

**Session IV: Future Prospects of Education and Action
(Concluding Session)**

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Kuroda

Welcome everyone to the concluding session.

By all means, I don't have any intention to summarize all points discussed during today's sessions. I would like to welcome Professor Cheng Kai-Ming, who just arrived from Hong Kong. He will be giving a keynote speech during tomorrow's parallel sessions, but will join our discussion this afternoon. He is a very famous comparative educationalist and I am glad to have him here with us today.

It is my hope you that you will be able to share your ideas about a future research agenda for the formulation of an international higher education framework for regional integration in Asia.

Our Global COE program just started, this is the first of five years. We would like to repeat this event on a yearly basis, giving us an opportunity to take stock of developments and future trajectories.

Of course, today you have all made significant contributions to this area of research. For example, with regards to the study of de-facto integration in regional higher education, I was impressed by how many of you have already tried to prove this de-facto integration with regard to education systems in Asia. But, as I am sure many of you realized, the UNESCO statistics lack the data for international students from China. It's very inconvenient discussing these issues without Chinese statistics. The statistics provided only take Macao and Hong-Kong into account. So, I've tried to look at international university agreements in my research and others also looked at professional exchange as an indicator of internationalization. But, we seem to be convinced that there is de-facto integration in Asia. This depends on how we define Asia, of course.

In another part of my presentation, entitled the search for a conceptual framework for regional integration of higher education, I also explained several different policy perspectives and historical perspectives. And many of you touched upon similar ideas with regards to policy objectives of Asian integration and cooperation in higher education. There are a variety of rationales that have been indentified, peace and mutual understanding, economic integration and regional market considerations. Then, Professor Pinti, Professor Supachai and others, provided robust analyses of existing frameworks. Professor de Prado and Professor Supachai offered a very detailed explanation of the global, picture of existing frameworks for regional higher education. Later, we looked at the individual actors in the process of regional integration, countries, universities, etc. Malaysia seems to be a really popular country for many researchers. Other countries that are often discussed at length included, Singapore, Thailand, China and Japan, of course.

I just summarized what we have already heard today. But, in my opinion, we will need more empirical evidence upon which to base our propositions in the future.

What can we do to accomplish this? That is what I want to know. I think this is what we would like to collaborate on in the future.

So, if you have any thoughts to share with us, we would be glad to hear them. For example, Professor Sonoda may like to explain our decision to create a data set based on student surveys in different countries.

I hope all the participants in the room will be able to contribute to this discussion.

Thank you.

De Prado Yepes Thank you, Professor Kuroda.

You mentioned the need of empirical data. I just wanted to point out that the Asia-Europe Foundation in Singapore launched a database a few months ago for Asian and European countries. It doesn't have too much data for the purposes of the researchers gathered here, but it is a good source of data, nevertheless. In fact, this database could be used as a model for future databases in Asia or between Asia and Europe. This could perhaps be proposed at the education ministerial in Berlin, within the UNESCO databases or similar global and regional endeavors.

Thank you.

Sonoda Professor Kuroda introduced our student survey, because as Professor Kuroda mentioned, we tried to make every effort to have a very good start of this program. And decided to allocate a sum of money to collect the data from students of so-called 'top universities' in Korea, China, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines and Vietnam.

We put several questions together about how students perceive the necessity of working together for regional cooperation. A part of the questions deal with the motivations of students going out of their home countries to pursue studies abroad. So, it would be very flattering if some of the participants here would try to use this data to try to explain each countries' approach to integration and draw some comparisons to their own country.

By using this data you might be able to better inform a future agenda

based on collaboration in the area of higher education; not only in terms of research, but also in terms of educational systems.

In my case, I have been conducting a lot of research with other partner universities, like Korea University and Fudan University. By sharing data, we try to encourage the creation of symposiums and encourage students to use data to make academic presentations. Through this exchange of ideas, we hope to highlight and discover commonalities and differences among countries and among individuals. It is really fascinating to have this kind of opportunity. Thank you.

Sugimura

Thank you very much.

