positions.

In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Training mandated that all appointment levels, from assistant lecturer up to professor, should have the same workload allocation of a little over 50% for teaching, and 33% for research. This pattern is broadly in line with profiles for other national higher education systems, but the requirement for academic staff members to devote 33% of their workload allocation to research is not widely enforced in Vietnam. Compliance with this requirement is, therefore, extremely variable. The problem is that many academic staff members, because of the relatively poor salary levels available in the public sector, prefer to substitute additional teaching commitments instead of doing research. The additional teaching provides them with steady income.

Salaries for academic staff members in public higher education institutions are based on seniority, as regulated by the Government. Salary increments are awarded every three years, depending upon successful completion of assigned tasks, as assessed by senior academic managers.

In general, the salary levels available to academic staff members are insufficient to maintain a family, according to several sources (see, for example, Thanh Niên Newspaper, 2016; Tuổi Trẻ Newspaper, 2015b; and Tiền Phong Newspaper, 2016). For example, a young lecturer receiving a monthly salary of 4 million VND (about US$200), living in a major Vietnamese city where the minimum cost of living is also about 4 million VND (Dang Quang Dieu and Hien Thi Thuong Dong, 2015), cannot survive on an academic salary alone. Many, if not most, academic staff members feel obliged to earn a supplementary income. Those employed at public higher education institutions readily find opportunities for part-time and casual employment at private higher education institutions. These institutions function on a business model that involves a heavy reliance on the employment of part-time and casual teaching staff. Academics also take on extra work outside the academy, such as in hospitality or consulting. A significant challenge for the sector is the need to improve the salary levels of academic staff members.

The regulatory framework for academic employment is also in need of attention. Public higher education institutions are burdened by multiple regulatory requirements issued by different Government ministries. These requirements are not always well integrated. For example, the Ministry of Education and Training issues regulations regarding academic workloads and responsibilities; while it is the Cabinet which issues a separate set of regulations regarding academic salaries and academic promotions; and then it is the Prime Minister who independently sets the standards for the award of professorial titles. There is, in other words, a lack of regulatory coherence.

There is an additional need to increase the proportion of academic staff members, especially female academic staff members, appointed to professorial levels. The proportion of all academic staff members at public higher education institutions who are appointed as professors or associate professors is very small by international standards, at only 0.8% and 4.8% respectively in 2016. The large majority (83%) of these senior academic staff members are male, and older than 50 years of age (MOET, 2017). Females account for 47% of all academic staff members at public higher education institutions.

Private higher education institutions generally offer higher salary levels than public higher education institutions, but employment by private higher education institutions is typically offered on a contractual basis, which means that there is much less security of tenure. Few private higher education institutions support research, and so employment at a private higher education institution is typically limited to teaching and program administration.

The Future

In a recent doctoral investigation by one of the authors (Le Thi Kim Anh, 2016), the academic and organisational culture experienced by 30 academic members of staff from across a range of organisational and disciplinary settings at four leading, research-oriented universities in Vietnam was explored using a qualitative approach to the collection and interpretation of the data. Of interest were the issues, claims and concerns of the participants about the culture of their workplaces, and about the impact of this culture on the attainment of their academic aspirations.

The investigation pointed to the existence of a keenly developing sense of academic identity at Vietnam's leading, research-oriented universities. This identity was most strongly evident in the natural and applied sciences, where participants in the investigation manifested a well-developed sense of allegiance to global disciplinary communities. Participants from the natural and applied sciences reported a depth of engagement with global knowledge networks. They worked strenuously to reinforce this engagement through their publishing activities.

In the more individualistic research specialisms of the humanities, the desire for an affinity with global disciplinary communities was also widely reported, but research outcomes in terms of international publications were comparatively far less in evidence. Publishing in the humanities remained for the most part locally focused and intermittent.

Academics working in the applied social sciences, particularly teacher education, were the least globally engaged, reporting meagre links with international scholarly networks. Typically, in the field of teacher education, an understanding of the need to mark out intellectual territory through publishing research findings in peer-refereed journals was acknowledged, but it was an attainment that was also considered to be wholly out of reach in practical terms.

An important discovery was the identification of academic staff members able to be described as 'cosmopolitan researchers'. There were academic staff members, coming mainly but not exclusively from the natural and applied sciences, who were highly productive as international researchers. Nearly all these participants had obtained their PhDs abroad, and most had also completed post-doctoral research programs at foreign research-intensive universities. Though constrained by limited funding support, and tending to be 'inbred' to an extent because of their inclination to return to the same university at which they had completed their undergraduate studies, they fitted neatly with Clark's (1985, p.38) description of faculty members at leading research universities in the United States: where academic life was centred on research, teaching commitments were light, and professors enjoyed the rituals of their disciplines as well as high standing within their disciplinary enclaves. The 'cosmopolitan researchers' were, in other words, members of an elite group with a refined sense of academic identity within their international 'club'. These were the kinds of scholars that the Government and individual 'research-oriented' universities will need to rely upon to provide Vietnam with a globally competitive higher education sector in the not-too-distant future.

The two other groups identified were the 'local researchers', that is, academics who were active as researchers but who published mainly or entirely in Vietnam, and 'reluctant researchers', that is, academics who preferred to focus on teaching and who were not inclined to engage in research. Humanities scholars were more likely to be 'local researchers', and the 'reluctant researchers' were mainly scholars from the social sciences (including teacher education).

Practical measures are required to nurture and support the development of a 'cosmopolitan researcher' culture in Vietnam's higher education sector. The discussion in the earlier part of this paper has drawn attention to aspects of the sector that, if left unattended, will delay the development of this culture. In general, there is a need for public universities in Vietnam to have more capacity to act independently in cultivating the immense talent that they attract in the form of academic staff members and students.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has sought to chart a road ahead for Vietnam's higher education sector as it responds to the need to become more research-oriented and more globally competitive. There are pockets within the sector that clearly have made the transition to global scholarly engagement, but much of the sector remains tied to the values and practices of the past. The sector has made extraordinary progress since the early 1990s, but seven aspects of the sector that now urgently require attention include: improving the governance arrangements for higher education institutions; improving academic salaries and simplifying the regulatory environment regarding academic employment; providing more financial support for research and channelling more of this support through NAFOSTED; addressing the conditions that underlie the problem of increasing levels of graduate unemployment; revitalising policies that will promote the benefits from increased internationalisation; and improving the conditions of academic employment, especially the salary levels of academic staff members.

The need to achieve significant cultural change in the academy in Vietnam is pressing. Given the pace of change in higher education systems globally, Vietnam's higher education sector must take giant strides not only to make up ground but also to keep up with the pace.

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Shadow Education in Malaysia: Identifying The Determinants of Spending and Amount of Time Attending Private Supplementary Tutoring of Upper Secondary School Students

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Abstract: *This paper examines the determinants of spending and the amount of time attending private supplementary tutoring, or commonly known as private tuition, in Malaysia. Based on 343 self-reported questionnaires with upper secondary students across three states in Malaysia and using multiple regression analysis, we identified ethnicity, father's level of education and past academic performance as significant determinants of spending and amount of time attending private tuition. However, interestingly, we found that while geographical location and participation in internal tuition in schools were also determinants of spending, these two were not significant in determining the amount of time attending private supplementary tutoring. The identification of determinants of spending and amount of time, and in addition, the differences between these two illustrates the economic and educational dimensions of shadow education. More importantly, the insight also contributes to the formulation of possible interventions that can improve quality and reduce inequality in the mainstream education system.*

Keywords: *shadow education, Malaysia, secondary education, demand for education*

Introduction

Shadow education is a set of educational activities outside formal schooling or mainstream education, which primarily refers to private supplementary tutoring (Bray and Lykins, 2012; Stevenson and Baker, 1992). The term 'shadow' suggests that these educational activities mimic and reflect mainstream schools and the education system. Bray and Lykins (2012) used the analogy of sundial and its shadow to illustrate the relationship between the two education systems.

The mainstream education system has become an important agenda in policy dialogue due to the importance of education in economic and social developments. Education has been recognised as playing a vital role in reducing inequality, promoting social mobility and contributing towards inclusive growth and development. However, shadow education has been given relatively less attention both in policy dialogue and from an educational perspective. This lack of attention on shadow education has implications that may undermine the efforts of mainstream education in expanding access, strengthening inclusiveness and improving quality, relevance and cost efficiency of education (Sarvi, 2012).

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Like most Asian countries where shadow education has become a major phenomenon (Cheo and Quah, 2005), shadow education in Malaysia has also become an essential feature of the country's education system. This article focuses on the demand for shadow education in Malaysia, specifically to identify the determinants of spending and amount of time attending supplementary tutoring among upper secondary school students. As Bray (2014) argues, one of the challenges in analysing shadow education is that the definition used to define the educational activities is too broad to be meaningful and the research question and focus needed to be refined. Therefore, this paper only focuses on spending and the amount of time spent attending private supplementary tutoring.

This article comprises five sections. The first examines the phenomenon of shadow education in Malaysia, the second explores the determinants and ways in which these factors can be identified and examined, the third section discusses the methodology and empirical evidence, and followed by the model and findings. The article concludes by discussing the implications of the findings from economic and educational perspectives with policy recommendations.

Shadow Education in Malaysia

Supplementary tutoring or tuition is a social and educational phenomenon in Malaysia. In a survey conducted in the capital Kuala Lumpur with 1,600 students across eight schools, 88 % of primary school students use some form of private tutoring (Tan, 2011). A separate survey on the ability of secondary school students to transit into institutions of higher education, conducted across three other states of Malaysia with 641 students across six schools reaffirmed the extent of tuition where 89 % of Upper Secondary (Year Ten and Eleven) students relied on some form of supplementary tutoring (Aida et al., 2015).

In Malaysia, supplementary tutoring comes in various forms; private tutoring session and tuition centre based mass tutoring sessions. Anecdotal information suggests that private tutoring sessions are conducted on a one-to-one basis or in a small group, which is typically held at the home of either the student or private tutor. Tuition centres which cater for large number of students have double or triple the average teacher-to-student ratio of Malaysian government schools (typically 1:35). According to Kenayathulla (2014) citing the Ministry of Education there are more than 3,000 registered tuition centres with the Ministry of Education, involving 11,967 tutors and 3.2 percent of the total number of students in primary and secondary schools.

However, apart from private tutoring and tuition centre, supplementary tutoring is also carried out in mainstream schools. This is carried out by school teachers for some of their students outside of the normal schooling hours, typically in the evening. This is also a form of shadow education that may be peculiar to the Malaysian context, and like other forms of supplementary tutoring, students also have to fork out additional fees to attend these sessions. We term this form of shadow education as internal tuition. Although internal tuition is not the focus of our paper, these activities have some influences on external tuition, which we will examine later.

In terms of spending on tuition, using the 2004/05 Household Expenditure Survey, Kenayathulla (2012) estimated about 20 % of households spent money on private tutoring. Across four Household Expenditure Surveys, the average spending of households on education were Malaysian Ringgit (RM)17 (in 1993/94), and increased to RM31 (in 1998/99) and RM38 (in 2004/05) respectively (1 RM is about 0.24 US Dollars). However, in the latest survey in 2009/10, the average spending of households on education was merely RM31, which made up of only 1.4 % of total expenditure of households (Department of Statistics, 2011). Furthermore, there were differences in the average spending of households on education across stratum and ethnic groups. On average, the urban households spent RM39 on education expenditures but rural households only spent RM13 (DOS, 2011). As a multi-ethnic country, there are distinct differences in terms of income as well as the preference for spending. The average household income for *Bumiputera,*[1] Chinese and Indian was RM4,457, RM6,366 and RM5,233 respectively (Khazanah Research Institute, 2014) and the average spending for education was RM25, RM50 and RM41 respectively (DOS, 2011).

To briefly conclude, supplementary tutoring or tuition is indeed a societal trend in Malaysia as illustrated through the surveys by Tan (2011) and Aida, et al. (2015) but empirical evidence that shows the extent of this phenomenon and the economic value of these educational activities remain scarce and piecemeal. While efforts can be taken to measure the economic value of supplementary tutoring as an economic sector, however, it is also important to understand the determinants that influence the decision that influences the amount of spending of parents and students on tuition. Furthermore, to provide a clearer understanding of the determinants of supplementary tutoring, spending should also be examined alongside the amount of time spent attending tuition. Identifying determinants will not only helped us to understand the economic perspective, but equally important, gain insight on the educational perspective of shadow education.

