The Roles of National Quality Assurance Agencies on Development of Qualification Framework in Asia and the Impacts on Student Mobility - A Lesson Learned by Taiwan

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Introduction

- Higher education expansion in Asia
- Increased global and regional student mobility due to economic growth
- Quality of qualifications and regional qualifications reference frameworks
- Connection between quality assurance and qualification framework
Overall View of the Asia Pacific Region Higher Education and QA System

- Total Universities: 76,387
- Total No. of Student Population: 349,617,534
- Total No. of Quality Assurance Agencies: 87
- No. of Public QAA: 48
- No. of Private QAA: 39
- Countries with NQF: 32
- Countries without NQF: 19
Ambitions for international recruitment

Selected international student recruitment targets

- **Australia**: 720,000 onshore enrolments by 2025
- **Canada**: 450,000 international students by 2022
- **China**: 500,000 international students by 2020
- **France**: Increase international student intake by 20% (amounting to 470,000 based on current levels)
- **Germany**: 350,000 inbound internationally mobile students by 2020
- **Japan**: 300,000 international students by 2020
- **New Zealand**: 143,000 international students by 2025
- **Taiwan**: 58,000 foreign students by 2019
- **Malaysia**: 250,000 international students by 2025
- **South Korea**: 200,000 foreign students by 2023
- **Ireland**: 44,000 foreign students by 2019/20
Recognition of an Oversea Qualification

• Concerning diversity in educational systems and type of cross-border mobility, “a formal acknowledgement of a foreign credential” is even more complicated” (UNESCO Bangkok, 2013)

• a foreign qualification will be accepted only if it has no substantial difference from a local degree after being reviewed by recognition body.
Quality assurance

- Quality assurance is defined as “a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process and outcomes) fulfills expectations or measures up to **threshold minimum requirements**” (INQAAHE, 2018).
- Quality assurance (QA) mechanisms of varied types based on a range of purposes and processes
  - auditing, accreditation, evaluation, ranking, benchmarking
- With internal and external dimensions
  - self assessment / onsite visit / peer review
- Quality assurance is often associated with an educational policy by the government
- Serve as a quality gatekeeper of local providers and programs
- More than 100 countries with 250 QA agencies around the world
“Qualification Framework” is defined as an educational system structure, which has a series of instrumental regulatory logics, such as inclusion of all types of higher education providers, developing national standards for all level of education in terms of learning outcomes (Jarvis, 2014).

“makes hierarchical distinctions between qualifications and categorize them by level”, in which learners can earn credits and accumulate all skills and knowledge in different learning periods and paths (Hanf & HIPPACH-SCHNEIDER, 2005, p.9)

Currently, there are six regional Qualification Reference Framework with more than 150 jurisdictions involved in the development and implementation of NQFs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Framework</th>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Countries</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| The European qualifications framework                  | 2008 | 8     | Knowledge, skill, autonomy and responsibilities | European Union (EU) Member States: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, France, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the UK  
Not members of the EU: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Kosovo, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey (39) |
| The Pacific qualifications framework                   | 2011 | 10    | Knowledge, skill, application and autonomy    | Cook Islands, Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Tokelau (15) |
| Southern African Development Community regional qualifications framework | 2011 | 10    | Knowledge, skill, autonomy and responsibilities | Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe (15) |
| The Gulf qualifications framework                      | 2014 | 10    | Knowledge, skill, autonomy and responsibilities, Role in context Self-development | Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (6) |
| The ASEAN qualifications reference framework           | 2016 | 8     | Knowledge, skill, application and responsibilities | Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam (10) |
| The Caricom qualifications framework                   | 2017 | 10    | Knowledge and understanding; application and practice; communication, numeracy and ICT; life skills; autonomy, accountability and working with others. | Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago (15) |
Functions of Qualifications Frameworks

- as a policy instrument
  - demonstrate a further manifestation of government intervention under neoliberalism
  - education system reform in order to connect educational pathways flexibly within the national systems
- lifelong learning objective
- act as a quick reference guide on the recognition of foreign qualifications
- economic growth, social equity and sustainability should be embedded
Development and Models of QF in Asia

- 33 nations in Asia have developed national qualification framework. There remain 19 states without the system.
- In general, all ASEAN countries developed qualification frameworks, including Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, etc.
- In contrast, East Asian nations did not develop qualification framework yet, such as Japan, Taiwan.
- Four types
  - Enabling, Strong, Complete but not yet Unified, and Partial Frameworks
## Development of national qualifications frameworks of ASEAN states