With regard to the way forward over the next four years of this Global COE Program, I have one proposal. Discussing today's theme, we use the terms cooperation and integration. When I participated in Waseda University's previous project, aimed at creating an Asian Community, I was deeply impressed by the view that such an Asian integrated community, once created, could be a multi-layered society. As I listened to the presentations today, there seemed to be a lot of diversity in the observations and solutions offered. Maybe the answer is not Asia per se; rather, Asianess should be emphasized so that we can take advantage of this diversity, which is deeply rooted in Asia.

What I would like to look at is whether internationalization of higher education can create Asianess or not. The internationalization of many universities is already underway, in conjunction with efforts being put forth by other organizations. So, I think we don't have to repeat the same programs they have been running. Rather, through Waseda's program, in order to promote Asian integration, we should aim for the development of human resources as a core goal of the program.

For that reason, we would need to clearly define the goal of the program. But it doesn't have to be one sole objective. As already mentioned, depending on the situation and condition of different economies, political situations, and cultural diversities, there could be more than one variation. We should not forget this when trying to conceptualize a goal.

The important point is how we should treat international students as subjects for human resource development. When I listen to the discussions on international student mobility recently, what seems very risky to me is that international students are treated as a commodity and the amount of earning, by amassing large numbers of

international students, is measured in the name of internationalization.

The students, on their part, simply calculate the cost and measure the cost effectiveness of getting degrees. This is a very regrettable phenomenon. As opposed to hearing how many international students are expected to attract as an economic matter, I think that goals and visions of human resource development should be considered first and international students should take major roles through their cross-border mobility. As an educationalist, I would like to emphasize this point.

So what kind of human resources will we have to develop if we are to be considered leaders in the coming century? I think this reflection should be the major engine of the internationalization process. In that vein, I would like to highlight SEAMEO and AUN's efforts aimed at gathering a diverse group of students together to foster a sense of oneness. If such a oneness should exist or be brought about, I think it would be significant for the region.

Thank you.

Welch

My comment may build on Professor Sugimura comments.

What I think we have identified in today's presentations is what we know, but also what we don't know. And it seems to me, one of the interesting things that could be done – and perhaps Waseda could play a role in brokering such an approach - would be to find out more about what we don't know. Using frameworks, of the kind we have heard about today, whether it is GATS - which is only one kind of framework, but at least useful analytically - or whether we use the kind of multi-level approach that was talked about today - Global, regional, national, and so on – to perhaps develop a more complete understanding of linkages in higher education across the Asian region.

There are many issues associated with that: what counts as 'Asia'; what are the other sub-regional groupings.

What we have seen today, is where we could go and what more we could learn. And I think that would be an interesting thing to do.

Thank you.

Tullao

We did mention several modes of relationship and cooperation towards regional integration in higher education. My research topic that I think is relevant and can be explored further is: which one

really contributes to the narrowing of the gap between the developed countries and the developing countries in the region given the diversity in education, politics and economics.

We are actively promoting a lot of student exchanges, but is that more contributory to narrowing the gap, than research collaboration, which will elevate two or three research universities in every economy. Developed countries, like Korea, Japan and probably China, can assist countries such as Malaysia, the Philippines, Cambodia and other less developed countries. So, we need to reconsider policies being promoted in terms of the effectiveness of the modes of cooperation towards real integration.

Uroda

Whatever we suggest, I think that nothing is very specific, common or universal. In fact, I wanted to give an example from my research, which I'm currently undertaking as a PhD student at the University of Hong Kong. It has led me to the conclusion that there are certain excellent books with good theories written on the use of a universal paradigm, but the conclusion is that a sort of 'uncolonization' of English language mediation and the 'North-South' approach, are not the only way that actors do their work, especially within Asian region.

Taking the example from my research, based on a case study of two dual-degree programs in two countries. Geographically, they are fully in Asia, but politically, only 50% in Asia. There is dual-degree mobility and integration of all students in this program. There is almost no governmental support, though in one country there is some limited support, but not in the other. In the other country there is no support to this program, relying on almost fully on innovative institutional initiatives.

There is some dependence on current market situations and cross-border exchanges between these two nations. The achievements in this program and the success in marketing the graduates are correlated, with employment getting better and better since these exchanges have been taking place.

The case is based on institutions in Russia and China, where they meet in the Northeast. But the most interesting thing is that there is no English spoken there. Some professors have suggested that I should challenge this so-called 'universal theory.' But, there is another challenge that is emerging. That is, whatever paradigm we have is extremely context specific. We find that these explanatory paradigms are highly sensitive to national educational models and are culturally sensitive, as well.

