Interdisciplinary Degree Programs in ASEAN Plus Six Countries

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Abstract

Nowadays important problems cannot be solved by using only one discipline of knowledge. Therefore, experts from several fields have to cooperate in order to figure out the solutions for the problems. This paper discusses the interdisciplinary degree programs in ASEAN and six countries in Asia Pacific rim, so ASEAN plus Six are gaining recognition. They are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam. and Six countries are Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea.

1. Introduction

Nowadays important problems cannot be solved by using only one discipline of knowledge. Therefore, experts from several fields have to cooperate in order to figure out the solutions for the problems. Popularity of Interdisciplinary Degree Programs occurs. Searching Google with a phase “Popularity of Interdisciplinary Degree Programs”, over 1.5 million entries were found. This paper discusses the interdisciplinary degree programs in 16 countries; ASEAN and six countries have been joining the interdisciplinary degree programs, so ASEAN plus six countries are gaining recognition. ASEAN has ten countries, they are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and six supporting countries are Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea.

2. Interdisciplinary Degree Programs in each country

1). Brunei

- There are 13 government and 6 private universities and colleges in Brunei. A few of them use the word “university”. Examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in Brunei: Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University and Seri Begawan Religious Teachers University College, No explicit interdisciplinary degree program is shown in the web. On 30 March 2013, three top-ranking Japanese universities agreed to cooperate with the University of Brunei Darussalam to deepen ties in joint research and faculty exchange. The three Japanese universities are; Doshisha University, Sophia University and University of Tokyo. This development in cooperation might result in interdisciplinary studies in the future.
2). Cambodia

- There are 20 government and 13 private higher educational institutions in Cambodia. No explicit interdisciplinary degree program is shown in the web but some will eventually be available later. There are some interdisciplinary researches carried out.

- Examples of interdisciplinary research programs in Cambodia such as, the Center of Advanced Study (CAS) in Phnom Penh, the Royal University of Phnom Penh with help from Fauna and Flora International (FFI). The Center of Advanced Study (CAS) in Phnom Penh Issued a publication “Interdisciplinary Research on Ethnic Groups in Cambodia” in 1996. the Royal University of Phnom Penh with help from Fauna and Flora International (FFI). In 2008, an Interdisciplinary Research Group was established for studies on Cambodia biodiversity.

3). Indonesia

- There are 112 government and 75 private universities in Indonesia. Examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in Indonesia; In September 2003, two graduate programs were introduced as interdisciplinary programs in Indonesia, they are The program includes Islamic Studies and Social Sciences in UIN Sharif idayatullah and The program includes Islamic Studies and Social Work in UIN Sunan Kalijaga. University of Indonesia Provides 13 interdisciplinary degree programs for postgraduate students in different fields of study.

4). Laos

- There are one national university and 31 private higher educational institutions. SINTEF the largest independent research organization in Scandinavia has been conducting interdisciplinary activities in Laos. Examples of interdisciplinary activities of SINTEF in Laos: Theun Hinboun Power Company (THPC) and Theun Hinboun Expansion Project. Theun Hinboun Power Company (THPC) Operates hydropower plants, initially with no reservoir but then expanded by damming of a tributary to increase power production and to store water in dry season. Theun Hinboun Expansion Project, Estimating net greenhouse gas emissions from creating a reservoir for Theum-Hinboun Expansion project. These projects were done by two collaborative departments SINTEF Energy and SINTEF Materials and Chemistry. Universities in Laos could contact SINTEF to participate in the interdisciplinary projects.

5). Malasia

- There are 19 government and 71 private higher educational institutions in Malaysia. The interdisciplinary programs in Malaysia are available for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in Malaysia are The Universiti Technologi Malaysia and Nottingham University Business School in Malaysia. The Universiti Technologi...
Malaysia Provides interdisciplinary program in the field of Engineering and Technology. Nottingham University Business School in Malaysia provides Interdisciplinary program for Business Management.

6). Myanmar

- There are over 150 higher educational institutions in Myanmar. No explicit interdisciplinary degree program available in the web. There are interdisciplinary workshop available in Myanmar: The Sun Institute in Yangon, opened in the year 2012 as a non-profit organization operating certificate courses. The Sun Institute joined the University of Sydney to organize an interdisciplinary workshop in Myanmar Constitutional Democracy on 8-10 May 2013. Members of universities in Myanmar could join the interdisciplinary workshop.
- Another example of interdisciplinary workshop in Myanmar is “Islam, Law and the State of Myanmar” to be held on 23-24 January 2014 at the National University of Singapore. Members of some universities in Myanmar can attend and continue interdisciplinary activities at their own universities.

7). Philippines

- There are 456 state colleges and universities and 21 private universities in the Philippines. Interdisciplinary degree programs are available in the field of Social Sciences. Examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in Philippines are: University of the Philippines and Ateneo De Manila University.

