Motives, Problems, and Reforms in Transnational Higher Education: A Case Study of SUCs in The Philippines

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***Abstract*: This study examines the transnational higher education in the Philippines using sequential exploratory mixed design based on document analysis, and tools to conduct cross-sectional survey. The survey was developed and standardized interview was adopted where results were transcribed and coded for emerging themes. Four research questions guided this study: 1) What are the motives of international mobility of students? 2) What are the problems met by Filipino international students; 3) What actions taken by SUCs to address concerns of mobile students; and 4) What recommendations can be offered to better enhance the transnational higher education in the Philippines.**

The results exhibited challenges still persist that hinder transnational higher education programs, notwithstanding the long-term consequences of COVID-19. Most SUCs included internationalization in institution's policies and plans to be compliant with the SUC levelling, quality assurance assessments and responding to the ASEAN regional integration. Adoption of open and distance learning (ODL) as part, or an alternative modality of internationalization of higher education under RA 11448 is timely and pragmatic.

***Keywords:* TNE, Transnational higher education, SUC**

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, great significance has been devoted around the globe to international student mobility as a form of internationalization of higher education of which various institutional approaches have been adopted to inspire students to consider education in a foreign country, either on a short-term basis, on a study tour or educational exchange, for a longer time in degree programs. Internationalism has emerged in higher education systems worldwide because the higher education sector needs to be receptive to the requirements of globalization which is increasing from the underdeveloped to developed countries. International curricular offerings, adoption of faculty and student exchange programs, collaborative researches with foreign schools, the advancement of other activities such as cooperative education, university-industrial linkages, and cultural exchange, and the hiring of foreigners and bilingual as faculty members are among the initiatives. When internationalization takes place in the higher education organizations all around the world, then international integration in the sector will allow the organization's culture, mission, and vision to be understood (Deem et.al., 2008).

In the Philippines, outbound Filipino student mobility has substantively increased in recent years. Records show that the statistics of outbound students almost doubled up in 2017 compared to almost a decade ago, from 8,443 in 2008 to 16,308. Population explosion and the enduring economic growth caused higher education growth in the country, expected to be among the world's top 20 countries in terms of tertiary enrolment by 2035 (Macha, Mackie, & Magaziner, 2018). The highest outbound destinations for Filipino students are Australia with 5,075, US with 3,037, New Zealand with 1,105, the UK with 763, and Saudi Arabia with 747. Remarkably, Japan and China are not yet in there (Macha et.al., 2018). With the latest adoption of the K to12 format of basic education, Filipinos are now presumed to be more ready for international mobility with their English fluency as their advantage.

This study gears to the foremost question of how the existing programs of transnational higher education of state universities and colleges in the Philippines contributed to the achievement of its purposes. This research study will identify present motives, encountered problems by the out student-respondents, and their proposed improvements along with the inputs from implementers of these student exchange programs. With the enactment of RA 11448 (Transnational Higher Education Act), the expansion of international mobility programs is very promising and support to ASEAN regional integration efforts is encouraging amidst the consequences of the COVID19 pandemic.

The researcher, thus acknowledges his involvement that came from being a social scientist, a graduate of post-graduate degree in ASEAN studies from University of the Philippines, and a product of TNE program of one ASEAN countries (Malaysia). Despite his deep emotional attachment to the advocacy on open space in higher education and mobility of people in the region, he will be able to see it with scientific objectivity through this study.

Objectives

General: The study aimed to contribute to identify the motives, problems encountered by Filipino students, and assessing how the TNE can still be improved.

*Specific***:** The study has the following objectives:

1. To know the motives of international mobility of students;
2. To determine the problems met by Filipino international students;
3. To identify the actions taken by SUCs to address concerns of mobile students; and
4. To offer recommendations to better enhance the transnational higher education in the Philippines.

II. RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Parallel to the present study, some of the following literatures are very much relevant since these showcase different forms of transnational higher education:

A. Theoretical Bases of Transnational Higher Education

It is indisputable that international facet of higher education has renovated the higher education milieu making educational institutions increasingly globalized and interrelated that propelled the said sector, states, and their governments and peoples' organizations that focused their consideration to academic affairs and prospects with partners in other countries (Knight, 2008). The evident development in higher education partnerships and exchanges within the region manifested but not limited to research and university linkages, development in intra-regional mobility of students and institutional collaborations, regional quality assurance systems, and the growth in mutual educational programs are a demonstration of the growing significance of regionalization of higher education (Kuroda, 2012; Yavaprabhas, 2010).

The regional cooperation in higher education is based on the neo-functionalism that aims to solve common problems as a response to the theory of "spill-over." Hence, identifying common challenges would be for the best interest of HEIs among the states in southeast region (Hurrell, 1995b; Soderbaum, 2012). Based on the available quantitative data and experiences of the experts and students in international mobility programs, their empirical description would be significant in describing these regional initiatives. In embracing a political objective to create a strong regional integration based on voluntary participation, each of the state universities and colleges in implementing student mobility programs maintains the functionalist incremental strategies in a supra-nationalist approach.