Review of Literature on Shadow Education

This section aims to review previous research conducted on the demand for shadow education will focus more specifically on supplementary tutoring. This review will help to inform selection of variables for analysis in identifying the determinants of spending and amount of time spent attending private tuition.

While spending is a factor commonly used to examine the demand for shadow education, the amount of time spent attending private tuition is not a common variable examined. Most previous research concerning shadow education focused on participation as an act of taking part in shadow education without considering whether students attend private tuition or not (Barrow and Lochan, 2012; Buchmann, 2002; Jelani and Tan, 2012; Liu, 2012; Nath, 2008; Stevenson and Baker, 1992; Tansel and Bircan, 2005). There is also research undertaken by Ireson and Rushforth (2005) which examined the determinants of the subjects taken and the amount of time spent attending private tuition. This therefore depicts a gap in which minimal research has been conducted to investigate the determinants of demand for shadow education by concurrently examining the price and quantity; specifically the two dependent variables –spending and amount of time spent attending private tuition.

In terms of the independent variables, parents' demographic is a determinant of participation and spending in shadow education. Students from higher socioeconomic background or those with more affluent parents are more inclined to participate in shadow education, and this phenomenon is consistent across Hong Kong, European Union, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Malaysia and Japan (Bray, 2011; Bray and Kwok, 2003; Jokic et al., 2013; Jelani and Tan, 2012; Stevenson and Baker, 1992). Not only is this factor a determinant of participation, it is also claimed that the propensity to spend on shadow education increases in line with the household's expenditure level (Kanellopoulos and Psacharopoulos, 1997). This relationship can be explained by the fact that tuition is regarded as a necessity by those at the high-expenditure quantiles than the other end of the spectrum (Kim and Park, 2010).

Apart from the demographic factor, parents' level of education is another positive determinant for shadow education. Participation in shadow education increases with an additional year of parents' education, and this trend is consistent across diverse countries such as Egypt, Hong Kong, Kenya, England and Malawi (Assaad and El-Badawy, 2004; Bray and Kwok, 2003; Buchmann, 2002; Ireson and Rushforth, 2005; Paviot et al., 2008). Similarly, in examining cram schools in Taiwan, which is also a form of supplementary tutoring, parents with the lowest level of education (middle-school or lower) are less likely to send their children to such schools as compared to those with other higher levels of education (Liu, 2012). The propensity to spend on supplementary tutoring is also significantly related to parents' educational levels, as evidenced by studies conducted in Greece, South Korea and Bangladesh (Kanellopoulos and Psacharopoulos, 1997; Kim and Park, 2010; Nath, 2008).

However, in addition to the overall parents' level of education, father's and mother's level of education also has a varying effect on the participation of and spending on tuition but the results appear to be inconclusive. Most of the studies reported that mother's level of education

has a stronger impact as compared to father's level of education (Jelani and Tan, 2012; Kim and Lee, 2010; Tansel and Bircan, 2005). More specifically, Dang (2007) found that mother's education has a positive impact on supplementary tutoring at the primary level, but no impact on the lower secondary level; but interestingly, father's education had the exact opposite effect. Yet in terms of the expenditure, a study in Sri Lanka reported that father's level of education has a stronger effect outweighing the mother's whereby an additional year of education for father's and mother's will increase the expenditure on tuition by six and two % respectively (Pallegedara, 2011). Regardless of whether the father's or the mother's level of education has the greater effect, parents' education is a strong determinant that tends to place a higher emphasis on shadow education in the pursuit of greater academic excellence.

Academic excellence is also a strong determinant of participation in shadow education. In the pursuit for better academic performances or to maintain an existing level of performance, students with better grades or academic standing have been shown to be more likely to engage with supplementary tutoring (Stevenson and Baker, 1992). Research has shown that the rate of incidence on supplementary tutoring and the amount spent significantly grew with higher academic achievement levels (Bray, 2011; Kim and Lee, 2010; Kim and Park, 2010). This proposition is further supported by the argument that students who believed that academic results are not important are less likely to engage in supplementary tutoring, where in the case of Hong Kong, Bray and Kwok (2003) showed that schools with higher-band intakes have higher levels of tutoring than the schools with lower-band intakes. Bray (2013) also highlighted that students who rated themselves as good were more likely to attend tuition, as compared to their peers who rated themselves as excellent. Furthermore, students who rated themselves as poor were more likely to participate in tuition as compared to those who rated themselves as fair. The demand for supplementary tutoring is much stronger in education systems that are examination-driven as well as presence of competitive entry systems into schools and universities (Barrow and Lochan, 2012; Kim and Lee, 2010; Tansel and Bircan, 2005; Watson, 2008). Importantly, the strong relationship between high academic achievement and the high incidence of supplementary tutoring has to a large extent confuted the idea that weaker students are more likely to engage in these shadow educational activities; rather, students who have better grades tend to participate more actively in shadow education to help them achieve their academic goals (Liu, 2012).

Age of students can also be a determinant of participation and spending in shadow education. In Malaysia, it was reported that upper primary students are more likely to attend private tuition and spend more than lower primary students in Malaysia (Jelani and Tan, 2012). Similarly in Vietnam, there was a 30 percent and 66 percent increase in the spending on private tutoring at the primary and secondary level respectively when a student moves nearer to the last grade within the level of education (Dang, 2007). This notion is also reaffirmed by Barrow and Lochan (2012) who found that participation in private tutoring increases incrementally until a student sits for the Secondary Entrance Examination in Trinidad and Tobago. As the age and level of education increases, the stake in examination becomes greater. Therefore, there is a greater motivation for students to participate and spend on supplementary tutoring in preparation for examinations, and the participation and spending increases as the stake in examination increases (Bray and Kwok, 2003).

In terms of the geographical differences of students, the urban and rural connotation is a significant determinant on participation in shadow education. Consistent across different education systems including Japan, Kenya, South Korea and Sri Lanka, there is a greater demand and supply of supplementary tutoring in urban regions as compared to rural areas (Buchmann, 2002; Kim and Park, 2010; Pallegedara, 2011; Stevenson and Baker, 1992). More specifically, there are instances where the urban and rural differences only existed at certain levels of education, for example in the case of Vietnam where this difference was only applicable at the primary school level (Dang, 2007). However, there are exceptions where urban-rural difference is insignificant, for instance in Egypt (Assaad and El-Badawy, 2004), as well as a reduction over time in the urban-rural gap in terms of participation of shadow education such as in Bangladesh (Nath, 2008).

Besides the urban-rural stratum, there are also ethnic differences in countries and education systems that are multi-ethnic. For instance in Malaysia, it was found that households of Malaysians who are of Chinese and Indian descent are more likely to send their children to private tuition as compared to ethnic Malays who are the majority ethnic group in Malaysia (Jelani and Tan, 2012). Similarly, white students in England are less likely to participate in tutoring as compared to other minority ethnic groups where Indian students have the highest participation, followed by Chinese, African, Pakistani and Caribbean (Ireson and Rushforth, 2005). In contrast, Dang (2007) explained that spending on private tutoring reduced by as much as 32% when a primary school student is from an ethnic minority group in Vietnam, although there is no significant difference at the lower secondary level. On a similar note, the Tamils, which is the ethnic minority in Sri Lanka are less likely to spend money on private tuition classes as compared with the Sinhalese majority (Pallegedara, 2011). In general, ethnicity does have an impact on a student's participation in shadow education especially in explaining intra-system differences within a multi-ethnic context.

From the literature, parents' demographic and level of education as well as individual characteristics of the students in terms of age, academic excellence, geographical and ethnicity are among the independent variables that determined the participation in shadow education.

Data and Methodology

The data for this paper is from a research project titled Transition from Secondary Education to Higher Education: The Case of Malaysia and used with permission from the researchers of the project (see Aida et al., 2015). In the research project, a two-page survey questionnaire was distributed to upper secondary students (Year Ten and Eleven) across six schools in three States of Malaysia – Penang, Kelantan and Sabah. In each State, two schools were selected: [one is located in the urban area and another in the rural area. The survey questionnaire was administered by a teacher in the school.

As the survey questionnaire was conducted to examine a broader only the indicators in the survey questionnaire that are related to shadow education were used in this paper. The indicators/ variables are: (i) number of subjects registered for the Malaysian Certificate of Education examination, (ii) father's and mother's level of education, (iii) result of the Lower Secondary Assessment, (iv) participation in internal and external tuition, (v) number of hours a week attending internal and external tuition, (vi) subjects taken for external tuition, (vii) spending per month for external tuition, and other demographical variables including ethnicity and the school (which has taken into account the urban-rural and state distribution).

Due to the nature in which empirical evidence used in this paper was derived from a larger project, there are some limitations to be acknowledged. We are not in the position to design the sampling of the survey questionnaire and neither are we able to change its structure and data collection method. We do not claim that the findings are representative across Malaysia, as the sampling only involved three of the fourteen states. The survey questionnaire is a form of self-reporting, and this form of data collection does not allow much triangulation and validation of the empirical evidence reported by the respondents. Moreover, we are also not able to account for possible biases and discrepancies resulting from the fact that the survey questionnaire was administered by teachers in the schools. Yet, as shadow education and private tuition are not the main theme of the questionnaire, but only a section in the larger questionnaire, the sensitivity of the topic with teachers may not have influenced the responses. In addition, the limitation of empirical evidence have also refrained us from exploring with greater depths specific aspects of shadow education, for instance the ways in which internal and external tuitions are conducted. Although there are limitations to the empirical evidence, it is important to recognise the focus of this paper is to examine the determinants of spending and amount of time spent attending private supplementary tutoring. As such, participation in private supplementary tutoring became the inclusion criteria in the selection of samples and the empirical evidence used in this paper was derived from 343 respondents who reported in the survey that they participated in private supplementary tutoring.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Definition of Variables

Variable	Definition	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max
Urban School	Dummy Variable for Urban School	0.70	0.50	0	1
Hours spent in internal tuition	Continuous variable for hours spent at internal tuition	4.53	5.90	0	30
Father's educational level	Categorical variable for Father's level of education	3.39	1.07	1	6
Academic Excellence	Categorical variable for no. of A's in Lower Secondary Assessment	3.44	2.75	0	9
Chinese	Dummy Variable for ethnic Chinese students	0.35	0.43	0	1
Indian & Others	Dummy Variable for students of Indian and other ethnicities (excluding Malay, Chinese and East Malaysian *Bumiputera*)	0.08	0.23	0	1
East Malaysian *Bumiputera*	Dummy Variable for students of ethnicities from East Malaysia	0.11	0.41	0	1
Spending on external tuition	Continuous variable for spending on external tuition	181.43	163.17	5	1100
Hours spent in external tuition	Continuous variable for hours spent at external tuition	6.00	4.00	1	30

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and definition of variables. Out of 343 respondents, 70 % were in urban schools and the remaining in rural schools. The respondents also comprised of 46 % Malay, 35 % Chinese, 8% Indian and Other, and 11% *Bumiputera* from East Malaysia. In terms of the respondents' father's level of education, 3%were primary school leavers, 13 % were lower secondary school, 47 % completed upper secondary school, 21 % with a diploma, 11 % with a bachelor degree, and 5% with a postgraduate degree. In terms of the previous academic achievement, 13% did not score any A in their Lower Secondary Assessment and 1.5 % scored nine As.

The main variable examined in this paper is the amount of spending on supplementary tutoring outside of school. The average spending for supplementary tutoring is RM 181.43 per month with a standard deviation of RM163.17. The minimum value is RM5.00 per month and the maximum value is RM1100.00. Consistent with most expenditure data, the spending amount is not normally distributed. This was confirmed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test, which indicates that the spending variable was not normally distributed. Hence, as a way to normalise the data, the spending variable was transposed with logarithm into 'log spending'.

In addition, the amount of hours spent attending external tuition is also used as a dependent variable to examine the extent of participation. The average number of hours a week spent is 6 hours with a standard deviation of 4. The minimum value is one hour and the maximum value is 30 hours. Similar to spending, the number of hours spent on tuition is not normally distributed and therefore normalised by transposing the time variable with logarithm into 'log hours outside'.