So, my conclusion is that the more case studies we have, the more we will be able to improve on a theoretical elaboration.

Thank you.

Yamada

Hello, my name is Shoko Yamada from Nagoya University.

Since I am not a specialist of internationalization of higher education, my comment may be off the point. I got the impression throughout the session that there is confusion between the two terms: internationalization and regionalization.

I think these two aspire to different goals. When we talk about internalization, you may be more interested in raising the university's ranking in the global ranking system or you may be thinking of introducing English as a language of instruction. But when we talk about regionalization, the issue would center more on the notion of 'Asianess' or mutual understanding, or other such issues.

So, I would like to suggest that we should separate these two issues. Even though they are mutually related issues, we should consider regionalization as a distinct issue.

Thank you.

Sanusi

I would like to highlight that these ideas are getting more specific in terms of areas for research. I sense that there is an attempt to integrate the RIHE, research institutes on higher education. I would like to suggest a similar approach as the one adopted by RIHE.

First, I would like to suggest building a network of scholars focused on the research of integration of higher education. Secondly, with regard to databases, we are currently working on signing MOUs with several universities to share information on the development of benchmarking systems.

This is what we are currently involved in developing.

Thank you.

Kuroda

I also wanted to comment on Professor Sugimura's comments, as to what kind of people we would like to nurture through this discussion of integration and international cooperation.

In the afternoon, when we talked about regional frameworks, we were excited to talk about Asian identity. 'Diversity' became the key word, a very positively perceived key word when we discussed

identity, specifically Asian identity. Can it be the foundation of identity?

Diversity has traditionally been portrayed as being contrary to identity. The notion of identity emphasizes something that is homogeneous or something in common. I consider a key part of Waseda University's identity in the contemporary world, to be based on its diversity; not only international diversity, but also a diversity of the people and student body. I think that diversity can be a part of identity, especially within ASEAN and Asia.

So, let's consider for a moment the kind of people we are trying to nurture for the future. Not any one unique personality or characteristic, of course, but when we think about Asian interests - the kind that a national university would try to foster amongst its student body, for example – something may be said about the many commonalities we share. I am quite sure that this kind of discussion has already taken place within the ASEAN framework. Maybe there are 'ASEAN interests,' and even 'Asian interests.'

Given that there is room for people espousing dual-identities, this would not be an exclusionary way of thinking. For example, I consider myself both Japanese and Asian and find that there is no real contradiction between these two perceptions. Perhaps the way forward then, is to consider institutions that instill future generations with a sensibility to 'Asian interests.'

So, how can we go about setting up these institutions? One university, alone, cannot accomplish this. The European experience is very helpful. They created both the College of Europe and the European University Institute to nurture a sense of European regionalism within individuals. But, is this enough?

Perhaps collaborative curriculum development amongst universities and crossing different fields, can also nurture individuals with similar sensibilities.

Professor Kai-Ming, would you care to share your thoughts on these issues?

Kai-Ming
Cheng
(University of
Hong Kong)

I must apologize, as I've missed a good part of the meeting. So, if anything I say proves to be outside of our track of conversation or a repetition of what people said, I apologize.

Because I haven't gone through the presentations, I have to admit I am a little confused about the themes of integration, internationalization and human resources. These three seem to refer to

a very cluster of issues, and I'm not sure how they come together.

Let me begin by saying that I only ask questions – it is safer. I want to present my views by asking one umbrella question which I have been contemplating. I'm not asking the question as if have any value judgments. But, my central question in order to provoke a discussion is: do we need a separate Asian ranking of universities?

Now, I'm asking this question not because I want to express my like or dislike of rankings, but rather because rankings are now overwhelming education systems throughout the world. Just in the past few months I've heard news from Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Thailand, signaling that they've all produced blueprints for their education systems based on one indicator. That one indicator is based on rankings and has been expressed in their desire to build as many 'elite universities,' 'APEC universities' and 'world-class universities,' as possible. Thailand, for example, is trying to get as many universities as possible in the to 50 worldwide, top 50 in Asia and so forth. Pakistan is the most dramatic: they want to build 11 elite universities and 8 of them are to be engineering universities. After some discussion, they reduced the latter figure to six. The expenditures in the proposed budget for each university are greater than the budget for the entire higher education system. We also hear stories of vice-chancellors and presidents who are demoted because of the drop in their university's ranking and so forth.