B. Internationalization as Driver of Transnational Higher Education

Globalization cannot be merely understood as a higher form of internationalization. Scott (1999) contends that while internationalization presumes the being of established nation states, globalization is indeed "agnostic about, or positively hostile to nation states." Further, internationalization is mostly expressed through "the 'high' worlds of diplomacy and culture," whereas, globalization is manifested "in the 'low' worlds of mass consumerism and global capitalism." Finally, he believes that internationalization inclines to replicate and even legitimize hierarchy and leadership, but globalization can resolve the inequalities between states of the North and the South, and within different segments in one state (pascn.pids.gov.ph.).

Callan (1998) offers that the present descriptions for internationalization will be perpetually vague as different states and higher educational institutions may engage the very concept of internationalization in various methods and for different reasons. He recommended that the way of the discourse of internationalization concerning particular "approaches to and constructions of internationalization in the domains of policy, process, educational value, and social/occupational change." Likewise, Knight (1997) offered four approaches to understanding internationalization, anchored on (a) processes, (b) a typology of activities, (c) the development of competencies, and (d) fostering an international ethos (as cited in scribd.com).

C. The Elements of Transnational Higher Education

Most of the first world countries are greatly attracted in inviting foreign students as a source of income for universities; leniency in the demographic mandatory constraints connected to the home market; and some colonial powers preferred the migration of students from their old colonies as a form of foreign aid, and a way of diffusing cultural, economic and political norms (case in point is that foreign education promotes democracy in the home countries of the students if educated in democratic countries) (Spilimbergo, 2009); and it is highly contributed to the migration of skilled and highly skilled workers for their mobility so-called brain drain phenomenon has been part of the worldwide process of globalization (Docquier & Rapoport, 2011). International mobility of students attracts the talents and skills required to propel economic development. International students are prospective to reside and employ themselves in the host country once finished in their education (Rosenzweig, 2008).

D. The Risks of Transnational Higher Education

International immersion is vital in improving the wide latitude of competencies, and benefits concerning domestic and international market competitiveness. Nevertheless, economically frailer states tend to experience the so-called "brain drain" implication, where after completing the degree abroad, students tend to stay there for work may cause serious impact on the forthcoming intellectual welfare of their home countries.

Moreover, Kumpikaitė and Duoba (2012) believe that a pull of the unknown factor and the variance in some facets between countries help to expand the perspectives of the students. Their mobility allows the presence of social and cultural contacts, where having foreign teachers and staff, cooperation with other students with different

nationalities supports the international atmosphere conduciveness to the learning of higher educational institutions in a multicultural environment.

E. Approaches for Higher Education Engagements

There are approaches that available Asian Networks may engage, namely Functional, Organizational, and Political models, otherwise known as FOPA (Knight, 2013a). Each of these approaches is interdependent with one another. In the Functional mode, there are purposes identified such as the configuration of higher education systems, policies, the progress of cross-border programs, initiatives for setting qualification frameworks, credit transfer mechanisms to effectively facilitate the harmonization and talent mobility in the ASEAN region. The Organizational approach centers on multilevel tiers of interfaces and a diversity of players. Further, government institutions and non-government organizations, higher educational institutions, quality assurance bodies, or other professional stakeholders are cooperating to attain the crucial purpose of regionalizing the higher education sector. While the political approach is intended to implement the program and higher education efforts with the robust engagement of governmental think tanks, and legislators. Executing agreements, declarations, conventions, and treaties are considered important strategies for harmonization and eventually regional integration (Knight, 2012, 2013a, 2014 as cited in www.emeraldinsight.com, 2017).

A top-down and structural approach is meant by a hard approach used by government and powerful forces in a state consist but not limited to ministerial officials. On the other hand, individuals, groups, and universities could employ regional partnerships or activities using the bottom-up (soft) approach in engagement. Connecting the initiatives from institutions and governments, the crossbred approach calls for a further interesting strategy. This model is said to a certain extent of autonomy for networking among higher educational institutions (Chan, 2015; Hawkins et.al., 2012). Conventionally, the bilateral method is reflected as one of the best acceptable engagement formula in intellectual collaborations between higher educational institutions in Southeast Asian states.

G. Regionalization and the Higher Education Sector

In previous years, regionalization is observed as a movement in all parts of the world. It is conventionally "viewed within the dual frames of proximity and patterns of exchange and dimensions that in turn have been conceptualized and actualized along with prevailing norms of time and space" (Neubauer, 2012). As a process of assimilating shared advantages and regional policies as synchronized with global practices, regionalization is most of the time seen as either a subcategory of globalization or merely an ancillary to globalization (Beerkens, 2004; Dale & Robertson, 2002). A subcategory at a certain level focuses the integration into a global milieu with economic liberalism and free trade as manifestations. On the other hand, as a substitute, it inclines to oppose global forces and protect the unique regional cultural identity. Summing it up, regionalization concept as a form of internationalization goals at incorporating global inclinations and international norms into regional milieu (Hawkins et.al., 2012; Knight, 2013b; SATO, 2014).