The selection of the independent variables was guided by the review of literature on determinants of shadow education as well as availability in this dataset. Primary analysis using a stepwise additive regression was used to determine the variables for the full specification multiple regression model. The independent variables identified were: (i) urban-rural school to represent the geographical differences; (ii) ethnicity, given that Malaysia is a multi-ethic country and ethnic differences have been a major determinants on income and spending; (iii) hours spent on internal

tuition, where to normalise the logarithm variable is used; (iv) father's level of education, which has a higher explanatory value compared to mother's level of education; and (v) number of As in the previous national Lower Secondary Assessment (taken at Year 9) as a proxy for academic excellence.

The Model and Findings

The full specification multiple regression model comprising all the variables identified were regressed with spending and time spent respectively as dependent variables. The justification for studying these two dependent variables in separate models is because spending on private supplementary portrays the price households are willing to pay, in which this variable has an economic bearing on policy implications. On the contrary, total hours spent in private supplementary tutoring portrays participation on a greater level as compared to spending. Hence, this study concurrently examines the determinants of both price and quantity, of which there is still a literature gap in combining these two aspects. Besides, the differences in determinants of these two dependent variables gives a greater insight to the study of patterns of participation in shadow education.

The independent variables explained 44.2 percent and 16.9 percent of the variations in the dependent variable across the two models, as reflected by the R-square values (see Table 2). Hence, the independent variables used in the models are more suitable to explain the determinants of spending as compared to time spent on private tuition.

Table 2. Determinants of Log Spending and Log Hours Outside Model

Variable	Logspending Model			LoghoursOutside Model		
(Constant)	3.846	**	(0.155)	0.957	**	(0.147)
Urban School	0.300	**	(0.107)	0.058		(0.102)
Log Hours spent in internal tuition	-0.161	**	(0.052)	-0.015		(0.052)
Father's educational level	0.092	**	(0.039)	0.081	**	(0.038)
Academic Excellence (No. of A's in PMR)	0.046	**	(0.018)	0.051	**	(0.017)
Chinese	0.886	**	(0.111)	0.335	**	(0.104)
Indian & others	0.806	**	(0.151)	0.425	**	(0.138)
East Malaysian *Bumiputera*	0.460	**	(0.146)	0.234	*	(0.136)
R-squared	0.442			0.169		
F value	32.676			7.773		

Note : Standard error in parentheses; **Significance at 5% level; *Significance at 10% level

Across the two models, the father's level of education, academic excellence and ethnicity were the three significant variables that were consistent for spending and the amount of time spent attending private tuition. Interestingly, the hours spent on internal tuition and urban-rural variable were significant determinants of spending but insignificant to the amount of time spent.

Urban-Rural

Geographical location is a determinant of spending for supplementary tutoring. Our empirical evidence estimated that students in an urban school spend 35 $\%t^2$ more than their peers in a rural school. The significance of urban-rural differences reaffirmed the findings of earlier studies (see

Kim and Park, 2010; Pallegedara, 2011), and specifically in the case of Malaysia, an earlier study shown that on average, urban and rural students spent RM503 and RM231 respectively for tuition (Osman and Rajah, 2011). Kenayathullah (2013) also reaffirmed that urban students are more likely to enrol in and spend more on private tutoring. However, geographical location is insignificant as a determinant of amount of time spent attending external tuition, whereby there is no significant difference in the number of hours spent on external tuition between students in urban and rural schools. This findings differ from earlier studies by Buchmann (2002) and Nath (2008) whereby they suggested that students from urban schools tend to spend more hours attending private tuitions that their rural counterparts.

The different geographical locations as a determinant of spending and time spent illustrates an interesting proposition. The findings suggest that while there is no difference between the time spent by urban and rural students in supplementary tutoring outside of schools, the significant difference in spending implies that it is more expensive for students to attend supplementary tutoring in urban areas. A number of plausible explanations that contributed to this proposition include the higher cost of living in urban area, as well as a possibility that supplementary tutoring is carried out in urban areas more professionally and business-like to capture a larger market. Thus, the urban-rural stratum can only be considered as a determinant to the money spent on tuition but not the number of hours spent.

Internal and External Tuition

Although the focus of this paper is to identify the determinants of spending and time spent of external tuition, the time spent on internal tuition is identified as a significant determinant of spending but not the time spent on external tuition. The logarithm of hours spent on internal tuition has a negative relationship to logarithm of spending for external tuition. An increase of one percent in the hours spent on internal tuition will reduce the spending on external tuition by 0.161 percent. However, there is no significant relationship between the time spent on internal and external tuition. This finding therefore implies that more time spent on supplementary tutoring in school will reduce the monetary incentive for students to spend on tuition outside the school. Yet, time spent on tuition in school does not determine the participation of tuition outside of school.

Father's Level of Education

Parental education is a significant determinant of spending and the amount of time spent attending shadow education. However, between father's and mother's level of education, our model showed a higher explanatory value for father's level of education and hence this was used as an independent variable to represent the status of the family. The result shows that when a father's level of education is one level higher than another father, for instance between postgraduate and bachelor degree holders, spending and amount of time spent attending supplementary tutoring are higher by 9.2 percent and 8.1 percent respectively. This positive relationship between father's level of education with spending and participation in shadow education is consistent with previous studies conducted (see Pallegedara, 2011).

It is expected that fathers with a higher level of education tend to on average have a higher income as compared to their counterparts with a lower level of education. Hence, the higher income of the fathers also implies that the household has greater spending ability to support the child to improve or maintain his or her academic performance. The greater spending ability of household may also encourage their children to participate longer hours in supplementary tutoring. More importantly, identifying this determinant reaffirms Bray's (2009) argument that shadow education exacerbates social inequalities whereby economic and social yield from education depends on the social and cultural capital inherited from the family (Bourdieu, 1986). In other words, students whose parents have higher academic achievement have accumulated the capability or 'capital' for

these students to have an advantage over their peers whose parents do not have the same level of academic achievement. . The added capability or 'capital' inherited from the previous generation will further create an unequal competition in the current generation.

Academic Excellence

Previous academic achievement is a determinant of spending and amount of time spent attending supplementary tutoring. The level of achievement is measured by the number of As students obtained in their Lower Secondary Assessment, the last public examination sat by the respondents prior to responding to the questionnaire, and that the result of this assessment is comparable across the country. From the model, it was estimated that for a student who has an additional 'A' as compared to his or her peers, he or she is likely to spend 4.6% more on supplementary tutoring and to attend an additional 5.1 % hours of private tuition. This findings is consistent with many previous research (see Bray, 2011; Kim and Lee, 2010; Kim and Park, 2010; Liu, 2012; Stevenson and Baker, 1992). The rationale underlying this finding is that students who have better grades tend to put a greater emphasis on their academic performance and therefore have greater incentive to spend and participate in tuition as a way to help them maintain or improve their academic goals. This also shows that shadow education to some extent exacerbates the educational divide in mainstream education in schools. For instance, students who are not performing academically would have given up and therefore do not participate in supplementary tutoring, and students who are performing well would want to improve faster by attending external tuition.

Ethnicity

Last but not least, ethnicity is a determinant of spending and amount of time spent participating in shadow education in Malaysia. This findings is expected in the context of a multi-ethnic country like Malaysia (see Jelani and Tan, 2012; Jelani et al., 2015; KRI, 2014; Wan, 2005). The importance of ethnicity may contradict the findings of previous studies conducted in other countries or societies, particularly in mono-ethnic and less diverse populations, such as those reported by Dang (2007) and Pallegedara (2011). In our model, students of Chinese descent are likely to spend 143 %[3] more for tuition fees and 40 % more hours per week than their Malay peers. Likewise, students of Indian descent and other minorities groups like Sinhalese and Eurasians are likely to spend 124%[4] more on fees and 53 %[5] more hours than their Malay counterparts. As for the *Bumiputera* from East Malaysia, which comprises the Kadazandusun, Bajau, Murut and others, tend to spend 58 %[6] more on fees and 26%[7] more of their time a week for tuition, as compared to their Malay counterparts in Peninsular Malaysia.

To explain ethnicity differences, there are a number of justifications. First, Bray (2009) pointed out that Confucian traditions tend to place greater importance on education and self-diligence and this proposition may partly contribute to the higher spending and hours of participation in shadow education by students of Chinese descent. Second, up to 2002, entrance into Malaysian public universities had an ethnic quota. Although the quota was abolished and replaced by meritocracy, there remained different policies for admission based on ethnicity whereby there are two pathways of pre-university programmes into public universities. There is a Matriculation programme which has a quota of 90:10 *Bumiputera* (including Malay and other ethnic groups in East Malaysia) and non-*Bumiputera*, and the STPM examination. Although differing in standards, the grades of the two programmes are used as one common entry criteria (Lee, 2004). Hence, the higher propensity to spend and more time devoted to external tuition by students of Chinese, Indians and other descents may be driven by the need for them to excel academically in a more competitive pathway into universities. Third, the lower incidence of Malay and East Malaysian *Bumiputera* students engaging in external tuition may be related to the fact that these students have a higher tendency to be in boarding schools and therefore do not leave the school compound to acquire additional

supplementary tutoring. Fourth, at the primary level, there are vernacular schools in Malaysia using Mandarin and Tamil as their medium of instructions. However, at the secondary level, Malay becomes the only medium of instruction. Thus, students from Chinese or Indian descent are more likely than their Malay and *Bumiputera* peers to attend tuition for the Malay language to help them master the language. Regardless of the possible reasons underlying ethnic differences in terms of spending and amount of time spent, ethnicity is a significant determinant of spending and amount of time spent attending private supplementary tutoring in Malaysia.

Discussion and Conclusion

Shadow education is now a major phenomenon in Malaysia. This study identifies ethnicity, father's level of education and academic excellence as determinants of spending and amount of time spent; while geographical location and participation in internal tuition as determinants of spending but not the amount of time spent in supplementary tutoring. The identification of these determinants has important economic and educational imperatives.

It is important to first recognize that shadow education has grown as an economic sector based on demand and supply without much governmental intervention. It has been left in the invisible hands of the market, and identifying the determinants of spending and amount of time spent has given us some insights into the ways in which individuals participate in this economic sector. Although Bray and Lykins (2012) argue that shadow education should not be left to the market forces but instead would benefit from more active policy interventions However, from understanding these determinants, we argue that the interventions and initiatives should target and address issues in the mainstream education system.

One of the key issue in the mainstream education system that was 'illuminated by its shadow' is the phenomenon of overemphasis on examinations and grade inflation. For instance, the national examination in Year 11, Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) has over the years suffered from massive grade inflation. In year 2000, the 'open paper' system for SPM was introduced whereby students have the flexibility to choose the number of subjects. This resulted in students attempting more than 20 subjects, and in 2007, the national top scorer for SPM got 21 A's. Interestingly, in 2008 where more than 400,000 students sat for SPM, 6,277 students scored straight A's (The Sun Daily, 2009). Hence, to curb grade inflation and the 'rat-race' for A's, a cap of ten subjects and an additional grade A+ were introduced for SPM beginning 2009.

The findings on determinants of spending and amount of time spent for shadow education reflects that the 'rat race' for Ass in examination within the mainstream education system still exists. Given that one of the findings of this study showed that students who are academically better tend to spend more on tuition classes, this reinforces the point that private tuition is predominantly used to help students to maintain or perform better in examinations, rather than helping those who are academically weaker to catch up. Compounded by the fact students whose fathers have higher level of education tend to spend more on tuition, which also indirectly suggests a higher level of income in a household, this strengthened the proposition of private tuition used to fuel the 'rat race' and further widening social inequalities (Bray, 2009).

Yet, the most critical reflection about the mainstream education system from its shadow concerns the quality of education. Given the prevalence of private tuition and especially the amount of time spent on it this phenomenon to some extent illustrates that students and/or their parents either feel that the education provided in schools is insufficient or not meeting their expectations. This situation may or may not relate to the overemphasis on examination, but certainly highlights a bigger issue of confidence with the overall education system. Adding on the rather dismal performance of Malaysian students in international tests such as PISA and TIMSS, policymakers and educators therefore may need to ask: Why are students spending additional time and money for private tuition in addition of the 30 hours a week of formal schooling? This study is only able to show the amount of money and time spent, but further study is required to understand the underlying reason.