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sector coverage</td>
<td>3 -Skills TVET Academic</td>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>4- Education, Industry, Prior learning, Professional certifications</td>
<td>3- Basic education TVET Higher education</td>
<td>2- School, TVET Higher education</td>
<td>Basic education, TVET and higher education</td>
<td>TVET and higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Features</td>
<td>Levels, level LO descriptors, credits (academic load), pathways, sectors,</td>
<td>Levels, LO descriptors, credits</td>
<td>Levels for formal and non formal education, work related, credits, pathways, professional titles</td>
<td>Level, LO descriptors, credits</td>
<td>Levels, credits, Level LO descriptors</td>
<td>Levels</td>
<td>Levels for formal and non-formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning/competencies</td>
<td>8 domains</td>
<td>5 domains Ethical and Moral Development, Knowledge, Cognitive Skills, Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility, Analytical and Communication Skills</td>
<td>5 domains Science, knowledge, know-how, skills, affectation &amp; competency</td>
<td>5 domains Thinking, behavioral, academic, technical, ethical-defined by disciplines, community of scholars/industry</td>
<td>5 domains knowledge and understanding, applied knowledge and understanding, generic cognitive skills, communication, ICT and numeracy skills, autonomy, accountability and teamwork</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5 domains Knowledge, cognitive skills; interpersonal skills and responsibility; Communication, Information Technology &amp; Numerical Skills; psychomotor skills;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental model</td>
<td>Enabling</td>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Complete but not yet Unified</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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## Comparison between QA and QF

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>QA</th>
<th>QF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature</strong></td>
<td>Governmental / quasi-governmental</td>
<td>Governmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Function / Roles</strong></td>
<td>Policy instrument</td>
<td>Policy instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Regional / global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Learning outcomes based / self enhancement / fitness for purpose</td>
<td>Learning outcomes based / compliance / standardization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach</strong></td>
<td>External review</td>
<td>Documentation review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>beneficiary</strong></td>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact</strong></td>
<td>University governance and management</td>
<td>Talent mobility and lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Taiwan Context

- Without Qualification Framework but **having a well-structured qualification system** from elementary school to post secondary
- National QA system was established in 2005
  - Higher education Evaluation & Accreditation Council (HEEACT) was founded by MOE and all universities and colleges
  - Undertake mandatory institutional and program accreditations
  - Self accreditation policy launched in 2012
  - 4 self-funded professional accreditors
- HEEACT and MQA signed Mutual Recognition in 2012
- HEEACT was commissioned by MOE to conduct a pilot study on Development of Taiwan Qualification Framework under NEW Southbound policy
Research Questions

- What are the roles of Asian quality assurance agencies in qualification framework development?
- What are the challenges for qualification framework implementation from Asian quality assurance agencies’ perspectives?
- What would quality assurance and qualification framework affect student mobility in Asia?
- What are the major concerns in developing Taiwan national qualification framework?
Methodology

• Online survey over 10 Asian quality assurance agencies
• Two international focus groups
• One national focus groups
• Field trips
Major findings

- Engagement of QA agencies in qualification framework development and implementation in Asia
- Taiwan’s practice
Engagement of QA agencies

- Three are three models of QA engagement in QF
  - Convergence model
  - MQA
  - Divergence model
    - BAN PT/ Thailand
    - Separatist approach (No role)
      - Taiwan and Japan
  - Enhancement of students’ learning outcomes and employability is the main reason for QA engagement
  - Working with varying stakeholders is the most challenging QA agencies as QF developer
Taiwan Practice

- Recognition of prior learning in different levels of education is the main purpose of qualification framework development
- Taiwan qualification Framework would be able to facilitate talent mobility
- Taiwan Qualification Framework needs to be inclusive, transparent and systematic
- Postsecondary education could be focus of the initial development of TWQF with three domains, knowledge, skills and competencies in compliance with ASEAN qualification reference framework
- Engagement of varying stakeholders is necessary
- From Partial model to Enabling model
Discussions

• Convergence or Divergence model?
• Partiality, inclusiveness and transparency would characterize Taiwan Qualification Framework
• Would NQF lead to an isomorphism phenomenon?
Conclusion

- Triangulation among regional qualification frameworks, governments and quality assurance agencies has been developed
- Assessment of educational outcomes is core for QA and QF
- A global qualification framework?
Quality Assurance Agencies

Regional qualification reference work

National regulatory framework
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