As internationalization is linked with higher education, governments consider it as a major strategy in human resources development and attraction of global competence. The transformation in higher education is the growth of regional distinctiveness and cultural cognizance collaborations, engagement, and coalitions in higher education frameworks brought by internationalization. It is argued that higher education is indeed vital in advancing harmonization and integration in the ASEAN region. As presented in different dimensions, values and actors concerned in the course of higher education regionalization (Sirat et.al., 2014, p. 1), "it facilitates the process of promoting, building and strengthening deep collaboration among higher education players within the region" (Knight, 2012). Regionalization in higher education as described by Knight (2012) is the synchronization of higher education systems, collaboration in projects, and activities among participants, and expecting that the ultimate aim of regional integration can be attained. The escalating development in student mobility in the region can show the positive sign of this phenomenon (Deardorff et.al., 2012).

A successful regionalization in higher education can only thrive on a necessary extent of economic and social development, geographical proximity, cultural commonality, and sustained political will of all partners (Marginson et.al., 2011. Regionalization in Asia has been moved by national governments and people in general" (Sugimura, 2012). In its place, Yavaprabhas (2014) argued, on the other hand, that "harmonization," would be healthier than "regionalization" of higher education to prevent undesirable setbacks, such as standardization, homogeneity, uniformity, and others.

The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) targets to improve the region's institution and people-to-people relations, which is crucial in achieving the ASEAN Community's dream of seamless movement of people, goods, and services (Teodoro, 2015). The ASEAN International Mobility of Students Program is a collaborative program in the region that delivers multilateral schemes to advance and improve student mobility. The state-governments provide scholarship programs for their students in selected HEIs to study in a counterpart HEIs in other countries (www.ched.gov.ph., 2015).

The ASEAN International Mobility of Students (AIMS) has been at the center of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Regional

Centre for Higher Education and Development (RIHED) educational programs as indicated in the 4th Five-Year Development Plan to nurture globalized human resources. For the SEAMEO-RIHED, international student mobility has always been considered as the key strategic rudiment of collaboration leading to the development of a harmonized higher education milieu among countries in the Southeast Asian region (oia.tu.ac.th). From 2010, AIMS is an exchange program by SEAMEO-RIHED participated by representatives from the ASEAN Member States with a balanced number of sending and receiving students. In this program, state-governments are responsible for subsidizing the programs provided, selection of participating HEIs, and the disciplines to be offered. The benefits of developing from this kind of cooperation are therefore limited to the individual institutions participating in such cooperation (Hou, et.al., 2017). The M-I-T Student Mobility Program overwhelmed this limitation by turning to ASEAN Member States' governments and higher educational institutions to develop a genuine regional program.

Presently, there are seven countries with more than 60 universities that have participated in this program with more than ten field offerings with a total of 500 courses. There was a continuing increase in partaking student numbers since the exchange program was started. The AIMS directed elite students, that the selection criteria included studying at least one year at home university, GPA score, English proficiency, and learning motivation. As implemented, students would take eight to ten credits within one to three semesters and such credits are awarded at the host university to be transferred into their home universities (Hou, et.al., 2017). The Program contributes to the development of citizens and promotes regional collaboration and integration, particularly to becoming an ASEAN Community (www.ched.gov.ph).

H. The Philippines on Transnational higher education (TNE)

The creation of international organizations, collaborations of universities, and curricular internationalization (Huang, 2007) could reinforce the course of addressing the gaps in globalization. Networks, linkages, and cooperation of international organizations may still be a slice of the process in maintaining activities that would accommodate the requirements of the population in assorted communities, particularly in the Southeast Asia region. Part of the educational policies of higher educational institutions in the Philippines is to address the demands of the ASEAN Economic Community to withstand better opportunities for collaborations. As ASEAN continues to exhaust undertakings to stimulate mobility and mutual recognition of professional qualifications, competencies, and skills in the region (Moussa & Somjai, 2015), the consistent development of local and international industry linkages show the strong opportunities to obtain the universal knowledge, live the core values and implement the valuable skills of the developed countries in the delivery of academic inside the universities and college through adjusting to the outcomes-based education gearing ASEAN integration (Laguador, Villas & Delagado, 2014).

The ASEAN Integration efforts as seen in the agreed mechanisms, mobilize the free flow of goods, services, investments, and capital which signifies the gradual establishment of a single market in the region. For this reason, higher educational institutions in the country along with neighboring countries in the region must ensure that curricular programs are synchronized with the ASEAN Qualification Framework requirements to allow their students and graduates to compete equally with other professionals and skilled workers from other ASEAN countries in the labor market.

