

## **Book Review**

***The Internationalization of East Asian Higher Education: Globalization's Impact.* Edited by John D. Palmer, Amy Roberts, Young Ha Cho, and Gregory S. Ching, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, (1st edition), pp. 230. ISBN 978-0-230-10932-2 (hardback).**

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This book is an edited volume comprising eight chapters written by a group of East Asian and Western experts in the field of internationalization of higher education. The book illustrates how to make the internationalization of higher education a stimulus for 'brain gain' or at least for 'brain circulation' (Shimmi, 2014). As a solution, one of the chapters called for creating independent models for an internationalization strategy and ignoring 'westernization' (Wong & Wu, 2011). In this chapter, the new term, 'contextualization' of higher education institutions was used to refer to internationalization. According to the authors, in the highly competitive market of educational export, unconscious attempts to internationalize higher education will lead any country to simply surrender to the will of the more powerful and developed countries. For example, in this globalized world, higher education has to pursue international agreements and arrangements

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whose target is to meet the goal of globalization. Thus the goal and policy of globalization is the ‘global convergence’ in terms of value, education content, and educational outcomes (Chan & Dimmock, 2008, p. 199).

Most importantly, the authors explored how globalization has impacted on East Asian university systems, culture and society. Several universities throughout East Asia have developed internationalization policies to meet the increasing demands of globalization. Initially considering these policies as being more about ‘Westernization’, the authors questioned how power and privilege are embedded within such efforts. The book develops new and intriguing insights into globalization theory and internationalization practice, expanding the investigation of East Asian values and contexts as being distinct from Western-dominant thoughts of globalization and internationalization in higher education. This book reveals how the ‘Westernized’ perspective is not entirely suitable in an ever-evolving globalized world. It also addresses how these institutions are moving towards globalization theory and internationalization practice that is compatible for themselves and their nation’s global engagement. The works develop a lively discussion over the purposes and goals of internationalization in East Asia. Specifically, it considers innovative programs that these university systems should be developing in order to cultivate global leadership among students, faculty, and the institution as a whole.

The major countries covered by this volume include Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, China, Korea, and Japan. The chapter authors applied methodologies such as case studies, demographic profiles, evaluations, and comparative analysis to critically examine the various dimensions of the globalization and internationalization of East Asian higher education. The topics discussed include ideologies of globalization and internationalization, and major strategy for developing regional education hubs. The concepts, contributions and challenges of some selected universities are also discussed. The case of Xinjiang University which is located outside the major developing areas of China has been discussed to demonstrate how trans-regional aspirations contradict the development and education of the ethnic minority population. Another chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the educational issues and challenges faced by minorities such as the Korean nationals living in China. China’s rapid transition toward a

market economy has caused educational problems to many of the fifty-six officially recognized minority groups in China.

The case of South Korean internationalization is discussed at length. In its efforts to become a leader in the evolving globalized world, South Korea attracts students from industrializing countries, who later help connect their countries to the globalized world. Whereas Japan and Korea have traditionally used their own traditional languages as medium of instruction, the pressure of globalization has made these two countries to change their strategy. Today an increasing number of classes are taught in English. In terms of ranking systems one chapter argues that the method of ranking systems adopted by ‘Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)’ and the ‘Times Higher Education (THE)’ are in favour of firmly established and highly esteemed universities, especially those in the USA and UK. Furthermore, students selecting a university by looking at the university rankings may not necessarily choose the most appropriate university. The rank of a university does not indicate that all disciplines, including natural sciences, and social sciences and humanities are equally well equipped. Again, if the policy makers put all their effort in ‘improving’ the university ranking, they may adopt certain policies and strategies which should be in favour the national cause.

Written in English and published at New York, this book is at par with major work on internationalization of higher education available in English and published by reputed centres and universities of the USA and UK including OECD, UNESCO, World Bank, and others (e.g. Altbach & Knight, 2007; Kehm & Teichler, 2007). Nevertheless, it has some limitations – both in substance and form – which should be addressed here in this review. Considering that internationalization has been impacted by globalization, the book presented strategies for internationalization of higher education institutions for practitioners and policy makers. This way of presentation places the book somewhere between research and politics. For example, all of the eight chapters covered macro level discussions such as rationales and strategies of internationalization, challenges of globalization, innovation based research and academic cooperation. On top of that all chapters revolved on issues of cross-border academic mobility, while mobility-based internationalization is going to change (Knight, 2008).

In term of form, this book has limitations too, such as all chapters are mostly conceptual and analytical. This trend of writing has been characterised as ‘conceptually ambitious’ (Kehm & Teichler, 2007, p. 269). Besides, each chapter should be followed by an abstract or summary of the chapter in order to facilitate the readers. Though all countries of East Asia were covered in this book but as an advanced and developed country Japan’s current state of internationalization of higher education was not addressed well. No issue of quality assurance process was mentioned in the book although improving quality and standardization of education systems are key to successful internationalization.

Despite the fact that the book is not beyond limitation, it aimed to minimize the dominance of globalization in higher education institutions in East Asian countries. Presented in eight chapters written by several distinguished scholars, this book has a special relevance for Malaysian higher education, considering Malaysia’s aspirations to lead other South East Asian countries including Thailand, Vietnam, Philippine, Singapore, Hong Kong in the race to become regional education hubs to attract international students and scholars. While globalization requires convergence in all aspects of development, the term ‘internationalization’ in the higher education context refers to implementing significant and substantial changes in order to respond to that global demand.

