

AWARENESS ON ASEAN 2015 INTEGRATION, MANAGERIAL FLEXIBILITY AND SCHOOL PREPAREDNESS FOR TRANSNATIONAL STUDENTS: BASIS FOR A CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION PROGRAM

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Abstract: *With the advent of technology, the growing economic interdependence, the setting up of international political linkages, the expansion of travels and the rise of global education, the world seems to become a single interdependent community. By 2015, the ten countries of ASEAN will be transformed into one region where exchange of people, services, goods, capital and education will take place. The investigation determined whether the level of awareness and managerial flexibility of the top level heads significantly influence the preparedness of Higher Education Institutions to cater to the academic needs of transnational college students. The inquiry made used of a descriptive-correlation method and was conducted among Private Higher Education Institution in Region XI participated in by 21 school head respondents. The three-part researcher-made, validated and pilot-tested questionnaire was used to gather pertinent data. Results were subjected to Pearson r and regression test analysis. Findings revealed a high level of awareness on the ASEAN integration among top level heads in the HEI's of the region. Managerial flexibility in terms of decision making with regards to the area of investments and marketing strategy is often evident. Results pointed out that HEI's are prepared in terms of curriculum, faculty, and facility to address the academic needs of transnational students. Hence, school preparedness of HEI's to cater to the concerns of transnational college students is significantly influenced by the managerial flexibility of its decision makers.*

Keywords: *Educational leadership, ASEAN 2015 Integration, Awareness, Managerial flexibility, School preparedness, transnational students, descriptive-correlation, Pearson r , Philippines.*

INTRODUCTION

Many centuries ago, it would have been difficult to discuss a global culture. But today with the advent of technology, the growing economic interdependence, the expansion of travels and the rise of global education, the world seemed to become a single interdependent community.

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By December 31, 2015 the ten member countries of ASEAN namely Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Philippines will be transformed into one region with a motto of "One Vision, One Identity and One Community". The integration of ASEAN community into a single market was patterned from the formation of European Economic Community (EEC) which has six member states as initial economic partners and eventually turned into a political union with 28 member countries and the creation of North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which created a single market among U.S., Canada and Mexico.(ASEAN Integration 2015: Progress Report, 2014)

The establishment then of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) is not just economic in nature but also as an employment and educational opportunities where there is a free exchange of people, students and goods across geographic boundaries of the ASEAN nations. It was made to believe that academic institutions played a significant role for the success of the integration of ASEAN 2015 for it is in them that human resources will be properly trained and developed holistically to become a functional member of the country (ASEAN Vision 2020, retrieved 12 December 2014).

Historically, ASEAN was established in 1967 and is currently consist of 10 member states. It was during the Kuala Lumpur Summit in 1997 that the development of AEC Blueprint was initiated by the ASEAN leaders. During the 9th Summit in Bali, Indonesia in 2003, the Declaration of ASEAN Concord was adopted. Then at the 13th ASEAN Summit in Singapore in November of 2007 ASEAN leaders adopted the ASEAN Economic Blueprint. The said blueprint served as a coherent master plan guiding the establishment of AEC (Khoman, 2014).

Seemingly, there are a lot of great challenges and opportunities that await the member countries. A rapid market change and even tougher competition will possibly occur in the field of business and in the academe as well. Craven and Piercy (2006) explained that organizations should be guided by the principles of having first a clear understanding of market, customers and competitors before making investments decisions. They emphasized the importance of gaining the growing knowledge of current trends of economic activities for it can bring success in making investment decisions. Most likely, if leaders failed to update themselves and understand globalization and its essence, they would possibly made a poor analysis of their strategy which will result to failure, thus the whole organization will suffer. Hunt (2000) expound then that the high competency skill of a leader is vital in directing the operations of the organization for its success. Otherwise less competent leaders will fail to recognize the investment opportunities that will lead to a myopic decisions and eventually loss the competitive positions because

they either showed lack of creativity or did not properly value the importance of strategic considerations which resulted to a weaker positions of making investment decisions.

On the other hand, managerial flexibility is important in making options relative to financial securities that involves discretionary decisions on matters relating to the operations of the entire organizations. However, there is an increased number of academic and professional managers who are now convinced that the criterion technique to corporate resource allocation have failed because they cannot properly capture managerial flexibility to make and revise later decisions in response to unanticipated market developments. Hence, managerial flexibility could improve the understanding and communication of the value of investment projects and in a way create the presumptions on considering a good investment opportunities which would have been misled without taking into consideration the value of flexibility(Trigeorges,1993).

In the aspect of education, there is a new type of international student named as “glocal student” which have been growing in number. Glocal student are students who have global aspirations but opted to stay in their own country or region to pursue education and the fast developing ASEAN countries are gearing toward the trend of the existence of glocal students. Glocal students represent the future of Transnational Education(TNE).Transnational Education is described as education for the students based in a different country to the degree-awarding institution that offers students international experience with the advantage of better affordability. So then, colleges and universities will no longer be the same as they used to be (Zhang, 2013).

With an estimate 2.7 million students studying outside their country and estimated to reach at seven million by 2020, the influx of transnational students likewise are expected to enroll in the Higher Education Institutions in ASEAN countries which is increasing in numbers. It posed a great challenge of ASEAN universities and colleges to look into the curriculum of their irrespective degrees. The wider picture of cultural diversity and differences may be given consideration when enhancing the curriculum (Riguer, 2012).