University of the Philippines provides Asian Studies Program for graduates to get more knowledge on the Asian culture as well as the perspective society in the given areas. Ateneo De Manila University provides Development Studies Program for undergraduates to study about socio-economic theories, policy analysis and management tools.

8). Singapore

- There are 13 local universities and 42 foreign universities in Singapore. Foreign universities are mainly from the UK, the USA and New Zealand. Examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in Singapore: The National University of Singapore, Singapore Management University and Ngee Ann Polytechnic. The National University of Singapore offers the interdisciplinary degree programs in the field of Computation and System Biology. Singapore Management University offers the interdisciplinary doctoral program. Students are able to choose their specialized subjects to study. The specialized subjects are Economics, Marketing, Psychology, Finance and Information Systems. Ngee Ann Polytechnic has a School of Interdisciplinary Studies for undergraduates.

9). Thailand

- There are hundreds of public and private higher educational institutions in Thailand. Examples of public universities are Chulalongkorn University, Thammasat University, Mahidol University, Kasetsart University, Rajabhat Universities, and
Rajamangala Universities. Examples of private universities are Assumption University, Bangkok University, Siam University, Sri Pratam University, etc. Examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in Thailand such as Thammasat University, Kasetsart University, and Siam Technology College. Thammasat University provides interdisciplinary degree program for Bachelor’s, Master’s and Ph.D. programs. Sample Interdisciplinary Degree Program at Thammasat University such as Bachelor of Social Science, Master of Arts in Women’s Studies and Ph.D. in Social Science and the Humanities. Kasetsart University provides Interdisciplinary Master of Business Administration. The Board of Trustees of Siam Technology College has approved a Ph.D. program in Interdisciplinary Studies with Information and Communication Technology.

10). Vietnam

There are 42 government and 24 private higher educational institutions in Vietnam as well as 3 foreign universities. The foreign universities come from US, Singapore and Australia. Examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in Vietnam such as The Vietnamese-German University, University of Technology Darmstadt and Vietnam National University. The Vietnamese-German University provides Master degree of “Sustainable Urban Development” in the form of interdisciplinary program. This program is in cooperation with the University of Technology Darmstadt in Germany. Vietnam National University provides Interdisciplinary of Arts and Sciences program and cooperates with the University of Washington.

11). Australia

There are 38 government and 4 private higher educational institutions in Australia. Examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in Australia such as University of New South Wales and University of Sydney. University of New South Wales offers the Australian Studies for undergraduates about Australia’s History and Culture. Students are able to choose the subjects that they would like to study. University of New South Wales also offers the Australian Studies for undergraduates about Australia’s History and Culture. The subjects that students are able to choose such as English, History, Indigenous Studies, Sociology, Geography, Political Science, Music, Theatre Studies and Film Studies. University of Sydney offers Indigenous Australian Studies in the form of interdisciplinary program to understand the history of Aborigines as well as the selected subjects. The selected subjects are History, Literature, Sociology Health, Linguistics and Film and Archaeology.

12). China

There are over 2000 universities and colleges in China most of the higher educational institutions in China are controlled by the government. Examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in China such as Tsinghua University and Fudan University. Tsinghua
University has an Institute of Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences for both graduates and undergraduates. Fudan University runs in the School of Management, it provides the interdisciplinary program for undergraduates called “all-round education”.

13). India

There are 285 state and 112 private universities in India. Examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in India such as University of Pune and University of Mumbai. University of Pune has Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences. University of Mumbai offers Interdisciplinary study of Music and Psychology, Music and Sociology and Music, Philosophy and Religion for students who would like to improve their understanding and mechanism in the musical performance.

14). Japan

There are 89 public and 580 private universities in Japan. Examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in Japan such as Hiroshima University and University of Tsukuba. Hiroshima University offers Interdisciplinary curriculum for International Development and Cooperation with different fields of studies in order to develop global perspectives and provides for graduate students in the field of Social Sciences. University of Tsukuba offers Interdisciplinary program in Life and Environmental Sciences. The program trains students about how to solve various problems such as Resources, Environment, Energy and Food Security.

15). New Zealand

There are 8 public universities and no private university in New Zealand. Examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in New Zealand such as Auckland University of Technology and Lincoln University. Auckland University of Technology offers Research-based degree for Ph.D. students to study Social Science and Public Policy in the form of interdisciplinary. Lincoln University provides interdisciplinary in every faculty, but only in some subjects for example, Farm Management in Faculty of Management.

16). South Korea

There are 48 public and 43 private universities in South Korea. The examples of interdisciplinary degree programs in South Korea such as Ewha Womans University and Seoul National University. Ewha Womans University offers Interdisciplinary Program of Technology and Development. The fields of study are IT, Design and Health and Environment. Seoul National University offers Interdisciplinary program for undergraduates in Computer Sciences.
3. Concluding Remark

Colleges and universities in ASEAN plus Six are offering or in the process of preparing to offer interdisciplinary degree programs. Foreign universities and research organizations are also interested in conducting interdisciplinary projects in ASEAN plus Six.