Notes

[1]*Bumiputera* refers to the sons of the soil, which represent the Malays, East Malaysian ethnic groups and other indigenous ethnic groups of Southeast Asia. In this research, "East Malaysian *Bumiputera*" refers specifically to ethnic groups present in Sabah, such as Kadazandusun, Bajau, Melayu Brunei and Murut, and "Malay" refers to those in Peninsular Malaysia.
[2]The semielasticity for the dummy regressor is calculated using the device suggested by Halvorsen and Palmquist; taken from Gujarati (2003). The antilog (to base e) of the estimated dummy coefficient is computed, then 1 is subtracted from it and the difference is multiplied by 100. For instance, [antilog(0.3) - 1] x 100 = 35 percent.
[3]The calculation is as follows : [antilog(0.886) - 1] x 100 = 143 percent.
[4]The calculation is as follows : [antilog(0.806) - 1] x 100 = 124 percent.
[5] The calculation is as follows : [antilog(0.425) - 1] x 100 = 53 percent.
[6]The calculation is as follows : [antilog(0.460) - 1] x 100 = 58 percent.
[7]The calculation is as follows : [antilog(0.234) - 1] x 100 = 26 percent.
[8]The data used in this study is from The Transition from Secondary Education to Higher Education: Malaysia project, comprising of Professor Dr. Aida Suraya Md. Yunus, Professor Dato' Dr. Ibrahim Che Omar and Dr. Chang Da Wan (one of the authors of this paper). Both authors greatly appreciate the permission given to us to use the data for this paper.

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Mobility, Mutual Recognition and ASEAN Community Building: The Road to Sustainable ASEAN Integration

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Abstract: *This paper analyses the role of international mobility and mutual recognition to regional community building in the ASEAN region by reviewing policy documents and international student mobility statistics. ASEAN policy directives have evolved from regional economic cooperation to ASEAN Community building despite the limited mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) on professional services, and low and unbalanced intra-ASEAN student mobility. However the non-ratification of the 2011 UNESCO Asia and Pacific Recognition Convention, and the slow implementation of various regional frameworks supporting the establishment of an ASEAN Higher Education Area have limited the potential contribution of mobility and mutual recognition to the ASEAN Community building project. Recommendations to enhance its contribution includes expanding and implementing ASEAN MRAs to all professional disciplines, the development and institutionalisation of an ASEAN quality assurance system, promoting a balanced intra-ASEAN mobility, and ratification and implementation of the 2011 UNESCO Asia and Pacific Recognition Convention (Tokyo Convention).*

Keywords: *ASEAN, regionalism, mobility, mutual recognition, community building*

Introduction

Although officially established on the 22th of November 2015, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Community still requires significant regional building initiatives. Progress in ASEAN regional integration has mostly focused on economic cooperation and integration, while education cooperation, until recently, has focused on ASEAN human resource development to support sustainable national and regional economic development.

The last decade, however, has seen ASEAN initiatives move beyond economic cooperation and integration, in the direction of establishing the foundations required to establish an ASEAN Community. In particular, this period saw a significant number of initiatives focused on the regionalisation of higher education in the ASEAN region.

Drivers of these developments are a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors include the various common challenges faced by ASEAN Member States, and the need to ensure competitiveness in the ASEAN region. Extrinsic factors include the acceptance of the knowledge-based economy discourse and of the role of higher education in sustainable economic development, the various regionalisation initiatives including in higher education (especially in Europe), and ASEAN's need to engage in inter-regional collaboration with different regions and regional initiatives.

Sharing common challenges, individual ASEAN member states have resorted to looking into regional solutions to build peace, prosperity, and sustainable economic development within the increasingly relevant ASEAN-led regionalism frameworks namely: ASEAN, ASEAN plus 3 (China, Japan,

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and South Korea) and East Asian Summit (which include Australia, India, New Zealand, United States of America, and the Federal Republic of Russia on top of the ASEAN plus 3 countries).

Within ASEAN, the concept of mobility has been strongly imbedded in its ASEAN Community building directive and initiatives. Mimicking Europe's four freedoms, ASEAN has been promoting and supporting the mobility of goods and services, investments, capital, and labor. However, ASEAN developments in the area of mobility of services and labor (especially professionals) has been lagging. The paper will briefly present a brief overview of ASEAN Community building, developments in ASEAN mobility and mutual recognition, which include ASEAN student mobility, and various ASEAN and non-ASEAN initiatives. This account will be followed by discussion of the role of mobility and mutual recognition of higher education qualifications in the ASEAN Community building project. The paper end by concluding and providing recommendations for consideration by the ASEAN Secretariat.

Regionalism and Regional Community Building

The establishment of a regional community, such as the European Union and ASEAN, is brought about by the process of regionalisation, which leads to regional integration (Hettne and Soderbaum, 2000; Knight, 2012). Regionalisation (or the process of region building) can be seen in terms of: a project driven by actors; a process with its own internal dynamics, geopolitical and economic factors; and as products with regions (through regional organisations) as actors at the regional and global levels (Lagenhove 2012, pp.18-19).

Seen as a continuum, regionalisation has been categorised into four different phases, namely: early, old, new and comparative regionalisms. Early regionalism dealt with trans-local economic, political, social and cultural integration, while the latter three phases of regionalism have been conceptualised in terms of political (bi-polar Cold War, Post-Cold War, and multipolar (world of regions) world orders), and policy (e.g. policy direction, institutions, and agents) contexts (Soderbaum, 2015). Furthermore, old, new and comparative regionalisms are differentiated by their actors (state; state vs. non-state; and state and non-state) and modes of governance (nationalism; resisting/taming/advancing economic globalisation; and regions as part of multi-level global governance) respectively (Laursen, 2008; Soderbaum, 2013; 2015).

A regional community, such as the ASEAN Community, is socially constructed by the interests and identities of its actors taking into consideration the interaction process and their subjective understandings (Chao, 2014b). Originally defined with geographical and inter-governmental restrictions (Haas, 1958; Ravenhill, 2001), (new) regionalism is now seen as "an outcome of the integration processes usually involving the coalition of social forces: markets, private trade, investment flows, policies, and decisions of organizations and state-led initiatives" (Robertson 2008, p.720). As a complex project, regionalisation should be disaggregated in terms of economic, social and political integration processes, and seen in relation to the degree of the transfer of sovereignty from the nation state (e.g. ASEAN Member States) to the region (e.g. ASEAN Secretariat) (Hettne, 2005). It should be noted that the spill-over effect of one type of regionalism may lead to deeper integration or to other types of regionalisms as seen in the European and ASEAN cases, where economic regionalism has led to social/political regionalism (Chao, 2014a).

Although endogenous (focused on the nation state, and other actors, desire and needs) and exogenous (reacting to globalisation) factors are both driving factors to region building (Soderbaum and Sbragia, 2010), tensions between universal ideas and norms, and aspirations for regional cultural, managerial and ideational autonomy exist (Acharya, 1997). With its non-resolution seen to deter institution (and region) building, Acharya (1997) advanced that the process of adaption and 'indigenisation' of ideas and norms is the only solution to address these tensions.

Although earlier studies on social interaction and regional community building had mixed results (Toth, 2012), two recent studies focusing on the Erasmus program provide support for Deutsch (1957) and Fligstein's (2008) argument that increased and prolonged social interaction may eventually lead to the formation of an integration community of states and nations, and/or a regional identity.

Studying 61 Erasmus students in three different universities in Turkey, Demirkol (2013) concluded that educational mobility programmes have a positive effect on cultural integration. Similarly, Stoeckel (2016), studying roughly 1,500 students at 38 German universities, concluded that social interaction contributes to a European identity. However, Stoeckel (2016) stated that it was most effective only in particular contact with other international students rather than contact with hosts.

Regional community building requires more than a slogan, such as 'one vision, one identity, one community' or regional and/or national policies. Consensus building for its regional (ASEAN) vision, and the actual formulation and promotion of a regional (ASEAN) ideal are necessary. Furthermore, it requires a 'sense of community', which can only be achieved through prolonged social interactions, such as through international (Intra-ASEAN) student and professional mobility especially when complemented with mutual recognition arrangements.

It is within the above-mentioned consensus building, identity formation, and promotion of a 'sense of community' that mobility and mutual recognition contributes to ASEAN Community building. These processes, however, are anchored on historical developments that form the current state of the ASEAN Community, international student (and professional) mobility, and mutual recognition in the ASEAN region, which are presented in the subsequent sections of this paper.

ASEAN Community Building

After a series of failed regionalisation initiatives (e.g. Association of South East Asia; and the Malaysia-Philippines-Indonesia (Maphilindo) initiatives), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was officially established in 1967 by its five founding member states, namely: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Its membership later expanded with the accession of Brunei Darussalam in 1984, and Vietnam, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Cambodia in the late 1990s.

The continuum between old and new regionalisms can be seen in the ASEAN region. Old regionalism can be seen with the various regional economic cooperation initiatives, such as the ASEAN Industrial Projects (AIP), Preferential Trade Arrangements (PTAs), and the ASEAN Industrial Complementation (AIC), later supplemented by the ASEAN Industrial Joint Ventures (AIJV), were set forth by the 1976 Declaration of ASEAN Concord. These initiatives were developed during the Cold War era as a response to the international commodity crisis and to promote intra-ASEAN trade on a number of preferential goods (e.g. food and energy) (Cuyvers and Pupphavesa, 1996). New regionalism in the ASEAN region can be seen to have started with the establishment of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) in 1992, which was a response to globalisation and neo-liberalism, especially with the rise of China and India in the late 1980s.

After the establishment of AFTA in 1992, various regionalisation initiatives, mostly focused on ASEAN Economic integration (ASEAN, 1995; 1998; 2009a), were initiated. However, a multi-tier (two-track) economic liberalisation, especially with the ASEAN Minus X formula, developed in the ASEAN region with the ASEAN6 (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) countries moving ahead of the CLMV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam) countries, with the possible exception of Vietnam.

Within the rationale of ASEAN Community building, and especially after its expansion in the late 1990s, ASEAN started initiatives to narrow the development gap between ASEAN Member States. These initiatives include the Initiative for ASEAN Integration and Narrowing the Developing Gap, have focused on narrowing the development gap between these two ASEAN sub-groupings (ASEAN, 2017; Chao, 2016) to realise a single market and to support the establishment and consolidation of the ASEAN Community.

The ASEAN Community building directive started with the ASEAN Vision 2020 and the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II, which were adopted in 1997 and 2003 respectively (ASEAN, 1997; 2003). Officially established on November 2015 by the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, the ASEAN Community is anchored on three pillars namely: the ASEAN Political-Security Community (originally ASEAN Security Community), the ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural

Community (ASEAN, 2015a). This advancement of ASEAN regionalism is meant to facilitate the free movement of goods, services, investment and skilled labor, and the freer flow of capital within the ASEAN region.

Figure 1. ASEAN community vision 2025

ASEAN Community Vision 2025 (Kuala Lumpur Declaration)		
Consolidate	**Envision**	**Complement**
Rules-based, People-Oriented & People-centered	Peaceful, Stable & Resilient	UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda
Three Pillars of ASEAN Community		
Political-Security	**Economic**	**Socio-Cultural**
Implement ASEAN agreements	Highly integrated & cohesive regional economy (*resolution of non-trade barriers*) (*movement – investment, skilled labor, business persons & capital*)	Committed, participative & socially-responsive (accountable/inclusive mechanisms)
Promote/protect *human rights*	Competitive, Innovative & Dynamic	Inclusive (promotes/protects human rights)
Promote/Strengthen *Peace-oriented values*	Enhanced connectivity & sectoral cooperation (regional frameworks)	Dynamic & harmonious (*identity, culture & heritage*)
Strengthen *ASEAN unity, cohesiveness & centrality*		Innovate & contribute to Global community

Source: Adapted from ASEAN (2015a)

Acknowledging the need to consolidate the ASEAN Community, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration also set directives to advance ASEAN's vision of a peaceful, stable and resilient community of nations with "one vision, one identity, and one community", one that complements the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (ASEAN, 2015a).