The internationalization of higher education produces a compelling necessity for international external quality accreditation and evaluation and growing weight for cross-national recognition of qualifications (Harvey, 2004). It gears in ensuring that graduates are capable to assume leadership duties in international background armed with the required competencies and qualifications to participate in the competitive activities in the region. Universities and colleges through their products, the graduates take a vital role in national development. Consequently, stabilizing the balance of supply and demand of graduates who will partake the labor force in various trades and sectors in the ASEAN Economic Community is a very imperative issue in the formulation and implementation of national and international policies and arrangements. Therefore, the internationalization of higher education is a pivotal approach to activate professionals in the higher educational institutions to respond proactively to the new challenges and likewise produce skillful human resources for participating states (Moussa & Somjai, 2015). The call for globally competitive graduates could only be attained by adopting international standards to the mandated functions of the universities and colleges.

I. The Philippine State Universities and Colleges and TNE

The higher education sector in the Philippines is seen with substantive development in the last decade. There were 3,590,000 students in 2016 alone enrolled in the HEIs both public and private with an observable 40% increase starting the academic year 2006-2007 compared with the 12% decrease in the preceding year. This can be attributed to the launching of the K to 12 Basic Education Program in 2010 which aims to mandate two additional years in the prevailing 10 years of basic education. As a result, enrolment in the higher education sector dropped between 2016 and 2018. There was a minimal increase of higher education institutions from 1,710 (2006) to 1,934 (2017) from which number, the majority are private higher educational institutions with 1,706 or 88%, and as per record has admitted an estimated 2.22 million or 54% of all students' population. The other 228 public institutions received the

remaining students of 1.88 million or 46% (ched.gov.ph, 2017).

From these are 112 state universities and colleges (SUCs) excluding the University of the Philippines and Mindanao State University. These SUCS are organized or created by their respective charters through laws and are regulated by the government and subsidized by public funds. In this number, it excludes the 454 SUCs' extension/branches/satellite campuses in the country, the 102 local universities and colleges (LUCs) duly created and subsidized by local government units, and other 14 state-owned and funded higher educational institutions, vocational education centers, and specialist institutions operated or supervised directly or indirectly by the Commission on Higher Education.

The most popular discipline of study is Business and related courses (26%), Education and Teacher Training (19%), Engineering and Technology (13%), and Information Technology (11%). While the Commission on Higher Education has identified Education and Teacher Training, Engineering and Technology, Information Technology, and Medical and Allied courses (6%), Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Veterinary Medicine (3.5%), Maritime Studies (3.3%), Architecture and Town Planning (1.1%), Natural Science (1%), and Mathematics (0.4%) as the priority disciplines (www.qaa.ac.uk., 2018).

J. Commission on Higher Education and TNE

Pursuant to RA 8292 or the Higher Education Modernization Act (HEMA), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) was created. It is mandated by its Charter to serve as the overseer of the higher education sector in the Philippines. Its functions are to set the minimum guidelines standards for academic programs, institutions of higher learning, monitor and evaluate HEIs' compliance to these standards, rationalize the higher education sector which includes the amalgamation of existing institutions and the establishment of new HEIs, support the development of a center of development and excellence in banner programs, and the conduct of relevant research activities, linkages, and collaborations (ched.gov.ph).

K. Philippine Expenditure in Higher Education

The CHED budget as per Republic Act 11465 the General Appropriation Act (GAA) of 2020 was decreased by P3.77 billion, from the P50.5B in 2018, P50.4B in 2019 to P46.73B this 2020. Almost a third of this decrease in the CHED budget can be attributed to the universal access and financial assistance programs that provide free tertiary (college) education enacted 2 years ago (dbm.gov.ph). The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) justified the reduction in the budget allocation for CHED programs due to the absorptive capacity of the state universities and colleges (SUCs) and private higher education institutions. The DBM

intends to "rationalize" the implementation of the Free Tuition Act specifically the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) that supplements additional P11B allocation in the 2019 budget alone. The TES component allows students to enrol in both SUCs and private institutions and will receive allowances and other related subsidies. Tuition fees of students in private HEIs can be subsidized in full or a portion through an educational voucher scheme. The Philippine government has decreased the budget for several programs as seen redundant with the free tuition measure (philstar.com. 2020).

In general, the education sector got P654.77 billion, a combined budget allocation with the Department of Education of P521.35 billion, and the State Universities and Colleges with P73.72 billion (Rey, 2020). However, the combined higher education budget allocation is only 2.9% of the P4.1-trillion national budget for the Fiscal Year 2020 falling short the international benchmark of World Bank for tertiary education budget of 15% of the total education budget.

This is contrary to the global trend of tertiary education which among others gives premium on spending for transnational higher education. In the OECD Report on Tertiary Education, over 4 million higher education students are studying in other countries. The international students increased from around 800,000 (1975) to 4.5 million in 2012 (OECD, 2015a). These students in the OECD network which includes the Philippines became bigger by 5% from 2013 to 2014 (OECD, 2016). An estimated 53% of these mobile students were from the Asian regions. With the substantive decrease in budget, the internationalization efforts in higher education are expected to disadvantageously impact the sector.