Moreover, the Philippine government have been ready with the presence of transnational students. In fact, provisions in the 1987 Constitutions in accordance with the Batas Pambansa Blg.232, otherwise known as the “Education Act of 1982”, Republic Act (RA) No.7722, otherwise known as “Higher Education Act of 1994” adopt the Policies,Standards and Guidelines (PSG) for Transnational Education as mandated in the CHED MEMORANDUM ORDER (CMO) No.02 Series of 2008. (CHED, CMO-No.02-s2008.pdf)

However, Catherine Castaneda, CHED Regional director commented that Higher Education Institutions were at snails pace toward internalization but HEI's get into the competition seriously. The country's late shift to the K to 12 curriculum, university degrees from the country are often times not given equivalency in the member countries. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) had started reviewing degree programs to compliment with the new curriculum so that Filipino graduates will not be left behind. Moreover, only two universities in the Philippines expressed their desire to consider the shift of academic calendars and start the first semester in August instead of June namely University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila University (Castaneda, n.d.)

Apparently, in Mindanao specifically in Region XI, some Higher Education Institutions were able to establish their names and produced top notcher/s in both health and non-health related courses. It is also noted that a number of foreign students studied health related courses in Davao City. However, there are identified common problems encountered by these students. Language is one for they find it difficult to understand what is taught and learning becomes difficult then especially to non-English speaking foreign students. Second is the cultural adjustments for this may led them to feel uneasy emotionally, psychologically and physically. There are some cases that they get troubled in school because of culture shock. Third is homesickness for they have to move away from their country to study in a foreign land making them feel alone and lastly, some would find it hard to deal with locals due to lack of interactions outside of class and study group (Student Competitions, 2014).

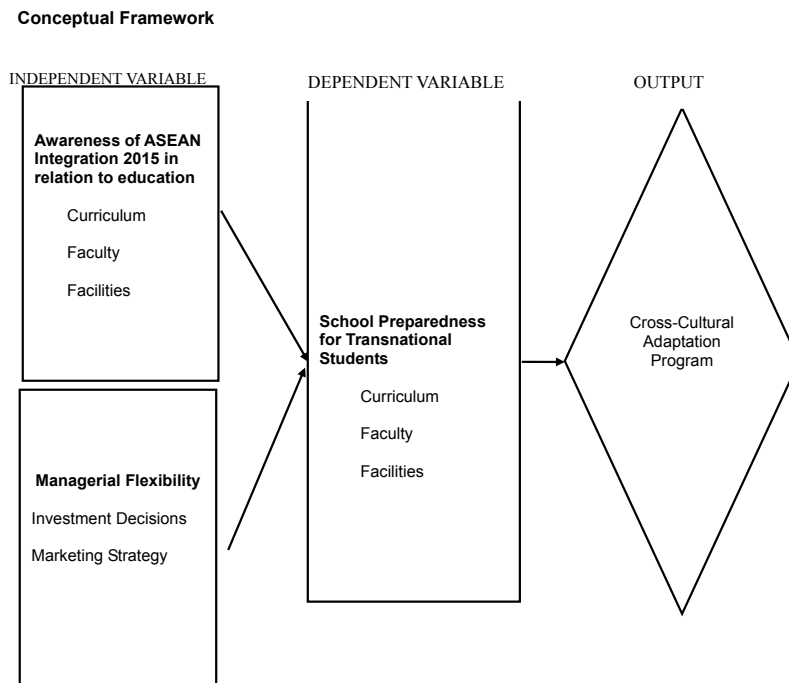
In addition, Catherine Shepherd, a British Council Research Director of Education, reported that foreign students are not treated equally by the awarding institutions and are not offered the same quality of experience as those given to locals. It is in this context that the researcher find the sense of urgency to determine the level of awareness and preparedness of ASEAN integration 2015 in relation to education among top level school heads of HEI's in region XI. The study looked into the managerial flexibility of top level administrators. Results of the study may be used as baseline information for creating a cross-cultural adaptation program. The study may also provide initial findings on the level of managerial flexibility among top level school heads of HEI's in region XI for it may shed light on how managerial flexibility affects the operations of the academe to cope up with regional and global competition. The study would also help HEI's assess their level of preparedness in terms of cross-cultural adaptation program that helped them prepare for the possible influx of international students. Further, the study can be beneficial to other researchers as a model for more studies of the same nature and other related studies.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the “Knowledge-Based Theory” of Shelby D. Hunt (2000). The theory viewed that knowledge is the key factor in promoting prosperity and well-being of the people and the primary role of the organization is knowledge application rather than knowledge creation. The theory has implications for the basis of organizational capability, the principles of organization design, the analysis of hierarchy and the distribution of decision making authority. Generally, knowledge-based approach shed new light upon current organizational innovations and trends and has far reaching implications for management practice. The proponent argued that knowledge and capabilities among the organization are the main determinants to sustain competitive advantage and superior performance.