Figure 1 presents the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, with key characteristics in each of its three pillars. Of particular interest for ASEAN Community building is the focus on increasing ASEAN unity, cohesiveness and centrality, movement of investment, skilled labor, business persons and capital, enhancing connectivity and sectoral cooperation (including the use of regional frameworks), and a focus on dynamism and harmony particularly for identity, culture, and heritage. The above-mentioned focus highlights the need to develop and promote an ASEAN identity, implement regional frameworks, and enhance mobility, especially people to people mobility, to further consolidate the ASEAN Community.

ASEAN Mobility and Mutual Recognition

The World Trade Organization's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which came into effect in January 1995, has caused an increasing focus in the global trade of services. Given the focus on service liberalisation and the reframing of education as a commodity that is subject to the rules of trade, GATS contributed to the global acceptance of the knowledge-based economy discourse, which became prominent from the late 1990s or early 2000s.

Within this global context, ASEAN embarked on its own liberalisation of services within the AFAS framework (ASEAN, 1995), and eventually within ASEAN's directive to transform ASEAN into a region with free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labor, and freer flow of capital, as set out in the 2007 ASEAN Economic Blueprint (Koty, 2016). ASEAN has acknowledged the contribution of highly qualified graduates to ensuring the region's competitiveness and the establishment of a regional knowledge-based economy.

Given the common challenges across ASEAN Member States including but not limited to increasing student enrolments, economic restructuring, financial constraints, access, equity, quality and relevance issues (Lee and Healy, 2006; Umemiya, 2008), a consensus emerged regarding the benefits and necessity for higher education cooperation (Chao, 2016).

This is evident in the ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan and the Hua Hin Declaration which highlighted the centrality of education in ASEAN's commitment to build the ASEAN Community (ASEAN 2009b; 2012, p.3) . The ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan in Education was developed to support ASEAN principles of peace and stability, sustained economic growth and shared prosperity, cooperation and consensus, rule of law and good governance, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are enshrined in the ASEAN Charter (ASEAN, 2012). In fact, the Work Plan was a response to the decision of the Fourth ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting in 2009 (4th ASED) "which considered the importance of having a work plan to guide the work of the Senior Officials Meeting on Education (SOM-ED) in an integrated manner towards the building of an ASEAN Community" (ASEAN 2012, p.4).

Furthermore, the four priorities in the ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan in Education are intended to "support ASEAN programs that raise awareness of regional identity; promote access to and improve quality of primary, secondary and tertiary education; support regional mobility programmes for students, teachers, and faculty and strategies for internationalisation of education; and support for other ASEAN sectoral bodies with an interest in education" (ASEAN 2012, p.vii). Aside from acknowledging the need for consolidation of the ASEAN Community, ASEAN's focus on increasing access to quality education, improving quality of education, and cross-border mobility and the internationalisation of education highlights the importance attached to student (and professional) mobility to ASEAN Community building.

International student and professional mobility can facilitate the inter-cultural and social awareness and understanding required in any community building exercise (Demirkol, 2013; Toth, 2012; Stoeckel, 2016; Vaughn, 2016). Given the identity formation role of education, particularly in higher education, and of increasing regionalism in the global world order, the role of intra-ASEAN mobility and mutual recognition of ASEAN higher education qualifications is becoming a necessity for ASEAN Community building.

ASEAN Student Mobility

As this section looks into ASEAN mobility and mutual recognition issues, it is necessary to briefly discuss the developments in ASEAN international student mobility in higher education. Although ASEAN student mobility has been increasing over the past two decades, intra-ASEAN student mobility is quite low. ASEAN outbound student mobility has significantly increased from 154,289 to 256,945 from 1999 to 2015 respectively (see table 1). Within the same period, intra-ASEAN student mobility has also increased from 1.87% to 6.92% of the total ASEAN outbound students from 1999 to 2015 respectively (see table 1).

Intra-ASEAN mobility is significantly hosted by Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, three countries which respectively hosted 53.89% (12,467), 22% (5,138) and 9.78% (2,262) in 2010, and 57.70% (10,253), 27.55% (4,895), and 12.22% (2,171) in 2015, of ASEAN internationally mobile students. Although Singapore should also be a key host of ASEAN international students, no information is available in the UNESCO UIS dataset.

Table 1. ASEAN Student Mobility

	1999	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
ASEAN outbound	154,289	143,643	164,176	223,021	228,272	228,568	231,347	237,097	256,945
Intra-ASEAN	2,882	7,643	4,728	23,133	19,694	18,496	8,524	12,190	17,769
	1.87%	5.32%	2.88%	10.37%	8.63%	8.09%	3.68%	5.14%	6.92%

Source: Calculated by author from UNESCO UIS database

Malaysia and Singapore are widely regarded to be key international higher education hubs in the ASEAN region, each hosting a number of foreign university branch campuses (Chao, 2014b; Clark, 2015; Dessoff, 2012). Malaysia hosts a significant number of Indonesian, Singaporean and Thai students, while Thailand and Vietnam host mainly ASEAN students from the CLMV countries (see table 2). Of particular interest is the fact that Malaysia has sent a large number of students to Indonesia during the period 2005-2010 (see table 3). Given that this is atypical for Malaysian student mobility, the rationale and driving factors for Malaysian student mobility to Indonesia during this period requires further investigation.

In spite of the increase in intra-ASEAN student mobility, it continues to lag behind the increase in ASEAN outward student mobility, especially starting in 2006 (see figure 2). ASEAN's regional capture for ASEAN outbound students has only been focused on Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam (and Singapore, being a global higher education hub, in spite of the missing data). Furthermore, it is also apparent that there is an Islamic (Indonesians studying in Malaysia), and geographic (CLMV countries going to Thailand and Vietnam; Singaporeans studying in Malaysia) preference within ASEAN higher education. Socio-economic status of ASEAN Member States and its students may have also contributed to international mobility decisions along with language, culture, quality and affordability of education in ASEAN Member States.

ASEAN mobility and mutual recognition initiatives can be seen within the ASEAN University Network (AUN), the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation – Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED), and ASEAN itself. These are complemented by various higher education initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), particularly through its Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the European Commission (EC) and its partners. In particular, the EC's 'European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (EU-SHARE)' Project is supporting ASEAN initiatives, through the AUN, develop the regional architecture for ASEAN, and ASEAN-European Union, higher education mobility and mutual recognition.

Table 2. ASEAN Students Hosted by Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam

	Malaysia			Thailand			Vietnam		
	2000	2010	2015	2000	2010	2015	2000	2010	2015
Brunei Darussalam	265	310	548				214	517	
Cambodia	137	229	273		1,009	1,182			381
Indonesia	5,296	8,955	5,700		191	274			6
Lao PDR	20	17	16		1,254	793	358	1,744	1,772
Malaysia					129	100			
Myanmar	301	396	404		1,205	1,620			

Philippines	113	350	371		170	148			11
Singapore	306	840	960		39	30			1
Thailand	457	1,316	1,361					1	
Vietnam	64	54	620		1,141	748			
Total	**6,959**	**12,467**	**10,253**	**0**	**5,138**	**4,895**	**572**	**2,262**	**2,171**

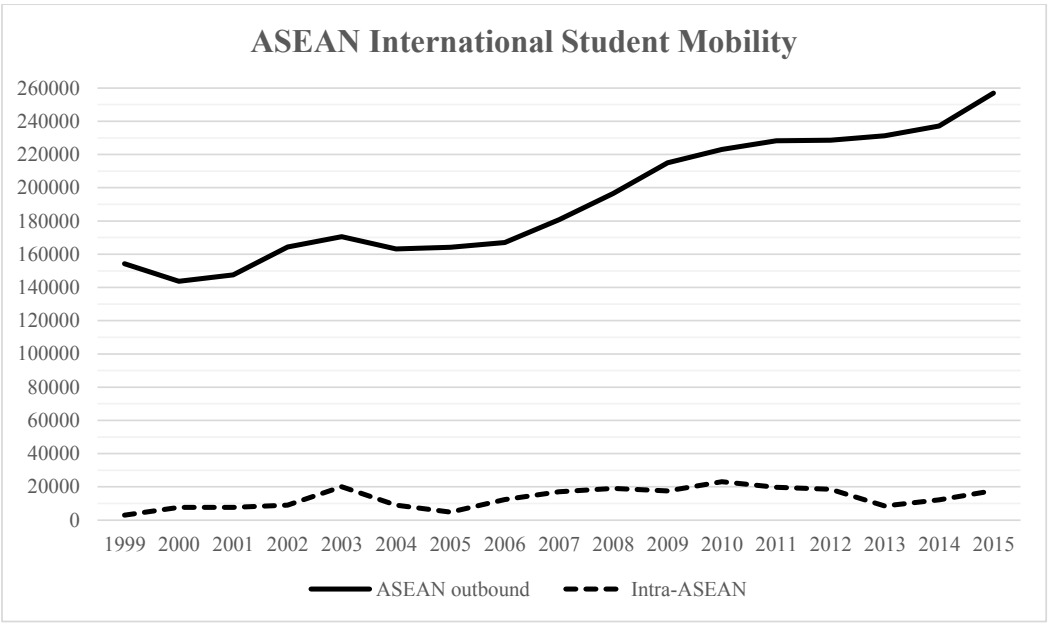
Source: Calculated by author from UNESCO UIS database

Table 3. Malaysian Students in Indonesia

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1,052	2,775	2,882	2,227	Not available	2,516

Source: Compiled from UNESCO UIS database

Figure 2. ASEAN student mobility



Source: Calculated by author from UNESCO UIS

AUN, SEAMEO-RIHED and ASEAN

Since its establishment in 1995, AUN has been engaged in strengthening university cooperation within ASEAN, promoting cooperation and solidarity among scholars, academicians, and researchers in ASEAN Member States. In 2008, AUN became one of ASEAN's sectorial ministerial body responsible for higher education cooperation and development which mandates its serving as a policy-oriented body in ASEAN higher education. Re-established in 1993 (originally established in 1959), SEAMEO-RIHED's mission has been to foster efficiency, effectiveness, and harmonisation of higher education in South East Asia through systemic research, empowerment, development of mechanisms to facilitate sharing and collaborations in higher education.

Both AUN and SEAMEO-RIHED have been engaged in quality assurance, international student mobility, credit transfers and internationalisation of higher education in the ASEAN region. However, AUN activities are located within its network of AUN member universities, and recently through associate member universities, while SEAMEO-RIHED engages at the regional level (e.g. the ASEAN International Mobility Scheme, among others).

ASEAN has also contributed to the harmonisation of ASEAN higher education with its development and adoption of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) in 2014. ASEAN Member States are also required to reference their respective national qualifications frameworks to the AQRF. Indirectly, the AQRF also promotes the development of national qualifications frameworks in ASEAN member states.

Since 2005, ASEAN has concluded and signed several Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) and/or Framework Agreements on Mutual Recognition on Engineering, Nursing, Architectural, Medical, Dental and Accountancy Services, Tourism Professionals, and Surveying Qualifications. Furthermore, an agreement for visa exemption for ASEAN nationals and the ASEAN Framework on Movement of Natural Persons were signed in 2006 and 2012 respectively. These agreements and frameworks are positioned to increase the mobility of professionals and support the free movement of trade in services within the ASEAN region.

In AFAS, probably the first ASEAN document with reference to mutual recognition of educational qualifications, article 5.1 facilitated the recognition of education, experience, requirements, licenses or certifications granted in another ASEAN Member State for the purpose of licensing or certification of service suppliers. However, the same article clarifies that such recognition may be based on agreement/arrangement with concerned Member States or even be accorded autonomously. As such, the above-mentioned ASEAN MRAs are an ongoing development as part of ASEAN ongoing economic integration initiative especially in services. This argument can also be supported by ASEAN's ongoing development of an ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATISA).

Non-ASEAN Factors

Aside from policy directives and projects from ASEAN and ASEAN-related organisations, non-ASEAN organisations have also contributed to (and to a certain extent directed) initiatives related to ASEAN mobility and the mutual recognition of higher education qualifications.

UNESCO's regional recognition conventions have strongly influenced the global and regional discussions on mutual recognition of higher education qualifications (Chao, 2015), while the ADB has supported SEAMEO RIHED's projects related to harmonising credit transfers in the ASEAN region. Furthermore, given their experience in the regionalisation of higher education and international student mobility, the European Commission, and its partners from its Member States, have also supported ASEAN in developing ASEAN (and EU-ASEAN) international student mobility and mutual recognition of higher education qualifications. The latter's ongoing EU-SHARE project, which runs from 2015 to 2018, aims to harmonise ASEAN higher education and create a bridge between ASEAN and European higher education (Chao, 2016).