Conceptual Framework

This conceptual diagram shows how a given country (i.e. Philippines) through its HEIs (SUCs) maximize their mobility programs for purposes favorable to its people and to itself in general.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

The country serves as the motivator role encouraging SUC to cooperate through the mobility of students to ensure participation in higher educational institutions (HEIs) by providing benefits to the development of collaboration. The SUCs implements the partnerships/cooperation with other HEIs based on their capabilities by employing the preferential frameworks of participating in higher educational institutions from other countries. Identified challengers are addressed through course of actions at the institutional and state level to sustain the benefits of the mobility of students to both the human resource and development goals of the country.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative method of research to describe systematically the motives, problems, and reforms in transnational higher education in the Philippine state universities and colleges. It is believed by the researcher that this method is the most related and appropriate for the present study. The data collected were from primary and secondary sources.

Aside from the documentary analysis of data using a sequential exploratory mixed design from research journals, international and local books, statistical reports and databases by CHED and SUCs, online journals, newspaper publications, and official websites, statistical tools were used to conduct a cross-sectional survey in building quantitative analysis based on the results of the administered surveys to students and implementer-respondents.

Furthermore, the framework analysis method as a variation of content analysis was used, which is often termed thematic or qualitative content analysis. This approach identifies commonalities and differences in qualitative data before focusing on relationships between different parts of the data, thereby seeking to draw descriptive and/or explanatory conclusions clustered around themes. This method also offers a case-and theme-based approach wherein data are categorized through the hierarchy of themes and sub-themes (Gale et al., 2013). The framework method reduces data by summarising and synthesising the preliminary interpretations, similarities, differences, and gaps and connecting the relationships to each other. Framework analysis also makes use of data mapping and interpretation through case-based typologies and creates a matrix to link cases and themes together. From this matrix, the framework analysis develops interpretations and explanations (Gale, 2013; Moerman, n.d.).

There were two (2) groups of respondents, the outbound students (Filipinos) under international mobility programs who are presently enrolled or recently completed their studies in another participating countries, and the key officials / implementers from public higher education institutions. The respondents will be randomly selected from participating state universities and colleges (SUCs) based on established inclusion and exclusion criteria. The exclusion of foreign students was due to their unavailability since they were all required to return home before the total lockdown in the Philippines due to COVID-19. Their participation in this study would have been substantial in identifying trends in the profile of foreign students. This would have made better comparative perspectives on how the mobility programs in the ASEAN region would affect the Philippines, vis-à-vis.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Motives of International Mobility of Students

Table 1 presents the motives by the Filipino students in studying abroad.

Motives	*f*	*%*	*r*
1. Imbued by personal reasons.	30	48.39	1
2. The degree/education obtained will improve portfolio/curriculum vitae.	15	24.19	2
3. Acquire social and cultural experiences from the host country.	2	3.23	6.5
4. Better international career opportunities abroad.	12	19.35	3
5. Increase job prospects (home country).	10	16.13	4
6. Learn a new language, or improve language skills.	1	1.61	8
7. Expand connections/networks by meeting more people of different nationalities.	2	3.23	6.5
8. Take advantage of the offered scholarship or grant.	5	8.06	5

f = frequency, % = percentage, r = ranking

This result reveals that the primary motive of student-respondents in pursuing studies in other countries is personal reasons, which ranked first. This is followed by improving portfolio; better career opportunities abroad; and in the Philippines, taking advantage of scholarship opportunities; and establishing connections to other nationalities, which are in the same rank. Learning a new language is the least mentioned reason in engaging in international mobility. This confirmed that importance of ASEAN and AMS through higher education institutions in fulfilling these expectations and attracting participants within the region for student mobility (Chan, 2012).

B. Problems Encountered by Filipino International Students

It can be gleaned from Table 2 that the always encountered problems by the Filipino students are the low benefit scholarship coverage, access regulations (visas, permits, etc.), and the culture shock in the host countries. Though other challenges are also valid, these stated problems are the major ones according to the respondents.

Table 2. Problems Encountered Filipino International Students

Problems	x	r	VI
1. Insufficient skills of the student in foreign language.	4.38	5.5	Always Encountered
2. Discomfort with accommodation (including food) in the host country.	3.75	15.5	Frequently Encountered
3. Separation anxiety/ from partner, child(ren), and friends.	3.63	17	Frequently Encountered
4. Loss of social benefits (insurance, financial or not)			Always Encountered
5. Loss of opportunities to earn wages due to the program.	4.25	9.5	Always Encountered
6. Unexpected additional expenses in the pursuit of the study.			Always Encountered
7. Low benefit scholarship coverage of the program.	4.38	5.5	Always Encountered
8. Loneliness, uncomfortable or nervousness with other people.			Always Encountered
9. Problems with recognition of credits achieved from home country.	4.38	5.5	Frequently Encountered
10. Problems with access regulations to the preferred host country (visa, residence permit, etc.).			Always Encountered
11. Limited admittance to the preferred institution and/or study program in foreign country.	4.38	5.5	Frequently Encountered
12. Incompatibility of the structure of the program to my field of study/interest.			Always Encountered
13. Emotional problem or stressful experience in the program.	4.38	5.5	Frequently Encountered
14. Health problems (e.g. allergy) or existing disability served as obstacle in the study.			Frequently Encountered
15. Disconnected with religious support or spiritual needs.	4.00	13.5	Always Encountered
16. Academic delinquencies or low grades.	3.75	15.5	Frequently Encountered
17. Disorientated or slow to adjust with the local culture (culture shock).	4.63	1.5	Always Encountered
18. Incompatibility with the academic norms or practices.	2.88	18	Moderately Encountered
Average Mean	4.13		Frequently Encountered