In connection with the study, it is implied that getting a correct information would mean knowledge on whatever trends and issues, whether local, national or global which will make top level managers or heads be aware on the current happenings. Being open to the different possibilities, these managers or heads can possibly integrate these information to whatever programs they will undertake.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship of the Variables of the Study



Getting correct information is associated with knowledge that will help top managers or heads among HEI's prepare to for a more competitive and tougher environment brought about by the integration of ASEAN 2015. The theory also emphasized that man's actions are mostly rational and based on a systematic evaluation of the information available.

With this, it is expected that most top level managers or heads will not and cannot make any decisions for the institutions whether business or academic without any correct knowledge and solid bases for the fact that success and failure of a certain organization have something to do with their ability to make decisions. Top managers or leaders are expected to consider the implications of their actions based on a reasonable assessment of those implications. Hence, in making decisions for the institutions, top managers or leaders can rely on the correct knowledge they have. Lower level of knowledge on matters might contribute some problems to the organization in the future in terms of making decisive decisions especially on matters involving investments.

This study deals with the level of awareness among top level manager or heads on the ASEAN Integration 2015 in relation to education as well as their level of managerial flexibility which served as the independent variables of the study. The level of preparedness for transnational students among higher education institutions served as the dependent variable as shown in Figure 1. It is conceived that the school preparedness for transnational students rely on the awareness of the top managers or heads on the current trends and issues regarding on global education brought about by the integration of ASEAN 2015. This awareness led the top level managers to initiate cross-cultural programs so as to prepare their institution on the possible influx of foreign students so that they can also help facilitate the physical, social, emotional and academic adjustments these foreign students will go through. Further, it is also presumed that the existence of cross-cultural adaptation program is dependent on the managerial flexibility of top level managers or heads for it entails decisions on the finances of the institutions.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the level of awareness on ASEAN Integration 2015 in relation to education, managerial flexibility and school preparedness for transnational students which can be a basis in creating a Cross-Cultural Adaptation program among HEI's in Region XI. Further, it sought to establish significant relationships among these variables. Specifically, this investigation was designed to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the level of awareness among top level managers on ASEAN Integration 2015 in relation to education in terms of

- 1.1. Curriculum;
- 1.2. Faculty; and
- 1.3. Facilities?
2. What is the level of managerial flexibility in terms of;
 - 2.1 Investment Decisions and
 - 2.2 Marketing Strategy?
3. What is the level of school preparedness for transnational Students in terms of;
 - 3.1 Curriculum;
 - 3.2 Faculty; and
 - 3.3 Facilities?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the following pairs of variables
 - 4.1 Awareness on ASEAN 2015 and School Preparedness for Transnational Students and
 - 4.2 Managerial Flexibility and School Preparedness for transnational Students
5. Is the school preparedness for transnational students significantly influenced by each of the following;
 - 5.1 Awareness of ASEAN Integration 2015;
 - 5.2 Managerial Flexibility

METHOD

The study employed descriptive-correlation research method. This method was used to determine the relationship between and among the existing variables. In particular, it determined the level of awareness of ASEAN Integration 2015 and level of managerial flexibility among top managers or leaders of Private Higher Education Institution in Region XI. It also measured the level of school preparedness for transnational students on the cross-cultural adaptation program of the HEI's. Moreover, it assessed whether their awareness on ASEAN integration 2015 and the level of managerial flexibility have something to do with their preparedness on the cross-cultural adaptation program.

The study was conducted among the selected Private Higher Education Institution in Mindanao specifically in Region XI. The region is located in the southern part of Mindanao and is composed of 6 provinces namely, Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, Compostela Valley, Davao Oriental, Davao Occidental and

Davao City. The selection of HEI's was based on the capability of the school and its accessibility. However, the researcher assumed that transnational college students may not enroll to HEI's located in the periphery of the region. So, there was no representation made by the researcher.

There were two groups of identified respondents of the study, namely the presidents and vice-presidents of selected Private Higher Education Institutions. The selection was based on the responsibility assumed by key persons who make big decisions in their respective HEI's especially in the aspect of investment decisions and other matters relating to finances. Out of 33 questionnaires floated to the identified respondents only 21 gave back the survey tool.

Purposive sampling technique was used in identifying respondents of the study. This method was used to choose sample respondent based on the criteria mentioned suited to the objective of the investigation (Oliver, 2013). Moreover, this research was only limited to Private HEI's top level heads for they have certain degree of autonomy in terms of decision making compared to State colleges and universities.

Figure 2: The Map of Region XI



A researcher-made questionnaire with three major components was used for data gathering. The first and third components pertain to ASEAN 2015 awareness and school preparedness relating to education. It contained three categories namely curriculum, faculty and facilities with five-item statements in each category. Furthermore, the categories and statements mentioned were patterned with the concept of ASEAN Vision 2020, while the second component delineates the managerial flexibility with two specified categories namely investments decisions and marketing strategy. Each category contained a ten-item statements which were based on the idea of Cravens, D. W., Fiercy, N F. (2006) Strategic Marketing, 8th Edition. A five point Likert scale was used in the researcher-made questionnaire. These are, Strongly Agree(SA)=5, Agree(A)=4, Moderately Agree (MA)=3, Disagree(D)=2 and Strongly Disagree(SD)=1. Hence, answers were interpreted according to the scale range as follows.