Recently, I had the opportunity to participate in a meeting of rankers. They have held three world conferences already, the last one being in Shanghai. They estimate that there exists approximately 34 rankings; three are international and the rest are national. More and more national rankings are appearing. Each ranking is stirring people's emotions, arousing ill feelings. Nobody seems to be happy.

Top universities, suddenly become ranked third or fourth and they are very agitated. Others rise to the top and begin worrying about their standings in future rankings. Resources are put into the 'catching up' in a ranking, looking to climb up the ranking hierarchy. But the ranking represents a certain ideology of higher education. So my question is, do we need a separate Asian ranking to protect ourselves?

It's very pragmatic question. The question could be considered in the following ways. First of all, I would say that universities, as we know them now, are fundamentally a western idea; almost like a philharmonic orchestra, you can play Chinese music, you can play Japanese music and nonetheless they are western influences. So, my

first question is: are there elements that are common to all universities? I presume there are: methodologies to running a university, technology, etc. We need to outline what they are.

Second, apart from these base line commonalities, is there anything in higher education that is Asian; that is, different from Latin America, Anglo-Saxon universities and African universities? Is there such an element? In my mind, I can think of a few, but does this count as body of knowledge and a comprehensive framework.

Third, if there is such a thing called 'Asian higher education,' how would that contribute to the world community of higher education? Education is not one-way traffic. For example, most Asian universities seem to pay a lot of attention to student development; that is, alternative learning apart from a formal curriculum. Which, if we are not careful, will disappear if we abide by the current ideology of rankings. But if you look at the work place, people are talking about tacit knowledge, ethics issues, values issues and so forth.

All these elements are related. Western universities are trying to integrate all these elements, which used to be attributable only to the church and families. Elite universities however, have always had this element to them. What element of 'Asianess' can contribute to the international community?

Finally, I would like to ask how many 'Asias' do we have? Do we have just one 'Asia,' what I call chopstick Asia? But there are many Asians that don't use chopsticks. I can think of people from South Asia and Islamic communities, as well. Apparently they have a very different concept of higher education.

Of course there is also the question of university collaboration in Asia. When Asian universities collaborate or integrate, what are there general motivations? There are lots of motivations for Asian universities to partner with prestigious Western universities. Many motivations also exist which encourage Asian universities to partner with weaker universities. This occurs almost as a kind of transaction, if not an invasion. So, why integrate? The motive for integration in the European Community seems to be more obvious. But in Asia, perhaps it's yet to take shape.

I have many other questions, but I'm just asking questions - I have no answers.

Thank you.

Takashi
Onishi
(United Nations
University)

Hello, my name is Takashi Onishi and I'm from the United Nations University.

I'd like to make some comments about China. In Asia, I think the country that is receiving the most international students is China, not Japan. This new trend began several years ago and Japan was overtaken. I think there are about 150,000 international students in China. When it comes to sending students abroad, China is the most important country. In other words, the country that we should be looking to for new initiatives is still a developing country. I think this is a very important point. And in terms of the size as well, China is an overwhelming entity. When you consider these points, I think you will find that the situation is very different from that which led to European integration.

Now, how should we look at China? Are we going to co-exist or are we going to compete with it; are we going to embrace it? Unless we talk about it, I don't think we can move ahead with this discussion. In other words, without China, Asian integration would be an impossible endeavor. It is true that we should be talking about higher education. But, at the end of the day, we have to talk about political economy and environment. No matter what the topic of discussion, I think we can see the same structure.

Also, on this particular topic, what are China's views; what are China's thoughts? This has to be discussed it and looked into, otherwise effective Asian integration may not move forward. Thank you.

Kuroda

Thank you very much Dr. Onishi.

In concluding this session, I would ask Professor Kim, Professor Piniti, Professor Supachai and Professor Morshidi to make some final comments.

Thank you.

Kim

I would like to build on Professor Welch's comments regarding "what we didn't know."