f = frequency % = percentage, r = ranking

But the SUC implementers draw other problems that might greatly affect the compliance of the Philippines to ASEAN policies on student mobility. Other than the given insufficient financial support or subsidy as described in their statements such as "financial support in the institutional level," "financial support," "availability of local funds to support scholarship programs," "financial aspect," "funding"(L47, L72b, L73, L76, L83 respectively: Appendix K), these observations were also revealed, that programs are "not popular, only a limited number is engaged (L9), "leniency in structural arrangement" (L45), "language (diversity)" (L72a), "digital divide and social divide in the region" (L74), "conflict of laws" (L75) laws are the perceived hindrances. The CHED implementer on the other hand mentioned the "Lack of a centralized mobility database, multiple mobility platforms with overlapping mandates and varying credit transfer schemes, and sustainability of resources may pose challenges in building a harmonized higher education pace in the region. Nevertheless, these are already being addressed through the many initiatives on-going in ASEAN, which enjoy strong support from higher education stakeholders" (L19: Appendix K, Addendum), and the "the need to expand the number of available scholarship opportunities for academic mobility in the country both for inbound and outbound students. Visa and immigration issues also affect whether a foreign student will choose the Philippines as their study destination. We continuously work with the Bureau of Immigration and Department of Foreign Affairs to address concerns that are relevant to their respective mandates" (L12).

In the Philippines, funding support in mobility programs is highly dependent on the terms of the MOA/MOU mutually agreed by ASEAN Member states via HEIs (CMO No. 55, 2016). Similarly, the scholarship support as revealed to be the utmost experienced concern of the outbound (Filipino) students can be attributable to the report of the Department of Budget Management that one-third of its budget for projects including international mobility programs was cut-off due to the realignment to the free tertiary education as governed by RA 10931 (Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act) (dbm.org.ph, 2019) as to increase allocation to several higher education programs may be considered as redundancy with the free higher education measure (philstar.com., 2020).

C. SUCs' Course of Actions

1. Transnational higher education in the Philippines. There were already early undertakings in the Philippines for TNE. Mainly, several units of the University of the Philippines have received special funding from foreign higher educational institutions through bilateral development assistance programs (Sicat, 2019). These programs were intended to advance and enhance various fields and specializations considered significant and deficient in the Philippines such as agriculture, engineering, public administration, economics, business, and statistics. The most active American universities among many others that assisted the University of the Philippines were the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Stanford University. In case of private HEIs, the most prominent a cooperative arrangement was the establishment of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) by the Ateneo De Manila University, Dela Salle, and the University of the Philippines College of Business Administration in cooperation with the Harvard University as supported by private American foundations.

Meanwhile, the Commission on Higher Education in the last two decades has retorted the requirements of the

country in developing its human resources capital and supporting a knowledge economy to cope-up with challenges brought by globalization by promulgating series of interventions through policies and guidelines on transnational higher education and international collaborations. These include the "Policy Framework and Strategies on the Internationalization of Philippine Higher Education" (CMO No. 55, 2016), and the "Policies, Standards and Guidelines for Transnational higher education Programs" (CMO No. 22, 2016). Several of these CHED documents provided the identified key policy determinants for the internationalization initiatives for higher education which are decisively set in support of the national development plans and the ASEAN Economic Community. In general, these set out principles and directives in CMO 22 (2016) serve as guidance of the HEIs in the country as they embrace internationalization initiatives. It includes comprehensive aspects such as academic and student mobility (inbound and outbound), transnational programs, and institutional mobility partnerships. The Commission focuses more on transnational higher education (TNE) policies, standards and guidelines highlighting the mandatory requirements for foreign higher education institutions.

Similar requirements are set for Philippine HEIs including SUCs in offering outbound transnational higher education. They must be recognized as Center of Excellence (COE) or Center for Development (COD) for the courses/discipline intended to be offered in another country or at least with Level III accreditation received from the appropriate accrediting bodies [Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU) for private Catholic institutions, Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) for private non-sectarian institutions, Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities Accrediting Association Inc. (ACSCU-AAI) for Protestant institutions, Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP) for state universities and colleges (SUCs) and local universities and colleges (LUCs)] (CMO No. 1, 2005). For both inbound and outbound studies, the participating HEIs must secure permission from CHED before operation and implementation. In the case of foreign HEIs, the application must be filed with their local partner HEIs through the CHED regional office where the local HEI is under jurisdiction. The Policies, Standards, and Guidelines (PSGs) of a particular program or discipline provide the list of the documentary requirements. Upon signing of Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), the authority to operate will be granted for the period of two years for undergraduate programs and one year for graduate programs. The CHED will implement an assessment to validate the authority to operate and as a basis, if the programs will still be eligible to continue or extension.