<i>Range</i>	<i>Descriptive Ratings</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
4.50 - 5.00	Very High	It means that the awareness on ASEAN 2015 integration, managerial flexibility and school preparedness of the HEI's heads are Very Evident.
3.50 - 4.49	High	It means that the awareness on ASEAN 2015 integration, managerial flexibility and school preparedness of the HEI's heads are Often Evident.
2.50 - 3.49	Moderate	It means that the awareness on ASEAN 2015 integration, managerial flexibility and school preparedness of the HEI's heads are Sometimes Evident.
1.50 - 2.49	Low	It means that the awareness on ASEAN 2015 integration, managerial flexibility and school preparedness of the HEI's heads are Seldom Evident.
1.00 - 1.49	Very Low	It means that the awareness on ASEAN 2015 integration, managerial flexibility and school prepared of the HEI's heads are Not Evident.

The instrument was validated and reliability tested. The first, second and third component yielded a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .926, .904 and .957, respectively. The researcher was able to float the distribution of 33 survey questionnaires however only 21 were retrieved. Statistical analysis included Pearson r and multiple regression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1A
Level of Awareness on ASEAN 2015 on Curriculum

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Description</i>
Foreign Languages courses must be offered.	4.05	High
Student exchange program must be ready.	4.50	Very High
Credit transfer policy must be implemented.	4.52	Very High
Curricula must be globally aligned.	4.43	High
Culture-sensitive programs must be promoted.	4.71	Very High
Category Mean	4.44	High

The level of awareness on ASEAN 2015 Integration among top level heads on the area of curriculum is evident ($m=4.44$). This result is understandable since respondents are top level heads at the same time educators. They recognize the important role of curriculum for the success of ASEAN integration. This high awareness level can be attributed to the different conferences, fora, seminars, workshops, trainings regarding ASEAN 2015 integration organized by the leading ASEAN countries which were usually attended by the top level heads of the different stakeholders. Linkages among ASEAN universities have also been established wherein top level heads discussed on the kind of education they can offer to local and transnational students that can be reflected in the school curriculum.

Findings suggest the idea of UNESCO that challenged the offering of a good curriculum which highlights a constructive management of cultural diversity and intercultural understanding that promotes cultural sensitivity (UNESCO, Strengthening Education System). Faculty and staff are expected also to be culturally sensitive so that they can promote a positive learning environment. Thille and Frank (2006) explained in their study that cultural differences can be misunderstood as lack of confidence and competence which may also result to a strained relationship between teacher and students. Nonetheless, sensitivity to other's culture can be developed if it becomes a part of Faculty Development Program of a school. In this manner teachers be reminded and cautious enough with their verbal and non-verbal gestures especially in the classroom setting.

With the concept of globalization, if one wants to understand and penetrate culture, they have to speak the language. Academic institutions must be serious of looking into consideration the offering of foreign languages in their respective curriculum. In the study of Kim (2013) explained that if educational institutions are serious in educating future global leaders and citizens, foreign language must be an important part of this endeavor. The pursuit of foreign language education should not be interpreted as luxury but rather a necessity. A University of Chicago study showed that learning foreign language help reduce biases in decision making and can help bridge the gap of understanding one's culture (Why Foreign Language learning Still Important, 2013).

Table 1B
Level of Awareness on ASEAN 2015 on Faculty

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Description</i>
Exchange professor program must be given importance.	4.14	High
Faculty qualifications must be strengthened.	4.90	Very High
Teaching pedagogy must be innovative.	5.00	Very High
Faculty research capability must strengthened.	4.91	Very High
Culture-sensitivity among faculty must be developed.	4.81	Very High
Category Mean	4.75	Very High

As shown in Table 1B, the high level of awareness among the top level heads of the HEI's on the ASEAN 2015 integration related to faculty is always evident (m=4.75). Undoubtedly, respondents consider quality of faculty as one of the strengths of the school. Consequently, the more qualified and competent a faculty is, the more effective he/she could be.

Responses of top level heads as regards innovation on teaching pedagogy are of the same wave length as revealed in highest mean of 5.00 (Table 1B). With the trend of global education and the expected influx of transnational students, teaching pedagogy skills among faculty must be strengthened. Exposing the faculty to the different academic institutions with varied cultures can widen their perspective on how to innovate pedagogy according to the kind of client they have.

This finding affirmed the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) explanation that says "quality of education is primarily determined on the

qualifications and competencies of the faculty". In view of the faculty's significant role in influencing education outcomes CHED requires that teachers at the higher education level must have at least master's degree in the field in which they teach as mandated in CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No.40, s2008.

Moreover, the idea of teaching pedagogy is supported by the study of Tharp, Doherty, Echavarria, Estrada, Goldenberg, Hilberg and Saunders, W (2003) who explained that teachers must not only show mastery of the content and cope with the different forms of standards but also investigate the background of the students and know them well. Hence, appropriate and innovative instructional activities will be properly planned and enacted. The manners in which teacher deals with the students and organizes instruction are very important aspects of helping each learners learn. Through pedagogy, the science of teaching, the skill of the teacher will be measured.

However, there is no guarantee that learning takes place in every student but there are evidences about the varied teaching and innovative pedagogy which resulted to student learning. These evidences revealed that learning takes place when teacher create a supportive learning environment, encourage reflective thought and action, enhance the relevance of new learning, facilitate shared learning, make connections to prior learning and experiences and provide sufficient opportunities to learn and inquire into the teaching learning relationship (New Zealand Curriculum: Effective Pedagogy).