UNESCO's 1983 Asia and Pacific Recognition Convention and its revised version, the 2011 Tokyo Convention, have framed the discussions on mutual recognition of higher education qualifications in the Asia and Pacific region. Its recent revision, the 2011 Tokyo Recognition Convention, expanded this conversation to incorporate regional collaboration of national information centers, the use of national and regional qualifications frameworks, and even the use of transparency instruments such as the UNESCO diploma supplement (Chao, 2015). However, only Lao PDR, the Philippines and Indonesia have ratified the 1983 Asia and Pacific Recognition Convention, and the 2011 recognition convention has not entered into force given that only three (China, Australia and New Zealand) of the required five UNESCO Asia and Pacific Member States have ratified the revised convention (Chao, 2015).

Discussions on establishing an AHEA, however, started in mid-2007 with SEAMEO-RIHED's Japan Foundation-funded which includes exploring the benefits of establishing a regional framework

for higher education harmonisation. This project evolved into an agreement to develop various regional frameworks/mechanisms for quality assurance, credit transfer systems, mobility schemes, and lifelong learning systems (Chao, 2011; 2016; SEAMEO-RIHED, 2009).

ADB's support to SEAMEO-RIHED's project 'Harmonising Credit Transfer Systems in the Greater Mekong Sub-region and beyond' facilitated the discussion and initiatives to establish an ASEAN Higher Education Area (AHEA) or Common Space, and led to the development of the Academic Credit Transfer Framework Agreement (Chao, 2014b; 2016). The ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education was developed with the support from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German Rectors Conference (HRK) and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) supported the development of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education (Chao, 2016).

Furthermore, the European Commission's EU-SHARE project, in collaboration with its implementing partners, infused 9.6 Million Euros to strengthen regional cooperation within ASEAN, and between ASEAN and Europe, higher education (Chao, 2016; EU-SHARE, n.d.). In fact, the first ASEAN mobility forum was held on 2017 in Manila which was co-organised by the EU-SHARE project and the Philippines Commission on Higher Education focused on intra-ASEAN student mobility and aims to encourage deeper socio-cultural integration in ASEAN through people-to-people mobility (EU-SHARE, 2017). The support highlights ASEAN's recent priority in higher education, and its role in the ASEAN Community building process.

Discussion

The previous sections have presented the various developments within ASEAN higher education and the ASEAN Community building project. Various ASEAN policy documents have explicitly called for enhanced cooperation through the liberalisation of trade in goods and services, the free flow of professionals, and mutual recognition of professional credentials. Within the ASEAN 5-Year Work Plan in Education, education has been identified as a cross-cutting sector covering all three pillars of the ASEAN Community with human resource development, ASEAN awareness, and strengthening higher education cooperation, being key themes within the ASEAN Community building project.

Based on these observations, the discussion on mobility and mutual recognition in the ASEAN region will be presented in relation to: service sector liberalisation; higher education mobility and mutual recognition; development of regional frameworks; and ASEAN Awareness.

Service Sector Liberalisation

Even before the ASEAN Community building project, the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services, adopted in 1995, sought to enhance liberalisation of trade in services within the GATS framework to realise a free trade area for services. As early as 1995, within the same document, mutual recognition of education, experience and requirements were first mentioned, however, this was framed within the context of licensing and certification of service suppliers.

Within the ASEAN Community building project, the themes related to mobility and mutual recognition can be seen in its various policy documents. The community building project started with the ASEAN Vision 2020, which was adopted in Kuala Lumpur in 1997, which envisions "ASEAN as a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies" (ASEAN, 1997). This was further elaborated in the 2003 Declaration of ASEAN Concord II, which stated that the ASEAN Community shall be composed of three pillars: the ASEAN Security Community (later renamed to ASEAN Political-Security Community); ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community to build sustainable peace, stability, and shared prosperity in the region (ASEAN, 2003).

These policy documents highlight the vision of how human and natural resources contribute to the development and shared prosperity, the commitment to narrow the development gap within ASEAN Member States, and to enhance human resource development in all sectors of the economy through quality education, upgrading of skills, capabilities and training. In particular, the later document specifically mentioned the need to enhance cooperation and integration activities including human resource development and the recognition of educational qualifications to realise a fully integrated economic community.

Looking into the various action plans related to the ASEAN Community building project, the Hanoi Plan of Action (1999-2004), Vientiane Action Plan (2004-2010), and the Hua Hin Declaration (2009-2015) have specifically mentioned mobility and mutual recognition related issues.

The Hanoi Plan of Action stated strengthening the AUN, and its eventual conversion into the ASEAN University, strengthening of Member States education systems, and establishing a network of professional accreditation (ASEAN, 1999).

The ASEAN Economic Community was initially envisioned to be a single market and production base by 2020 (later advanced to 2015) with a free flow of investments, capital, goods, services and skilled labor within and across ASEAN Member States, while the Vientiane Action Plan aimed to undertake activities to promote and facilitate regional trade in services and movement of business persons, experts, professionals, skilled labor and talents (ASEAN, 2004).

Not only did the Hua Hin Declaration reiterate the need to facilitate movement of business persons, skilled labor and talents and the need for recognition of professional qualifications to establish the ASEAN Economic Community, it also specified action plans to complete mutual recognition arrangements under negotiation, implement the MRAs, and identify and develop MRAs for other professional services. Of particular interest is its action to enhance cooperation among ASEAN University Network members to increase intra-ASEAN student and staff mobility, and develop core competencies and qualifications for job/occupational and trainers' skills (ASEAN, 2009b).

These action plans form ASEAN's directives related to mobility and mutual recognition. It should be noted that mobility and mutual recognition in ASEAN policy documents were initially linked to movement of skilled labor and professionals within the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services and within the context of ASEAN liberalisation of trade in services. In fact, mutual recognition arrangements have been considered an important initiative for ASEAN integration on trade in services based on its ability to facilitate the flow of foreign professionals and workers taking into account relevant domestic regulations and market demand (ASEAN, 2015b).

With the exception of the MRA on Tourism Professionals which is implemented by the ASEAN Tourism Professionals Monitoring Committee, these MRAs are implemented by the Business Services and Healthcare Services Sectoral working groups under the ASEAN Coordinating Committee on Services. Common competency standards and an ASEAN-wide registration system for mobile ASEAN professionals covered by the various ASEAN MRAs, have been (or being) developed to support their implementation.

In terms of implementation, the MRAs for engineering and architectural services are showing signs of early success. According to the ASEAN Integration Report 2015, there are 1,252 engineers and 284 architects recorded in the ASEAN Chartered Professional Engineers and ASEAN Architects registers respectively (ASEAN, 2015c).

Higher Education Mobility and Mutual Recognition

In spite of these developments, discussions on student and academic mobility, and mutual recognition of higher education qualifications came at a later stage. ASEAN discussions on mobility and mutual recognition were initially focused on professional and skilled labor mobility as seen in the Hanoi Plan and Vientiane Plans of Action leading to the development and adoption of the first MRA in 2005, while it was only in the Hua Hin Declaration in 2009 where international student and staff mobility was explicitly mentioned.

The ongoing regionalisation of ASEAN higher education and its various initiatives may have played a role in their inclusion in recent ASEAN policy documents. Regionalisation of higher education initiatives were developed and implemented by AUN and SEAMEO-RIHED in the late-2000s. SEAMEO RIHED's *Raising Awareness: Exploring the Ideas of Creating a Higher Education Common Space in Southeast Asia* project, which started in 2007, and the various AUN and SEAMEO RIHED's subsequent regionalisation of higher education initiatives raised awareness on the necessity of international student mobility and regionalisation of higher education to support ASEAN Community building.

ASEAN's earlier and ongoing focus on liberalisation of trade in services, and its late realisation of the importance of intra-ASEAN student mobility in the ASEAN Community building process may have contributed to why intra-ASEAN student mobility has been lagging behind the growth of ASEAN outbound student mobility. However, the First ASEAN Mobility Forum, which focused on intra-ASEAN mobility and outlined a strategy to map and quantify intra-ASEAN student mobility, shows ASEAN's increasing focus on intra-ASEAN student mobility, and by extension mutual recognition of higher education qualifications in the recent years.

Regional Frameworks

In spite of the late discussions on ASEAN student mobility in ASEAN policy documents, the AUN, SEAMEO-RIHED and ASEAN, and sometimes in collaboration with other non-ASEAN partners, have developed and adopted a number of regional frameworks, mechanisms and/or transparency instruments related to mobility and mutual recognition. These frameworks including the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education (AQAFHE), and the Academic Credit Transfer Framework in Asia (ACTFA) can be considered as integral part of the ASEAN higher education area (Chao, 2015; 2016). They were developed to promote and support the regionalisation of ASEAN higher education, facilitate ASEAN student mobility and the mutual recognition of higher education qualifications (Chao, 2016). This sub-section presents these regional frameworks and discuss their relevance to mobility, mutual recognition and the ASEAN Community building project.

Developed and adopted by ASEAN in 2014, the AQRF is a common reference framework that enables comparisons of education qualifications across participating ASEAN Member States. Considered to be a unique ASEAN cross-sectoral and cross-pillar initiative, the AQRF was developed to support ASEAN Community building. Specifically, it supports achieving the free flow of skilled labor (through harmonisation and standardisation) within the region, and the establishment of an ASEAN skills recognition framework. Its objectives also include supporting recognition of qualifications and worker mobility, promoting and encouraging education and learner mobility, and encouraging the development of qualifications frameworks and national approaches to validating non-formal and in-formal learning in participating ASEAN Member States (ASEAN, n.d.).

Within the ASEAN Community building project, the importance of quality higher education and the need to award credit for studies within the Asian region has been recognised. In fact, these were behind the development of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education (AQAFHE) and the Academic Credit Transfer Framework in Asia, by the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network and SEAMEO-RIHED respectively. Even though both frameworks aim at supporting regional harmonisation in higher education, the former is focused on facilitating regional recognition of qualifications and the alignment and harmonisation of national quality assurance systems, while the latter is aimed at addressing the challenge of having multiple credit transfer systems in the Asian region (Chao, 2016).

Along with UNESCO's Asia and Pacific Recognition Convention and its diploma supplement, the three ASEAN regional frameworks facilitate harmonisation, transparency and accountability in ASEAN higher education (Chao, 2015; 2016). They also promote and support ASEAN student and labor mobility through a mutually agreed quality assurance and credit transfer frameworks, and a qualifications reference framework that enables referencing of ASEAN Member States national qualifications frameworks and their respective qualifications.

In spite of all these initiatives, regionalisation of higher education in the ASEAN region is still in its early stages of implementation. Mechanisms and frameworks for regional quality assurance, credit transfers, student mobility, and even mutual recognition conventions and agreements have been developed and/or established. Actual implementation, however, is still in its initial stages. In fact, some ASEAN Member States have not developed their national qualifications frameworks, and as such will not yet be referencing to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework.

Furthermore, the various ASEAN-based/linked student mobility programs (e.g. AIMS, AUN-student mobility scheme/scholarships) are for short term mobility, usually for one semester or one year. The limited duration, scope (disciplines), and number of participating universities in the above-mentioned mobility schemes significantly reduces their potential for increasing intra-ASEAN student mobility. It also does not establish an environment conducive to mutual recognition of higher education and professional mobility as its focus has been recognition and awarding credits acquired during the exchange within its member universities.

ASEAN Awareness

Regional community building is not simply a declaration that 10 ASEAN Member States came together to form formed the ASEAN Community. Although ASEAN's region building initiatives have initially focused (almost) exclusively on economic integration, it has evolved into a more complex community building project encompassing political-security, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. As such, ASEAN's region building project has evolved from old regionalism, one based on inter-governmental collaboration on a geographical restricted basis (Ravenhill, 2001; 2009) to new regionalism, defined as "an outcome of the integration processes usually involving the coalition of social forces: markets, private trade, investment flows, policies, and decisions of organizations and state-led initiatives" (Robertson 2008, p.720).