Defining the concept and process internationalization in layman’s terms as the increase of students’ mobility worldwide, will not bring substantial and practical changes in higher education. Global students’ mobility was estimated at 4.5 million in 2014 and has been forecasted to grow up to 8 million by 2025 (Maslen, 2012). Most of it involves the movement of students from Asian countries and towards the West (Damme, 2001). The direction of students’ mobility indicates that in the Asian region, universities are becoming a different kind of institution which is no longer interconnected to the destiny of the nation-state, while the role of higher education institutions should be to produce, protect, and inculcate national culture, ideas and interests. This trend in the developing and emerging nations of the Asian region could be depriving the citizens, leading Asians to migrate to the developed nations of the West. This is no doubt ‘brain drain’ (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Coming back to the relevance of this book for Malaysian higher education, the process of internationalization of higher education in Malaysia somehow resembles Singapore's but is unlike Japan and Taiwan. Two approaches to internationalization of higher education have been noted by Sheng-Ju Chan (2013), namely the 'independent' versus 'cooperation' approaches. Both approaches are applicable to cross-border collaboration. An example of countries adopting a 'cooperation' approach is Singapore and Malaysia. The two countries collaborate with the well-known universities of the world to internationalize and transform domestic higher education. This approach has let these two countries to cooperate with the west. On the other hand, 'Japan and Taiwan imposed strict regulations on the entrance of foreign universities into local markets as a form of Trans National Higher Education or cross border higher education in providing courses and setting up branch campuses.' This approach has been referred to as having the spirit of independence (Chan, 2013, p. 325).

While the benefits of internationalization are very clear, care has to be taken not to overdo it. A recent study shows that it is 'incumbent on institutions of higher education everywhere to make every effort to avoid or at least mitigate its potential adverse consequences' (IAU - International Association of Universities, 2012, p. 4). The risk involved is that some will gain while others will lose. There is a hidden exploitation by the developed countries because the process of internationalization seems to focus more on engaging with foreign providers and immersing the institutions into the world educational system (Chan, 2013). In this competitive situation, the weak are ever shadowed by the powerful and competent nations.

Two new initiatives in Malaysia indicate the seriousness with which Malaysia is working towards establishing itself as a regional education hub. The first is the development of Edu-city in Iskandar Malaysia, a major new multi-dimensional development next to Singapore. The second is Kuala Lumpur Education City (KLEC), another strategic education initiative incorporated into a new commercial and residential project in the Klang Valley south of Kuala Lumpur (Knight & Morshidi, 2011).

Edu-city aims to provide high quality education and produce a skilled workforce to support foreign companies located in the commercial

zones of Iskandar Malaysia. It also plans to support academic-industry collaboration through joint research laboratories and design centres. While these are impressive intentions, they face the challenges of attracting the right mix of foreign universities, researchers, and R & D companies to work in a new cross-cultural environment.

Both social and economic motives drive the new KLEC enterprise. On one hand, there is a pressing need to invest more into developing the human capital necessary for Malaysia's knowledge economy. On the other hand, KLEC aims to showcase Malaysia as an environment-friendly, energy efficient and networked knowledge based regional centre. The plan is to gain greater access to the regional education market especially from the three Asian population giants, India, China, and Indonesia. Secondly, the strategy includes the development of the necessary research infrastructure to position Malaysia as a regional centre of excellence and the central node for an international network of academic institutions, companies and services.

Without active engagement and vision development, internationalization practices may develop along 'default' neoliberal lines (Tadaki & Tremewan, 2013). International education has always been found to favour western countries over non-Western countries. Moreover, there is a disparity between mobile students and non-mobile students, meaning that physical mobility in education will be 'privileged' (Brooks & Waters, 2011). There is a view that internationalization can be regarded as 'academic capitalism' (Kauppinen, 2012). The reasons why students study abroad are manifold and include obtaining knowledge – and credentials – that are unavailable at home, gaining the prestige of a foreign degree, gaining access abroad when the doors may be closed at home, and, of course, emigration. For example, about eighty percent of Chinese and Indian students obtaining doctoral degrees in the United States do not return home immediately after graduation (Altbach & Engberg, 2014, p. 11). Considering that, while Malaysia is earning revenues from foreign students, it has a risk too. Do Malaysian citizens who go abroad for higher education return home with added skills and experience? If not, Malaysia is not gaining in the competition for attracting brains. In contrast Malaysia's higher education institutions are not really showing any trend that universities are technology-industry based (Azman, Sirat, & Karim, 2010).

Malaysia's approach in developing its education hub is unlike Singapore's Skilled Workforce Training Hub (Knight & Morshidi, 2011). Singapore has embarked on educating and training its students to be skilled labour/knowledge workers for a knowledge and service led economy, providing increased access to education and professional development for both international and domestic students as well as locally based employees, and establishing geo-political status in the region. Although Malaysia has an ambition to acquire a leading position in the region of Southeast Asia, a key aspect of the Malaysian education hub is the recruitment of international students to the country for the purposes of (1) internationalization and modernization of domestic higher education institutions (2) revenue generation (3) building international profile. In this scenario, it is primarily the local higher education institutions that are recruiting the students to their individual campus, although in some cases foreign branch campuses are involved. While a national recruitment strategy and requisite policies are in place, for the most part individual institutions are recruiting students to their own campuses and programs. The goal is to reach a national targeted number of international students and to build a reputation as an attractive place for international students to get a high quality education. In terms of ranking the educational hubs the skilled workforce training hub, has been said to be better than simple so called students' hub (Knight & Morshidi, 2011).

Lastly, the points which must be noted in this review are in the development trends in higher education – how to deal with the current unemployment rate of tertiary educated Malaysian students, the brain drain rate of professionals, the ability of foreign/domestic HEIs to produce employable knowledge workers, immigration/visa policies which allow students to stay in the country after graduation and others (Knight & Morshidi, 2011).

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