Meanwhile, the Faculty Handbook of the University of Delaware cited benefits of an international exchange program. It describes that international exchange is an enriching experience in many levels. It greatly affects to both professional and personal growth, arouses creative ideas, improves relationship and strengthens multicultural understanding. Dealing with new professional contacts suggest a wider perspective on the person's standing as a scholar, teacher, administrator in the global community at the same time it expands the reputation of the school in the quality of their faculty. However, it should be noted that faculty exchange program of the University of Delaware is not limited to the exchange to other universities and colleges but may be arranged with industrial firms, government agencies, businesses and others where both parties involved will benefit from the exchange (Faculty Handbook, University of Delaware).

The level of awareness on ASEAN 2015 on facilities is always evident as manifested in a category mean of 4.66 or very high (Table 1C). Undeniably, school facility is one of the important factors that attract local and foreign students to get in the academic institutions to study. The top level heads cannot just ignore this fact which revealed their responses that they are highly aware on the importance of school facilities. One of the visible things that HEI's in the region are working is

on the aspect of improving school facilities such as improving infrastructure and enhancing its aesthetic beauty.

Table 1C
Level of Awareness on ASEAN 2015 on Facilities

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Description</i>
Support system for transnational students must be set up.	4.67	Very High
Physical infrastructure of the school must be improved.	4.52	Very High
Technology must be available.	4.76	Very High
School campus must be a WIFI.	4.50	Very High
On-line transactions must be set up.	4.86	Very High
Category Mean	4.66	Very High
Overall Mean	4.62	Very High

Findings of the study was affirmed by the report of Lemasters (2014) the Director of Education Facilities Clearinghouse of the George Washington University, who emphasized that improving school facilities would mean that a big amount of budget should be allotted especially that at this time, quality facilities would be equated to a costly price. Schools that does not have sufficient funds cannot just easily improve school facilities especially if it is not one of their priorities. Meanwhile, Hanson and Kalyanam (2007) stated that the advent of technology makes the world smaller and people communicates in just a click. Hence a WIFI hot spot establishments that includes school campus and presence of the use of making on-line transactions is more attractive to the foreign clients.

Importantly, facilities are necessary to cope with global education and global competition. In the study of Hunt (2000) he explained that if the firms or organization want to compete in the global market, managers/heads must have the knowledge of their own resources and competencies. Resources will mean human force, facilities, capitals and others that adds to the productivity of the organizations. Backward governance and not updated facilities are factors to be considered in the failure of an organization.

Notably, the respondents of the study is highly aware on the ASEAN 2015 integration and its possible effect to the Higher Education Institutions in the region where tough competitions is surely to happen.

Table 2A
Level of Managerial Flexibility on Investment Decisions

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Description</i>
1. Transfer funds from personnel and operating expenses to the capital categories.	2.86	Moderate
2. Carry over the savings within the prescribed limit from one fiscal year to the next.	3.48	Moderate
3. Shift budget amounts within the line items of the personnel, operating and capital categories of a given program.	3.40	Moderate
4. Fill up new position/s without filing for additional authorization.	2.62	Moderate
5. Open a new program/courses for the institution.	4.24	High
6. Reclassify positions as long as the reclassification did not increase the total number of approved positions.	3.48	Moderate
7. Make use of the available funds to purchase updated facilities.	4.10	High
8. Hire a specialist for financial planning which includes forecasting revenues and profits.	3.52	High
9. Spend on the promotion of the institution regardless of how much is the budget.	4.14	Moderate
10. Invite foreign professor/s to work in our institution.	3.52	High
Category Mean	3.40	Moderate

A moderate level of managerial flexibility among the top level heads in the aspect of investments decisions is sometimes evident as manifested by a category mean of 3.40. This results gave an impression that top level heads is open to different possibilities and they are capable of bending their decisions if the circumstance calls for it. However, there are certain instances where decision making of the top level heads is limited especially if it involves huge finances.

This result confirmed with what Chaston (2004) mentioned that in influencing the change of decisions among heads in an organizations or firms may happen depending on the degree of knowledge or information they have about the trends

of the market. Results of research can influence managers or heads change their decision and their strategies.

On the aspect of opening new courses Mc Dermott (2014) in an article in the University World News, he made mentioned that transnational education students were interested in the peculiarity of the subject that they could not study in their own country. A big part of why students opted to chose transnational education over a local institutions is that the course offered is what they want to pursue. Further, older students will have a career path plan and it includes specializing in areas that are not offered locally, in that instance they will turn to other options and that is studying outside their country. If the local institutions reflect a limited courses in their home countries the transnational education will fill the other gaps. These limited courses are usually popular at postgraduate level McDermott further said. Hence, respondents must also be knowledgeable on the different courses that the school can offer and place their school in a competitive advantage.

. Further, the result was affirmed by Hunger and Wheelen (2011) who explained that in a formal organization, no one in the top level managers or heads is given full autonomy in decision making in terms of putting investments. It has to be decided by the highest governing body of the organizations. The policies of the organizations set the limitation of power for those in authority. Organizations move according to the provisions of approved budget for the year and guided with a so called strategic plan wherein possible investments of organizations should be reflected in the plan.