According to Hettne (2005), regional integration is a complex endeavor which should be disaggregated in terms of economic, social and political integration processes, and seen in relation to the transfer of sovereignty from the nation states to the region, namely ASEAN. This is reflected in ASEAN's three pillars: ASEAN Political-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community; and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, and the ASEAN Charter, which was drafted and adopted in 2007.

Given the above-mentioned evolution of the ASEAN Community building project, the importance of ASEAN identity building, and promoting awareness of the concept of ASEANess has been increasing. Discussions of ASEANess in official ASEAN documents started with the 2003 Declaration of ASEAN Concord II within the context of "cultivating people's awareness of ASEAN" and "to enhance the mutual ASEAN spirit", and have been carried onward in all policy documents related to the ASEAN Community building project.

In fact, as part of the education provisions in the Hua Hin Declaration and in support of the ASEAN Political-Security Community, the promotion and awareness of the ASEAN identity starts at the early stage of education inculcated into the curriculum in schools, especially in primary schools and guided by the ASEAN Curriculum Sourcebook, a resource designed for educators and curriculum developers implemented by the ASEAN Secretariat, and the development of ASEAN studies courses and programs for undergraduates and postgraduates respectively (ASEAN, 2009b; 2013).

However, the concepts of ASEANess and an ASEAN identity are intangible and constantly undergoing construction as a long-term, complex, and multi-stakeholder (including students and professionals) process. Mutual recognition of higher education and professional qualifications, and intra-ASEAN mobility not only raises awareness of ASEANess and the ASEAN identity, but actually contribute to the ongoing construction of the ASEAN identity.

Looking into the world's most successful student mobility program, the ERASMUS program, "mobility has been found to equip people in Europe with skills, European identity and citizenship values, also impacting on their social integration, inclusion and openness to other cultures" (European Commission 2015, p.13). This was also confirmed during the recent First ASEAN Mobility Forum,

"building cultural understanding and connections outside the home country" were considered the main benefits of student mobility (Chipperfield, 2017).

ASEAN mobility, be it student or professionals, results enhanced awareness of other ASEAN Member States political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts, and facilitates ASEAN identity formation. Intra-ASEAN student mobility is of particular importance as the current students will become the leaders, entrepreneurs and active citizens of ASEAN's future. Professional mobility facilitates understanding and harmonisation of professional practices and standards, and the integration of professions within the ASEAN Community. Mutual recognition of higher education and professional qualifications, however, is a major requisite for mobility.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Regionalisation is a complex and multi-faceted process leading to the creation of a region. This process goes beyond the simple cooperation model within geographic boundaries usually directed by Nation States in old regionalism, to a multi-actor, multi-level, and multi-dimensional process leading to the establishment of a region. Endogenous and exogenous factors and actors makes the regionalisation process both an internally and externally driven process often showing a continuity between old and new regionalisms.

In the ASEAN case, this continuity between old and new regionalisms is seen in its evolution from regional economic cooperation and its related initiatives to the more complex ASEAN Community building project. Building on prior and ongoing ASEAN regional economic integration initiatives (e.g. AFTA and AFAS), the ASEAN Community building project started on the basis of regional economic cooperation and evolved into a community building project involving political, economic and socio-cultural integration processes.

Mobility and mutual recognition have been discussed and documented in a number of ASEAN policy documents. Their purpose within the ASEAN Community building project has also evolved from a vision of utilising human and natural resources to contribute to ASEAN and ASEAN Member States development and shared prosperity to the need to enhance human resource development and the recognition of educational qualifications to realise a fully integrated economic community, and eventually to an integrated ASEAN Community.

In fact, the various plans of actions (e.g. Hanoi, Vientiane) and the Hua Hin Declaration incorporated mobility and mutual recognition, with the later adding timelines on completion of negotiated MRAs, the development of new MRAs for other professional services, enhancing cooperation among AUN members and developing core competencies and qualifications for job/occupational and trainers' skills. These action plans also direct ASEAN's initiatives related to mobility and mutual recognition, which evolved from its focus on the free movement of skilled labor and professionals within the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services and the ongoing liberalisation of trade in services into one supporting ASEAN Community building.

Current State of Mobility and Mutual Recognition

ASEAN developments related to mobility and mutual recognition have been focused on building the foundations for a regional quality assurance system, which is comprised of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education, ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework, Academic Credit Transfer Framework in Asia, and the various ASEAN-based or linked mobility schemes. Furthermore, the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Recognition Convention, both the 1983 and the 2011 versions, form an overarching framework to guide the recognition of higher education qualifications in the Asia and Pacific region, including the ASEAN Member States. However, these regional frameworks

are still under development or are in an early implementation stage, and only three ASEAN Member States ratified the 1983 Convention, and none has ratified the 2011 Convention to date.

The role of ASEAN student and academic mobility in promoting and raising awareness of ASEANess and the ASEAN Community has been incorporated in ASEAN's more recent policies since 2009. This recent development is framed within the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community integration process, and can be seen in both the ASEAN 5-year plan in education (2010-2015) and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. Mutual recognition of higher education and professional qualifications, and intra-ASEAN student and professional mobility not only raises the awareness of ASEANess and the ASEAN identity, but actually contribute to the ongoing construction of the ASEAN identity.

In spite of the ongoing regionalisation of ASEAN higher education initiatives, intra-ASEAN student mobility has fallen behind the increase of ASEAN outbound student mobility. Malaysia, Thailand, and arguably Singapore (in spite of the unavailability of data) are the major hosts of ASEAN students. However, geographic proximity and cultural cohesiveness appears to be a major factor influencing where internationally mobile ASEAN students study within the ASEAN region. Aside from the need to increase intra-ASEAN student mobility, there is a need to have a more balanced intra-ASEAN mobility to support raising awareness and understanding of the diverse ASEAN contexts, and the ASEANess within the ASEAN Community.

Mutual Recognition within the ASEAN Community has been focused on signing and implementing mutual recognition arrangements/framework agreements for key priority economic sectors. As such, mutual recognition, until recently, has been conceptualised as part of the ASEAN Economic Community process, and seen within an economic rationale. Although the implementation of the above-mentioned ASEAN MRAs are in their early stage, there appears to be some promise with the initial successful implementation of the MRAs for Engineering and Architectural services.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community's engagement with promoting ASEAN identity, culture and heritage, and promoting the concept and awareness of the ASEAN identity is also a promising development. This may facilitate an increased focus on enhancing intra-ASEAN student mobility, extending the period of study from one semester or even one year to a full program, and increasing focus on mutual recognition of higher education qualifications beyond the targeted professions.

Recommendations

Given the above-mentioned developments and the current state of ASEAN mobility and mutual recognition, it can be argued that mobility and mutual recognition, not limited to professional mobility, within the ASEAN region contributes to the ASEAN Community building project. They contribute mostly to the integration of the ASEAN Economic and Socio-Cultural Communities through facilitating the free mobility of professionals, skilled labor and services, and promoting awareness of ASEANess and the ASEAN identity within the ASEAN Community.

Mobility and mutual recognition in ASEAN, however, tend to be skewed towards an economic rationale, and limited to a number of professional sectors. The ASEAN Community embraces three pillars, namely: the ASEAN Political-Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community; and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. Mobility and mutual recognition should contribute to the integration processes of all three pillars of the ASEAN Community.

In spite of the recent development of various regional frameworks for the ASEAN Higher Education Area (e.g. AQRF, AQAFHE, and ACTFA), the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education, and the Academic Credit Transfer Framework in Asia, regionalisation of higher education is still in its early stages, and the implementation of the various ASEAN regional frameworks for higher education are in its early stage or have yet to be implemented. Their institutionalisation as foundations of an ASEAN regional quality assurance system has not even started. Intra-ASEAN student mobility, at 6.92% of total ASEAN outbound student mobility, remains minimal and mostly hosted by a few ASEAN countries. As mutual recognition of higher education qualifications facilitates international (and intra-ASEAN) student mobility, ratifying and implementing the UNESCO Asia and

Pacific Recognition Convention by ASEAN Member States will promote and institutionalise mutual recognition in the ASEAN region and beyond.

The ASEAN Higher Education Area is an integral part of the ASEAN Community, and international and intra-ASEAN student and academic mobility, and the mutual recognition of higher education and professional qualifications contribute to the ASEAN Community building project. Furthermore, professional and student mobility within the ASEAN region facilitates and contributes to the ongoing construction of the ASEAN identity by enhancing cultural awareness, inculcating ASEAN identity and citizenship values, and impacting their social integration, inclusion, and openness to other cultures as seen in the case of Europe's ERASMUS program.

Supporting initiatives to further develop and establish the ASEAN Higher Education Area not only promotes mobility and mutual recognition of higher education qualifications, but also directly contributes to raising awareness of ASEANess, the ongoing construction of the ASEAN identity, and molding future ASEAN citizens, entrepreneurs and leaders of the ASEAN Community.

As such, recommendations to the ASEAN Secretariat, and ASEAN Member States would be to: 1.) expand ASEAN MRAs and develop the common competency standards for all disciplines/professions, and facilitate the MRAs implementation across the ASEAN region; 2.) support the development and implementation of the various regional frameworks to facilitate the development and institutionalisation of an ASEAN quality assurance system, and the establishment of an ASEAN Higher Education Area; 3.) promote intra-ASEAN student mobility, and encourage a more balanced mobility across the ASEAN Member States; and 4.) encourage the rapid ratification of the 2011 UNESCO Revised Asia and Pacific Recognition Conventions (Tokyo Convention).

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Book Review

Education in Bhutan: Culture, Schooling, and Gross National Happiness. By Matthew J. Schuelka and T.W. Maxwell (Eds.) (2016), 252pp. ISBN: 9789811016479, Singapore: Springer.

This well-published volume of 15 essays and research articles on the Bhutanese educational system is exciting and revealing on several levels simultaneously. Many if not most of the articles contain valuable information about the history of the educational system, information which is not easily available elsewhere in any comprehensive form. Some of the articles, though not all, discuss with greatly needed but highly unusual frankness the problems that have inhibited the development of Bhutanese education. Some of the articles, but again not all, hint in a suggestive manner at the intellectual "box canyon" into which Bhutanese education has worked itself. Finally, the articles, taken as a whole, are very revelatory, through what they do not discuss, of the great need for profound self-analysis and self-criticism if the educational system is to dig itself out of the doldrums in which it currently finds itself.

The Kingdom of Bhutan remained relatively isolated from the politically and economically more dynamic regions of Asia until after World War II. This isolation was never complete, of course, although later both Bhutanese publicists and foreign romantics too often liked to talk about Bhutan as "Shangri-La." Until the years immediately after World War II, the country's education system, if one can speak of it in a systematic fashion at all, was primarily monastic both institutionally and purposively and refracted the *relative* isolation of the country. This cannot be stressed enough because, while some of the articles in this volume seek to suggest a continuity between the traditional and modern educational systems, the fact of the matter is that they are so utterly different that the argument for continuity is difficult to establish and maintain. Everything changed after World War II, primarily because the total environment in which Bhutan existed changed.

From its very inception, modern education in the Kingdom faced problems with which, quite frankly, it still wrestles. These can be winnowed out from the articles in this volume. First, in the first decades of modern education the country lacked its own cadre of teachers and was heavily reliant on personnel drawn from outside the country, most famously from Canada but primarily from India. The struggle to replace Indian teachers with Bhutanese required the construction of teacher training colleges, but the existence of teacher training colleges did not solve the teacher problem.

Second, there was a total lack of textbooks, and, consequently, the reliance on Indian textbooks became overwhelming. This meant that at that time Bhutan really did not have control over the content of its own education; Indian textbooks were strongly geared to the promotion of Indian nationalism, which did not contribute to the intention of Bhutanese education. When, eventually, a center for writing textbooks was set up under the Bhutanese Ministry of Education, the quality of the product inhibited the advancement of educational achievement.

Third is the issue of the physical context of education. Outside of the capital, and often even inside it, the schools are often badly built, in wretched condition, and with very little budgetary provision for their maintenance. Class sizes are large by any standard in too many schools, in the boarding schools parents often have to come and cook and take care of the children, and in remote and sometimes not so remote areas the children have to walk long distances to and from school.