2. Law Governing the Philippine Transnational higher education. Since CHED regulates transnational higher education through the issuance of Program, Standards, and Guidelines (PSGs), this is very static and dependent on the leadership of the Commission. On August 28, 2019, Republic Act 11448 or the Transnational Higher Education Act was signed into law. This brought the means for foreign higher educational institutions to offer educational services in engagements with state universities and colleges in the Philippines. As defined in the said law, transnational higher education refers to all types and modes of delivery of higher education study programs, educational services, or sets of courses of study involving the participation of foreign educational institutions with higher local HEIs. The law provides that, "The local branch shall be managed and administered jointly by the parties, subject to the provisions of the Constitution on control and administration of educational institutions. The local partner shall be accountable for ensuring the quality of the programs offered." This initiative of the present Philippine government is in response to the pressing demands of globalization which compels a borderless education. The law listed some distinct arrangements that are currently being used in other countries that can be emulated as benchmarks such as academic franchising, academic program offerings, articulation, specification of auxiliary services, awarding of services, branch campuses, distance education, double degree offerings, joint degree offerings (officialgazette.gov.ph, 2019).

The said law views TNE collaborations with reputable HEIs as a medium to draw the attention of potential international students in areas that are deemed crucial for the social and economic development of the Philippines. Transnational higher education has always been perceived in the Philippines causes an outflow of currency and even brain drain. With the admission of outbound students with the expansion of TNE creates job opportunities for both academic and support staff. This RA 11448 will be providing requirements for partnership schemes and external campuses/branches stemming from the provisions of CHED's PSGs. Specifically, it is noteworthy to mention that educational institutions are mandated to be owned by Filipino citizens, or by at least 60% Filipino citizens in a juridical entity, and the prohibition of non-Filipino exclusivity or non-Filipino citizens comprise more than a third of all the enrolments are inclusive in the provisions. On the other hand, foreign higher education institutions for temporary foreign residents may be owned by foreign citizens and can consist of 100% foreign faculty and students or at least 50% of the enrolled students and 25% employed faculty members. The law also provides the establishment of TNE in economic zones or hubs. And lastly, being in the top 500 best universities' rankings in reputable international organizations will be incentivized of curricular autonomy from CHED. It also proposes that a dedicated TNE division should be created under CHED. Pending the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of this law, "There is no ASEAN mobility policy that demands the compliance of

Philippine universities when it comes to academic exchanges, but the Commission issued CMO 55 s 2016 which also contains our overarching policy and strategies on international mobility. We have also drafted guidelines on higher education mobility, which is yet to be issued. Lack of sufficient resources and infrastructure is a serious barrier for some HEIs so we do our best to expand the reach of our capacity-building initiatives" (L18: Appendix K, Addendum).

Presently, SUCs are implementing institutional mobility with HEIs in Southeast Asia, jointly funded (whole or partial) by CHED and the ASEAN member-states'

participating universities or personal counterparts of the students running from 2016 to 2020 and has aimed to provide capacity and funding support to international students to niche bachelor degrees, special courses, and fellowships (lawphil.net., 2019) and the observance of the laws, rules, and regulations of partner countries.

D. Recommended Suggestions by the Respondents

Table 3 presents the suggestions to improve the transnational higher education in the Philippines.

Suggestions	*f*	*%*	*r*
1. Include language lesson	6	10.53	4
2. Increase financial support	23	40.35	1
3. Make cultural fellowship part of the program	9	15.79	3
4. Longer period of the program	4	7.02	5
5. Improve government assistance/facilitation	15	26.32	2

f = frequency, % = percentage, r = ranking

Table 3 portrays that the respondents' most recommended improvements of the international mobility programs of the Philippines is to consider the increase of financial support with 40.35% (1st rank), followed by improve government assistance/facilitation with 26.32% (2nd rank), cultural fellowship as component with 15.79% (3rd rank), language lesson with 10.53% (4th rank), and longer period of the program with 7.02% (5th rank).

Conversely based on the validation interviews with SUC implementers, other than the increase of scholarship funding (L98, L101, L103a: Appendix K), "there is a need to invest to internationalization" (L102, L108), "more government support" (L106), "more publicity" (L103b), include "cultural sensitivity" (L87), "report the undertakings," "sharing of experiences and learned skills and competencies," "(re) echo to others what they have earned" (L89, L92, L95), or render services (as "make them tutors or research assistant") (L90) upon return to home country/SUC. Given the present situations carried by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also suggested to "sustain academic in other remote modalities" of learning (L86). The CHED implementer offered the following recommendations: a) for ASEAN "region be able