Table 2B
Level of Managerial Flexibility on Marketing Strategy

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Description</i>
1. Exercise autonomy in sending faculty and staff for benchmarking among ASEAN schools/universities.	3.00	Moderate
2. Develop a research plan to document the benefits of student mobility.	3.52	High
3. Take concrete action to establish partnerships between Philippines and Higher Education Institution among ASEAN schools/universities.	3.95	High
4. Make an effort that the research office in your school will become a member of International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU).	3.40	Moderate

5. Make an institutional guidelines for credit transfer (Admission/Registrar) for a specific department.	3.66	High
6. Mandate for a budget allocation for the improvement of infrastructure of the school.	4.14	High
7. Mandate for a budget allocation for the purchase of advance facilities/ technologies.	4.10	High
8. See to it that the school promotion is readily accessible through web-site.	4.20	High
9. Allow clientele to make use of online transactions in your school.	3.90	High
10. Provide an office that is tasked for an external and internal environmental scanning.	3.71	High
Category Mean	3.78	High
Overall Mean	3.71	High

The level of managerial flexibility in marketing strategy is often evident ($m=3.71$) (Table 2b). Moreover, the item pertaining to *promotion through the use of web-site* yielded the highest mean of 4.20. This implies that in the area of promoting their school through the use of technology, high flexibility of top level heads' decision making is often evident. This reflects that school heads are much aware on the trends and scenario of the global community. Making use of technology is believed to be an effective means or strategy of introducing institutions to the world and what institutions can offer.

On the contrary, school heads have limited *autonomy in sending their faculty and staff for benchmarking among ASEAN schools/universities* as revealed in the lowest mean of 3.00. It only shows that despite being aware of the trend of the global community, respondents' assertiveness in decision making is limited especially in the agenda on sending faculty and staff outside the country for benchmarking. Top level heads cannot just use their autonomy on this matter because it entails a big allocation of budget. Benchmarking is a good strategy to improve one's capacity and it posts the possibility of establishing linkages. As much as they want to come up with benchmarking outside the country, this plan cannot be materialized specially if it is not included in the approved budget plan for the year except if the top level heads find ways and means for funding the said activity.

Results of the study affirmed what Armstrong, Adam, Deniza and Kotler (2012) claimed that marketing ones products and what the firm or organization can

offer by making use of technology is an effective way of capturing the audience, customers and potential clients but along with this, managers and heads should be wise enough how to make use of the financial and human resources of the firm. More so, the study confirmed what Hunt (2000) explained that knowledge on the current trends of business can make the organization survive in the competition however knowledge alone cannot pull the organization to success if the organization's capacity and resources are not enough to sustain the competition.

Table 3A
Level of Preparedness on Curriculum for Transnational Students

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Description</i>
1. The curriculum is globally aligned.	4.05	High
2. The courses apply Multi-cultural approaches.	4.05	High
3. The school provides program of studies that are culture-sensitive.	4.24	High
4. The school offering of English and Filipino is designed in a communicative approach intended for non-speaking foreign students.	4.14	High
5. The school provides policy on credit transfer.	4.00	High
Category Mean	4.10	High

As reflected in Table 3A, the level of preparedness on curriculum is high ($m=4.10$). This result implies that curriculum preparedness among HEI's are often evident based on the respondents responses. The result is strengthened by Morris and Mims (1999) who suggested that to make a classroom more "culturally sensitive" should be guided with a lesson plan that is rich with information about diversity of their students. Thus, teachers are expected to be more sensitive and aware of the different backgrounds of their students. With these, students begin to share, respect and learn how to work with others promoting a non-discriminatory classroom environment. As Coloma, Llenas, Meer, and Villamil, (2012) emphasized, teachers also may help students whose culture is different from the majority by creating a non-discriminatory learning environment by emphasizing respect to one's own culture, beliefs, traditions, and others.

On matters relating to credit transfer policy, this can be one of the considerations of transnational college students in choosing a school outside their home land. However, the discussion paper of Junor, and Usher, (2007) on "Students Mobility

and Credit Transfer” cited the barriers to student mobility. One of them is that transnational students may be hesitant to study in foreign institutions for they could lose academic standing because by taking different credits from another institutions. Further, he mentioned that academic barrier to mobility such as the lack of academic qualification and the absence of credit recognition may discourage transnational students to enroll and study outside their homeland.

Interestingly, credit transfer policy if made clear by the serving institution, may pave the way of establishing linkages among other HEI’s in the region and eventually come up with a students’ exchange program.

Table 3B
Level of Preparedness on Faculty for Transnational Students

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Description</i>
1. The faculty shows cultural competence skills.	3.90	High
2. The faculty promotes the variety of learning styles.	4.05	High
3. The faculty is highly equipped with technological skills.	3.71	High
4. The faculty possess high communicative competence suited for transnational students.	3.90	High
5. The faculty qualifications have met the global standards.	3.57	High
Category Mean	3.83	High

As revealed in Table 3B, the level of preparedness among HEI’s in terms of faculty is high (m=3.83). This result manifests that faculty implement variety of instructional methods in the delivery of the lessons (m=4.05). Thus, learning can be facilitated if learning styles are taken into consideration in the process. As Melissa Kelly, a Secondary Education Expert reiterates that students learn best when lessons are taught in their personal learning styles. And the main task of the teachers is to facilitate learning and how to make learning process feasible for students to accomplish and make connections to the real world for learning to be more meaningful. As supported by Lombardi who authored the “Authentic Learning for the 21st Century”, she said that cognitive research had shown that connecting learning to the real world experiences and information that provide formations that result significant learning. So, teachers must realize their significant role of bridging students reach their full potential.