What I don't know is, what I am. We are talking about various ways of considering Asian identity, but I'm not quite sure we know the issue well enough to discuss the integration of higher education systems and regionalization. We should spend some time and some energy searching for a multi-level Asian identity.

Then, we will need to come up with a more substantial definition;

not one which simply takes note of commonalities.

Thank you.

Piniti

I think, in some ways, I agree with Professor Kuroda: diversity can be a part of identity.

But, if you consider this more carefully, when you look in Asia you find that we all eat rice; we share rice-based cultures. This can be a part of the Asian identity.

But I would like to propose some ideas based on my many years working for the AUN. When we talk about education and cooperation in Asia, I think the many difficulty we face in Asia is our different academic calendars. If you ask when your first semester starts in Asian countries, you will receive a lot of different answers. So when we compare student or staff mobility in Asia, the figures are low compared with European countries. In Europe, I'm sure they enjoy a single academic calendar. They all start at nearly the same time.

The situation is quite different in Asia. For instance, even the structure of the education system is different. To obtain a bachelor degree, some universities require three years of study and others four years. We do not have the same system. This is another burden we carry when we try to promote student and staff mobility, even just within Asia.

In addition, there is a language barrier. Of course, in Asia we are accustomed to using different languages. Even under the ASEAN charter, we agreed that the official working language should be English. But, from my point of view, if we look into the communication between 10 ASEAN countries, we still have problems. Apart from Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines, who all recognize English as an official language, other countries in ASEAN don't have an official second language policy. This can be a big burden when we talk about student mobility.

Finally, I find there is a lack of student support systems. For example, when students from ASEAN want to come to Japan, they have to apply for a visa. I don't think obtaining a visa to come to Japan is easy for ASEAN students. Also they have to pay for visa fees. How do we overcome this problem and lend our students more support?

These are the reasons why I believe the figures for student mobility with ASEAN are so low.

Thank you.

Supachai

I would like to end by saying that I think we are getting better, in the ASEAN region, when we work together. I think we have done quite a lot in terms of sharing information, sharing best and worst practices, enabling us to learn a lot from each other. So, in terms of harmonization, we don't all need to strive to be the same. Perhaps it can be structured more like the EU, where the identity of each locality is preserved. These differences will encourage students to be mobile, discovering and rediscovering their neighboring cultures.

At the policy level, we need to continue working together. We need to speak to a multitude of stakeholders, especially those who are directly impacted by increased mobility: employers, students and other stakeholders in the community.

Another thing that I would like to touch upon is the issue of ranking. Professor Kim mentioned the difficulties related to the ranking system in Korea. Personally, I think it is necessary for us to consider that every faculty has its own mission and this is very important. I think that by linking different kinds of universities in different categories, we can make progress. I think there is room for sharing information on best practices across East Asia and Southeast Asia.

Morshidi

Let me begin by responding to Professor Kai-Ming with regards to ranking.

We are not excited, but the politicians are. This is one way the politicians are keeping tabs on the academics. They say "we gave you a lot of money and where are you now?"

I've written a couple of articles in newspapers regarding our heightened interest in rankings. My conclusion is that it is a convenient way for politicians to get back at us. We need to become part of the system in order to defend ourselves.

Finally, I would like to ask: can we have integration, Asian integration that is, without economic integration? This seems to be the biggest issue to me. In Europe, you have economic integration, followed by other sorts of integration. But in Asia, we have different systems. Economic integration is still a long way off. And yet, we are talking about Asian integration in other fields. Which one comes first? I believe, from what I've read, you need to have economic integration before any other form of integration.

Thank you.

Kuroda

Thank you very much.

At the outset of this session, I said “by all means I don’t have any intention to summarize everything we said today”; but I feel we have done precisely this.

I really believe that gathering together with Asian representatives and colleagues in the field, is very beneficial. Such collaborations have lasting and meaningful impacts on the future development of higher education.

We have highlighted a great many things that will require further study and attention. We hope to collect all your papers shortly to be included in the final publication, which we will be putting out later this year. I truly look forward to sustaining a lasting conversation on the integration of higher education systems in Asia, with all of you.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to thank Dr. Kamikubo for his assistance in planning this conference and all the administrators and students who also were involved in the preparation and facilitation of this session.

Thank you all very much.

(Transcription: Kyoko Moriya)