

A Comparative Study of Governance and Management of Universities in Four East Asian Countries and Societies: Based on the analysis of Findings of the APIKS Surveys in 2017

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The purpose of this study is to analyze and discuss key characteristics and issues of governance and management of the universities in four East Asian countries and societies that participated in the APIKS project. Drawing on the findings from national surveys in Japan, Korea, Malaysia, and Taiwan, the study analyzes and discusses the similarities and differences in their observations on the following common questions which are employed in the national surveys implemented in 2017. One question is about “Looking at this institution, please indicate how you feel about the following statements which relate to management and the decision-making process. Top-level administrators are providing competent leadership”. The other set of questions are concerned with “At this institution, where are the following decisions usually made?, which relates to Selecting key administrators, Choosing new faculty, Making faculty promotion and tenure decisions, Determining budget priorities, Determining the overall teaching load of faculty, Setting admission standards for undergraduate students, and Approving new academic programs”

There are several rationales for selecting the four case countries. First, according to the data of the World Bank (2021), by 2020, the case countries can be split into two broad groups. Japan, South Korea and Taiwan belong to high income countries while Malaysia is included in the upper middle-income countries. Second, although the case countries have come to be more impacted by the US philosophy of higher education recently, both the modern higher education systems of Korea and Taiwan were more affected by the Japanese ideas, and Malaysia used to be a colony of the UK before WWII. Third, while Japan has the largest population of academics, the size of academics in South Korea, Malaysia, and Taiwan can be considered to be almost similar. In contrast, the population of academics in Hong Kong is the smallest. Finally, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan can represent main characteristics of academics in East Asian countries, while Malaysia is a one of typical countries in Southeast Asian countries.

The analytical model of this study is derived from institutional theory, particularly new institutionalism, which emerged since the 1990s (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Scot, 2008), is used to analyze relevant data. Despite its being basically used in studies of sociology and sociology of education, the previous study suggests that the new institutionalism can be applied to not only explain how colleges and universities are shaped by wider social and political environments at both global and national levels (Manning, 2017), but also explore how the academy come to resemble each other or differentiate from each other because of national filters, institutional spheres, and individual academic backgrounds (Greenwood et al. 2017).

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