Table 3C
Level of Preparedness on Facilities for Transnational Students

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Description</i>
1. The school provides ICT infrastructure that reveals the kind of curriculum (subjects and corresponding units) offered.	3.81	High
2. The school infrastructure has improved suited for global education environment.	4.14	High
3. The school library facilities and books are updated.	4.10	High
4. The school classrooms have built-in LCD's, television and other facilities.	3.29	Moderate
5. The school provides on-line transactions.	3.67	High
Category Mean	3.80	High
Overall Mean	3.91	High

The level of preparedness among HEI's in terms of facilities is also high (m=3.80) (Table 3C). This indicates facilities readiness to cater to the transnational college students is often evident. It could be noted however that provision of liquid crystal display (LCD), television and other teaching facilities in the classrooms is moderate and this may be attributed to the financial condition of the school. It is understandable that LCDs and other built-in facilities cannot be provided in all classrooms because procurement of these would require substantial amount of money. As Picus (n.d.) cited that purchasing updated technologies and other school facilities would demand high cost. School cannot just spend as much as they want because they are also bounded by financial limitations.

Table 4
Test of Significant Relationship between Awareness Indicators and School Preparedness Indicators

<i>Awareness</i>	<i>Preparedness Indicators</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
A. Curriculum	Curriculum	.366	.102	Insignificant low correlation
	Faculty	.019	.935	Insignificant negligible correlation
	Facilities	-.208	.365	Insignificant low correlation
	Overall	.043	.852	Insignificant negligible correlation
B. Faculty	Curriculum	.235	.306	Insignificant low correlation

	Faculty	-.198	.389	Insignificant negligible correlation
	Facilities	-.086	.710	Insignificant negligible correlation
	Overall	-.056	.810	Insignificant negligible correlation
C. Facilities	Curriculum	.618	.003	Significant substantial relationship
	Faculty	.041	.860	Insignificant negligible correlation
	Facilities	.038	.869	Insignificant negligible
	Overall	.234	.308	Insignificant low correlation
Awareness overall	Curriculum	.484	.026	Significant moderate correlation
	Faculty	-.029	.899	Insignificant low correlation
	Facilities	-.114	.622	Insignificant negligible correlation
	Overall	.095	.681	Insignificant negligible correlation

Data in Table 4 show that a significant correlation exists between awareness on ASEAN integration particularly on facilities and preparedness on curriculum ($r=.618$; $p<.05$). This finding implies that the more the administrators are being aware on facilities required for the integration the more they are prepared in terms of curriculum. Further, the coefficient of determination of .382 indicates that curriculum preparedness can be attributed to its linear relationship with facility awareness.

Consequently, the overall awareness has a positive and moderate correlation ($r=.484$; $p<.05$) with curriculum preparedness. This result connotes that the more the administrators are aware on the implications of the ASEAN integration, the more they are prepared on curriculum. Note that it is easier for the institution to revise their curriculum as compared to the provision of additional facilities at par with global standards as this would require enormous financial capital. With the results, it is not surprising that the top level heads are aware on the implications of ASEAN 2015 since conferences, fora, seminars regarding ASEAN 2015 have been taking place and the said events are usually attended by the big bosses of the different stakeholders.

Iskandar (2009) explained that there are also efforts made by the HEI's in the region of making themselves more organized and give birth to the existence of SEAMEO RIHED that stands for South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organization Centre specializing in higher education development, in this sense raising awareness on issues concerning education such as curriculum, facilities and faculty qualifications can be facilitated among member countries. On the other

hand, Llaneta (2014) posted an article regarding the ASEAN University Network (AUN): Demonstrating the ASEAN Spirit in Higher Education is another concrete action that ASEAN universities can campaign on raising awareness on the ASEAN integration that directly affects education. Currently, AUN has 30 universities in 10 countries including three from the Philippines namely University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University and De La Salle University. Through AUN top level heads can raise awareness on ASEAN 2015 integration and its effect to higher education institutions.

As shown in Table 5, a positive significant moderate correlation ($r=.680$; $p<.05$) is noted between flexibility on marketing strategies and preparedness on facilities. This result means that the more they are flexible on their marketing strategies the more they are prepared in the provision of facilities. Similarly, the overall preparedness on ASEAN integration is positively related with flexibility on marketing strategies ($r=.588$; $p<.05$). This result implies that the more they are flexible on implementing marketing strategies the more they are prepared to cater to the needs of college students from different Asian countries.

Further, the overall flexibility of the administrators has a positive and moderate correlation with preparedness of faculty ($r=.487$; $p<.05$), with preparedness on facilities ($r=.593$; $p<.05$) and with overall preparedness ($r=.473$; $p<.05$). This result is an indication that the more the administrators are flexible on investment decisions and marketing strategies, the more their respective institution is prepared on the aspects of faculty and facilities. The correlation coefficient determination of .237 signifies that managerial flexibility influenced the preparedness of faculty to handle transnational students. Also, the coefficient determination of .352 signifies that managerial flexibility explains the relationship with preparedness on facilities. Finally, the coefficient determination of .224 implies that managerial flexibility explains the relationship with preparedness to cater transnational college students. However, there has been no study yet found regarding on the nature of same study.

