Chapter 8
Quality Assurance Within HEIs in South-East Asia

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ABSTRACT

With the adaption of The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) since the early 1960s, the quality within the higher education institutions (HEIs) has improved locally, regionally, and globally. However, there is still a need to harmonize the HEIs communities who were striving for more dynamic, resilient, sustainable corporations. This chapter aims at exploring quality assurance, culture acceptance, cultural management, and a selection of educational models within Southeast Asia, through critical analysis of current HEIs models while suggesting a theoretical framework based on QA tied to HEIs institutions to explore policies, procedures, scope, funding, and instruments to support strategies within open universities. The benefit of having this additional layer of quality assurance is to give guidance towards policies associated with economic growth towards harmonization of global HEIs. This robustness within the education sector has allowed the quality of export to become more financially appealing.

INTRODUCTION

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) founded in and around the year of 1967 (Choi, 2017), and the main drive was to find cooperation on the ideology of political stability and security. According to Khalid, Ali, Nordin, & Shah, (2019), ASEAN countries share a global drive for the development of Higher Education (HE) not just at a nationally or regionally but also at a global economy level. The impact of these ideologies is to offer diversity and similarities to the development of internationalization within the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) communities to assure quality in the regions through reorganization within an internationalization market. This approach alone is to strive for a more dynamic, resilient, sustainable community in the Southeast area. According to Rungfamai, (2018), ASEAN's policies are focusing on improving the production and consumption of goods and

services within the region through the creation of a single market and with its member countries to support internationalization between HEIs. These concepts, through careful management and available resources, have brought the necessary improvements to the quality of Higher Education (HE). Through the consistent changes to the Higher Education environments, with perceptions in terms of governance arrangements transforming to stimulate harmonization behind regional quality and demands has seen assurance improved (Umemiya, 2008). Mursitama, (2019) indicates that higher education institutions in Southeast Asia, which indirectly contribute to the main ASEAN's policies within the regionalism and intergovernmental level, develop faster and more effective due to them being integrated and finding a wealth of better opportunities for them to operate.

The research carried out by Mursitama, (2019) supports Khalid, Ali, Nordin, & Shah, (2019) concepts about the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community and how (HEIs) Higher Educational Institutions are encouraged to focus on development, services, and quality in general within a strategy to improve regionalization facilities. Through the ASEAN's policies, other nations can bridge and unify policies, trends, and harmonize HEIs for connectivity and standards across local, regional, and international practices/standards.

The HEIs within regionalization has enabled processes "*to facilitating, promoting, building and strengthening closer collaboration and alignment among higher education*" (Knight, 2012) to improve international demand for HE sectors. Having these processes to facilitate, according to Knight (2012), Hou et al. (2017) and Choi, (2017) would provide cross-cultural understanding, knowledge, and regional stability to improve political interdependencies. HEIs would be able to maneuver around political behaviors, to endeavor to recruit members and nations from other initiatives. With these abilities to maneuver around political issues from local to regionalization other issues and challenges could be faced from standards around HE quality, regulations, visa protocols and academic calendars (Mok, 1997; Mason, Arnove, & Sutton, 2001; Van der Wende, 2003; Hirosato, 2019). Nguyen & Nguyen (2017) builds upon this strengthen the links through promoting a more robust quality assurance and accreditation systems that are becoming more independent in Vietnam to support a multitude of different agencies and establishments. Vietnam's HEIs quality assurance and accreditation systems are well established and offer adaptability within policies, practices, leadership, and management. The idea of Vietnam's HEIs quality assurance and accreditation system is to build a quality culture that the establishments can develop accreditation. According to Nguyen, (2003) and Nguyen & Nguyen (2017), quality assurance within the Asia-Pacific Region should focus on "*accreditation, assessment, and audits*", thus providing suitable mechanisms for "*control and accountability*" when trying to enhance HEIs. Lam, (2019) indicates that these novel HEI approaches would improve quality assurance through having a flexible education system, which allows for significant initiatives from the private sectors to compete and invest. This overhaul would drive sector skill workforce, not just at a local level but regional and global, through attracting foreign direct investment via "*the long-term competitiveness and growth of Vietnam in the global knowledge economy*" (Lam, 2019). Nguyen & Nguyen (2017) highlights factors about growth and acknowledges the economies and indicates that Vietnam's quality assurance will address directly related to:

"*internal quality assurance,*
external quality assurance
accrediting agencies" (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2017).

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