to successfully create and sustain a robust higher education common space, strong focus and support must be accorded to the creation of mechanisms dedicated towards the establishment of an area of knowledge. These mechanisms—which include quality assurance, academic mobility and credit transfer, research, and qualifications frameworks—will not only create the higher education common space, but also help build trust within the region's higher education landscape and contribute to ASEAN Community-building" (L23: Appendix K, Agendum; b) for the Philippine government, a "More opportunities and strong support (financial, administrative, technical) systems must be in place so we can contribute to intra-ASEAN mobility. Concerned government agencies should also work together in addressing barriers experienced by students when it comes to visa and immigration, without compromising national security" (L24); c) for SUCs, "that students/faculty/ administrators/researchers who participate in an exchange conduct echoing and cascading activities which serves as an opportunity for them to apply what they learned in the exchange and share them with their peers. This will enable them to give back to their home institution and contribute to the development of their community" (L22).

Wright (2016) in his paper identified that support to international students in terms of scholarships is very limited in the region due to lack of appropriate funding. Lack of pro-active planning in the internationalization of higher education despite the growth in its reputation makes the higher education reactionary to the development of mobility programs in the region (Chou, 2017; Knight, 2012). Government and HEIs commitment can be assessed in this line, if it is deep" or "shallow" (Nair, 2009).

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary

The common Filipino culture to aspire to attain tertiary education and self-improvement are the main drivers for studying abroad. This is supported by Baruch (2007) who found that the competitiveness of one's portfolio is the strongest motive that influences mobility.

It is very evident that the insufficiency of financial support is still the utmost limitation of the Philippine government and its public HEIs in implementing mobility programs. Coincidentally, support to international students in the region in terms of scholarships is also very limited due to lack of "appropriate funding" (Wright, 2016). For this reason, government and HEIs commitment can be assessed in this line, if it is deep" or "shallow" (Nair, 2009). Other problems such as unpopular programs, leniency in structural arrangement, absence of centralized mobility database, multiple mobility platforms with overlapping mandates and varying credit transfer schemes, and sustainability of resources, language diversity, and conflict of immigration laws

curtail the effectivity of these mobility programs. Given the present situations carried by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also suggested to sustain academic in other remote modalities of learning.

B. Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. international student mobility is affirmed to be an important part of personal human resource enhancement, national development goals, and ASEAN regional integration.
2. The most significant weakness is the lack of sufficient funding support to the internationalization of higher education and mobility of students, followed by conflicting rules and regulations in visas and permits, immigration laws on students, and human resources to monitor and supervise mobility programs of higher education institutions, particularly the SUCs.
3. Charters, priorities, and agenda of state universities and colleges hamper the facilitation of a harmonized efforts of the sector in the internationalization and integration processes.
4. More lenient access of student visa is still a pending action due to several transnational concerns like drugs, illegal immigration, human trafficking, terrorism, and presently the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) which prevents the seamless mobility.

VI. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Implications

The mobility of people has an advantageous impact on academic, cultural development, social, political, and economic development of the sending and receiving countries. The accumulated knowledge and skills of graduates with gained cross-cultural experience complement the labor mobility in Southeast Asia, hence enhancing the ASEAN labor force to meet both personal and countries' requirements for human resources. The student mobility initiative provides an avenue for students to travel and study in other countries. Furthermore, the benefits caused by higher education harmonization programs are hoped to provide the development of a multi-cultural space where people respect differences in culture, religion, and language while conscious of the collective values and unity of the ASEAN Member States (Hawkins, 2012).

In the framework analysis, there are significant meanings in the words "funding," "digital divide," "social divide," and "COVID-19" in determining the viability and relevance of the TNE and its implications to the political and socio-economic facets of the Philippines. The Philippine government through CHED and SUCs need to revisit policies and make necessary adjustments in their

own respective contexts before advancing transnational higher education.

B. Recommendations

The following recommendations aim to enhance the implementation of the Transnational Higher Education of SUCs in the Philippines:

1. The national government through legislation and budget authorization needs to consider investing more in Filipino students to study abroad.
2. State universities and colleges need to conduct financial resource management studies and ventures to source out possible funds for internationalization of programs.
3. The Philippine government through CHED and SUCs must first make the necessary policies and adjustments in their own respective contexts before advancing a regional harmonization of higher education.
4. The SUCs should begin the national harmonization by delineating the broader objective of internationalization of higher education into institution-specific issues and institution-specific solutions.
5. The CHED should establish a centralized mobility database to streamline multiple mobility platforms with overlapping mandates and varying credit transfer schemes and avoid the proliferation of non-substantive agreements (MOUs and MOAs).
6. All SUCs through the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC) should actively participate in the crafting of the implementing guidelines of RA 11448.
7. Enable policies and infrastructures for the transition of academic landscape to the era of New Normal due to COVID-19 pandemic, delivery through alternative modalities such as "open and distance learning" (ODL) in internationalizing further higher education.
8. SUCs need to relive/active aggressively the inbound component of their mobility programs to attract numbers of foreign students.
9. It is recommended that future studies of this nature should include larger number of SUCs and Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) and private Higher Education Institutions.

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