Table 5
Test of Significant Relationship between Managerial Flexibility Indicators and School Preparedness' Indicators

<i>Managerial Flexibility</i>	<i>Preparedness Indicators</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
A. Investment Decision	Curriculum	-.252	.270	Insignificant low correlation
	Faculty	.397	.075	Insignificant low correlation

	Facilities	.272	.097	Insignificant low correlation
	Overall	.263	.249	Insignificant low correlation
B. Marketing Strategies	Curriculum	.327	.148	Insignificant low correlation
	Faculty	.431	.051	Insignificant moderation correlation
	Facilities	.680	.001	Significant moderate correlation
	Overall	.588	.005	Significant moderate correlation
Overall Flexibility	Curriculum	-.011	.962	Insignificant low correlation
	Faculty	.487	.025	Significant moderate correlation
	Facilities	.593	.005	Significant moderate correlation
	Overall	.473	.030	Significant moderate correlation

It can be inferred that the preparedness of an academic institution to cater to the academic needs of transnational college students with regard to the ASEAN integration in 2015 is significantly influenced by the managerial flexibility of its decision makers or administrators ($p < .05$). This is understandable in the sense that investment decisions are integral part in the preparation particularly on faculty development and facility procurement (Table 6).

It should be noted that the predictors--awareness and managerial flexibility do not significantly influence ($r^2 = .225$; $p > .05$) the preparedness of the school heads as regard ASEAN 2015 integration. Results show that the high level of awareness ($b = .039$; $p > .05$) among the respondents with regards ASEAN 2015 Integration that affect education in the area of curriculum, faculty and facilities does not influence the level of preparedness among HEI's to cater to the academic needs of transnational college students. On the other hand, respondents' high level of managerial flexibility ($b = .468$; $p < .05$) influence the preparedness of HEI's to cater to the academic needs of transnational college students.

With the result, one has to consider that awareness does not always necessarily lead to preparedness especially if the things that they have to prepare involve huge monetary expenses on the part of the institution. As much as the top level managers shows aggressiveness and decisiveness in terms of combating the challenge of ASEAN 2015 integration still their managerial flexibility in terms of investment is limited to some extent considering the financial capacity of their schools. Note that there is no study found yet on the same nature of interest.

Table 6
Multiple Regression Analysis of Preparedness for Transnational Students with Awareness of ASEAN Integration 2015 and Managerial Flexibility

<i>Predictors</i>	<i>Standardized Coefficient B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Awareness on ASEAN 2015	.039	.189	.853
Managerial Flexibility	.468	2.24	.038
r		.475	
r ²		.225	
F		.616	
p-value		.101	

As Ulrich and Smallwood (2007) emphasized that leadership matters. Lenient leaders will lead the organization into a downfall which may result to bankruptcy. This can also be true to an academic institutions. High level of knowledge on the current trends and concerns will guide top level managers in making decisions for the institutions, top managers and leaders can rely on the correct knowledge they have. Lower level of knowledge on matters might cause problems to the organization in the future in terms of making decisive decisions especially on matters involving investments. However, knowledge alone is not enough to cope with competition, financial stability also is vital to concretize plans from the correct knowledge (Dicken 2007).

CONCLUSIONS

Top level heads of the Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) in Region XI who participated in the study showed a high level of awareness on the ASEAN 2015 Integration. These top level heads are highly aware that the curriculum, faculty and facilities are essential in the whole learning process. However, in the aspect of offering foreign language courses and exchange professor program, the top level heads are not strong on these area. Hence, the need to materialize on the foreign subject offering and the exchange professor program should be taken into consideration seriously.

Top level heads among HEI's in the region are flexible in making decisions and in marketing strategy. They also manifest preparedness on the area of curriculum, faculty and facilities. However, based on the results, there is a need to strengthen faculty qualifications to meet global standard and the need to fill in all classrooms with built-in LCD's, Television and other technologies that are necessary in the

teaching and learning process. Thus, additional budget for the purchase of such aid in teaching must also be considered.

Data showed that there is a significant, substantial correlation that exists between awareness on ASEAN integration particularly on facilities and preparedness on curriculum. Consequently, the overall awareness is positively moderately correlated with curriculum preparedness. More so, awareness on ASEAN integration explains variation on curriculum preparedness. Hence, top level heads should also take into consideration to allot additional budget for the purchase of additional facilities if they wanted to be at par with the global standards.

A positive significant moderate correlation exists between flexibility on marketing strategies and preparedness on facilities. Similarly, the overall preparedness on ASEAN integration is positively related with flexibility on marketing strategies. The preparedness on ASEAN integration can be explained by its relationship with flexibility on marketing strategies. Hence, a need to be highly flexible on matters regarding investment decisions and marketing strategy post a challenge to the top level heads.

It can be inferred that the preparedness of an academic institution to cater to transnational college students with regard to the ASEAN integration in 2015 is significantly influenced by the managerial flexibility of its decision makers or administrators. This is understandable in the sense that investment decisions are integral in the preparation particularly on faculty development and facility procurement.

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