Fourth, and very broadly, the purpose (or purposes) of education in Bhutan remains a primary issue all too rarely discussed. In Bhutan, the problem of constructing a national identity for a tiny nation consisting of peoples speaking different languages, practicing different belief systems, in fact, different cultures, is, theoretically, a significant problem for the education system. It concerns nation-building itself. Education may be one of if not the only nationally institutionalized activity in which

the entire population participates during the formative years of life. One would expect considerable attention be paid throughout the education system to those subjects, language, history, literature, the arts, which would contribute to the construction of an identity into which all the children would grow with the process of becoming Bhutanese adults. And, indeed, sandwiched in cultures and societies that from the perspective of tiny Bhutan are potentially overwhelming, the issue of national identity through education should be very pressing. But it competes with education in the instrumentalities of modernisation, namely, maths, the sciences, business, and, in values, competitiveness. In the overall situation, given the lack of textbooks and modern literature appropriate for schoolchildren in the national language, together with the felt need to prepare future citizens for competition in the global market, the choice of English as the language of instruction makes a great deal of sense. But even the most patriotic modernists would have to admit that there is a certain inescapable contradiction between the purpose of education in nation-building and the choice of English as the language of instruction.

Fifth, and for the moment the last issue, is the "ideological" framework of education, which is no less important than any of the others. In fact, for reasons that can be clearly discerned in many of the articles in this volume, this is the primary, perhaps overwhelming, issue. As many of the articles make clear, Bhutanese education is guided by the principles of "Gross National Happiness" (GNH). For a decade now the Ministry of Education and other institutions associated with the educational enterprise have conducted conferences, teacher training sessions, curriculum revisions, all concerned with making GNH the heart and soul of Bhutanese education. GNH has, in fact, become the mark by which Bhutanese educators (not to mention politicians, tourism operators, bureaucrats, among others) want to distinguish the nation's educational system (and the nation itself) from all others. It is supposed to be the source of the values the children imbibe in the schools. GNH, as several of our authors make clear, derives from the fundamental Buddhist values that constitute the worldview of Bhutanese Buddhist culture. The only problem is that, despite all the conferences and teacher training sessions, nobody has figured out what the practical application of GNH is in education, not to mention in the rest of the society and economy. And concentration on GNH economics or business practices will not contribute to the competitiveness of Bhutanese in the world, or for that matter, in the national market, which the government loudly and endlessly proclaims is vital to the future.

At the moment, and I have no doubt but that this statement will be hotly contested, GNH is irrelevant to Bhutanese education, as an examination of rising rates of crime, drug abuse, and suicide, for example, among the nation's youth demonstrates. This is not the fault of the educators, bureaucrats, or the students. The problem is that nobody has been able to define the applicability of GNH to practical matters. The one exception may be the environment, and it is quite true that environmental studies play a not insignificant role at many levels of Bhutanese education. Even there, GNH is more a way of describing good environmental practice then it is a practice in and of itself. There are alternatives. For example, John Dewey's concept of education for democracy provides a very important pedagogical and philosophical foundation for rethinking Bhutanese education, but "democratic procedures" were introduced into Bhutan with little or no thought for the cultural support that would breath into those procedures real democratic life. Some instruction in the rituals of democracy, such as voting, does exist, but it is not supported by the kind of broad introduction into democratic culture and institutions that used to be represented in American education, for example, by civics classes. But here, as in so much else, the intrication of the educational system and society is all too obvious: when "democracy" was introduced into Bhutan by royal fiat in the first decade of the century, no attention was paid to the encouragement of democratic culture as John Dewey would have understood it. And it is precisely in this context that the purported role of GNH in education has become so pronounced: absent a focus on democratic culture, GNH has become the high-minded grounding for the education system. This is very apparent in the attention paid to it in this volume, but what is missing is the critical analysis of both the theory and practice of GNH that might throw more light on its function in education.

This book comes, as all books do, with its own implicit subtext, and readers should pay particular attention to that subtext, for which the various articles provide an excellent starting point. A subtle reading the article by Pema Tshomo, for example, "Conditions of Happiness: Bhutan's Educating for Gross National Happiness Initiative and the Capability Approach" (pp. 139-152) will give a nuanced and balanced insight into the importance of the relationship of the still-unrealized ideological purpose of Bhutanese education and its "objective existing reality."

Bhutan's "non-formal education" project is, without a doubt, a great achievement, and it is sensitively represented in this volume by former Minister of Education Thakur S. Powdyel's article (pp. 169-180). The final chapter, "Conclusion: Key Outcomes, Challenges, Ways Forward, and Future Research," by Maxwell and Schuelka (pp. 229-239) provides an efficient summary of the contents of the book and specifies many technical and professional issues. However, by and large, the issue of the content, the real theory and practice of GNH, an idea which is the core not only of this volume but, theoretically, of Bhutanese education itself, is nowhere critically analysed in this book. That task remains to be done.

What this volume lacks, most specifically, is a discussion of the material conditions of education, like the quality of the nutrition and physical health as well as the social support of the pupils, and, yes, the cleanliness of the toilets and the kitchens in the schools. If, as Pema Tshomo rightly says, a GNH education, "as a national educational goal, creates the conditions necessary to provide every individual with the freedom to develop to the best of his or her capabilities…" (p. 149), then surely a close analysis of the material conditions of education and how they contribute to, or deter, the attainment of that goal, is no less important than anything else discussed here. Another lacuna is the question of the type of personality to the formation of which the educational system necessarily contributes, that could be harmonious with a "GNH society." The cultivation of individualism in Western, particularly American, educational institutions is wholly suitable to the culture of competition that contemporary capitalism, with its emphasis on innovation and disruption, promotes. The implications of this question are far too deep and broad to examine further here, but if Bhutan does indeed look toward the creation of a "GNH society," then the education system must necessarily confront the social-psychological question with no less energy than it needs to confront its other issues.

His Majesty the Fifth King has always been, even as Crown Prince, an indefatigable champion arguing for the vital central importance and the improvement of Bhutanese education at all levels. This is his constitutional responsibility, on the one hand, but, on the other, it is his own personal passionate commitment to the young people who will construct and become the future of the nation. Education in Bhutan makes it very obvious that leadership and ideals are by no means lacking. Future accomplishment will require leadership›s willingness to examine critically the ideals it proclaims and to deal resolutely with the social-psychological dimensions of GNH and with the nitty-gritty of daily life and the living-and-teaching conditions that obtain in schools in Bhutan.

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Book Review

Teaching and Learning in Lower Secondary Schools in the Era of PISA and TIMSS. By Kirsti Klette, Ole K. Bergem and Astrid Roe (Eds.) (2016), 165pp. ISBN: 9783319173016, Switzerland: Springer.

This book is the 12th volume in Springer's series on *Professional learning and development in Schools and Higher Education* (Series Editors: Christopher Day and Judyth Sachs). The previous volumes in the series covered issues regarding teacher learning, professionalism, and practice in schools and higher education. This book, in particular, presents and discusses a number of video studies through theoretical lenses and methodological approaches intended to continue opening up the black box of classroom teaching and learning practices. In this regard, the book is an important addition to the existing literature on video studies, advancing work done earlier by researchers such as Stigler, Gallimore and Hiebert (2000), Ulewicz and Betty (2001), Clarke, Keitel and Shimizu (2006) as well as Janik and Seidel (2013). In the era of PISA and TIMMS, these kinds of work may prove increasingly important to provide the necessary counter balance when studying the dynamic processes in education systems and not just focusing on the products or narrow outputs of a system. Another goal of this book is to expand the discussion about students' and teachers' behaviours and practices in the classrooms – beginning with in-depth inquiries into Norwegian secondary school classrooms, and extending this discussion to Europe and other regions.

The first chapter provides an overview of the book, as well as key theoretical and methodological dimensions adopted by the contributors of this book. The four key dimensions that serve as analytical lenses as well as a theoretical backdrop are instructional clarity (clear goals, explicit instruction, content-focused instruction); cognitive activation (quality of the task, cognitive challenge, content coverage); discourse features (student engagement, quality of teacher–-student interaction); and supportive climate (creating an environment of respect and rapport). The authors argue that these dimensions are essential for high-quality instruction, and video studies provide a unique approach to study these dimensions. The chapter then discusses video study designs and strategies for data collection and analyses. The aforementioned dimensions are analysed individually and together, quantitatively and qualitatively – in parallel for some cases – to develop a more nuanced understanding about the complexities of classroom learning. This trove of rich data includes: video recordings from 140 videotaped lessons, 57 videotaped interviews with pairs of students, 42 audiotaped student interviews, 18 interviews with teachers, as well as copies of students' work and assignments. These data were originally collected under the PISA+ (2010) project to examine some of the issues identified in Norway's PISA 2000 and 2003 results in science, mathematics and reading.

The subsequent eleven chapters are sectioned off into three parts. The first part, which includes chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, focuses on instructional patterns within and across science, mathematics and language arts classrooms. The findings indicate distinct differences between the three subjects, with specific challenges and patterns within each subject. One of the most interesting chapters in the book is Chapter 2, where the authors break away from what they refer to as false conceptual dichotomies and use multi-level coding schemes to analyse instructional practices together with the type of interaction that took place in the science classrooms they observed. The use of multiple analytical lenses in a parallel fashion led to a more nuanced understanding of the possibilities of classroom interaction for the purposes of facilitating learning. Other chapters (3, 4) in this first section reveal the teachers' struggles in implementing effective practices in the classroom and the support they require in making advances in their professional practice. Inter-subject classroom comparisons also revealed interesting similarities and differences (Chapter 2, 4 and 5). For example, while teachers in language arts classrooms in Norway seemed to vary their instructional practices,

the Norwegian math teachers used more repetitive ways of working, using either plenary teaching or individual seatwork as the basic form of instructional format.

The second part of the book – Chapters 7, 8 and 9 – focuses on discourse matters. The work presented here analyses language use and discourse features in classrooms within the three aforementioned subject areas. Their overall analyses suggest that the interaction patterns in the observed classrooms are conducive for student utterances, but these utterances are in large parts more concerned with practical and procedural questions rather than substantive discussions linked to the subject area. The authors also explore the relationship between social language and scientific talk in science classrooms (Chapter 7 and 8). While coding was difficult because there were overlaps, they report initial evidence that teachers did not explicitly help students to transition from everyday language to scientific language. In addition – despite active student participation in discussions – it was reported that teachers did not facilitate or scaffold opportunities for students to link (or compare and contrast) the theoretical aspects of science to the students' practical experiences or preconceptions, and vice versa. Student participation in math classrooms involving turn taking and student–teacher interaction was also high, but the authors question if the interaction patterns they observed actually contributed to productive learning situations (Chapter 9).

Part 3 of the book focuses on "Engagement Matters." Chapters 10, 11 and 12 discusses how different instructional formats support student engagement, and how increased levels of student autonomy have impacted learners. In Chapter 9, for example, evidence suggests that student-initiated work plans led to working strategies that were ineffective, such as not spacing out the doing of math assignments over more optimal periods or doing just enough to meet the requirements. While student autonomy and student-centred ways of working have been actively promoted by educational policies in Norway, the findings as reported by the authors suggest that students may have been given too much responsibility and this may have compromised students' learning and attitudes towards learning. In Chapter 11, the researchers analysed a combination of data – from the TIMSS 2007 Study as well as their own video study – and found that increased levels of instructional variation can positively stimulate student attitudes to mathematics. Chapter 12 focuses on how teachers' commitment, embedded partly in the teaching activity system and partly in the teachers' personal interests and preferences, may influence teachers' actions in the classroom. In this chapter with the title "Teacher commitments: Love and duty in science education," the authors found that the teachers' commitment to the school is often expressed as a strong feeling of duty while their commitments to the students and their profession are more characterised by love.

Overall, the book provides valuable insights into the black box of classroom practice and behaviour by drawing on analysis that involves video data from classroom studies, PISA and TIMMS data, and concepts relevant to domain-specific instruction. The book uncovers some of the dynamic interplay between discursive interactions, instructional practices, and students' learning and behaviour in different subject areas. The findings provide critical clues where teacher professional development can be improved (e.g. where is tighter scaffolding and structure needed?), and how certain policies need to be revised. The various modes and combinations of analytical frameworks used to make sense of the different kinds of data also make it a stimulating read from methodological and theoretical standpoint.

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