

EDITORIAL NOTE

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The current volume includes various interesting articles which are informative, insightful as well as multidisciplinary, significant for academics, policy makers and students alike who are interested in East Asian affairs. This is in line with the aim of the journal in providing a platform for exchanges of ideas related to the East Asian region, with particular emphasis on Japan, China and Korea. This volume contains five articles focusing on three countries, contributed by scholars from various countries.

The first article is entitled *From Theory to Practice: An Assessment of Putting Learning into Practice Among Alumni of Korea Studies, University of Malaya* by Asmadi Hassan, Tan Soo Kee, Muhammad Muhsein Kamarudin and Rohayati Paidi of University of Malaya. The article examines the application of learning among Korea Studies alumni at the Department of East Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya. These includes the application of Korean language and Korea related courses at the work place, in higher degree programmes as well as in daily life. The study found that both knowledge of Korea and Korean language are important. Korean related course influenced alumni's way of thinking to be more open minded and overall contributed to positive behaviour. The skills taught allowed alumni to interact cross-culturally and understand the mind-set and lifestyle of Koreans. Meanwhile, a good command of the language opened wider opportunities in career development as well. Furthermore, there are many employment opportunities for students who were proficient in Korean, in market research companies to social media outfits. Furthermore, the post pandemic era has witnessed the rapid economic reconstruction of both Malaysia and South Korea and this resulted in the opening of more job opportunities. Therefore, graduates with Korean language skills have seized the opportunity which means they are as competitive in the job market as other graduates who learnt other foreign languages. Respondents in the research were of the opinion that students who want to be employed by Korean companies must possess the right language skills and level, such as having TOPIK Korean language certification before stepping into the working world.

The second article written by Sudhir Singh and Shashank Shekhar explores China's relations with Nepal, entitled *Deepening Sino-Nepal Relations: Implications for India*. The authors found that Nepal is extremely susceptible to outside influences because of its geostrategic location. This is because Nepal which is small as well as landlocked is crammed between China and India, two of the most powerful countries in Asia. Therefore Nepal is always the target of regional aspirations and conflicts. In order to protect its independence and national security, Nepal's foreign policy has focused on the difficult challenge of maintaining good relations with all parties.

The paper also discusses about the consequences of growing Nepalese affinity towards China as against its long-time friend and neighbor India. Due to Nepal's difficult democratic transition, frail institutional foundation, and unfavorable civil-military relations, the authors suggest that China seems to have several possibilities to develop significant influence inside the country's political and administrative system. Furthermore, the relationship between

Kathmandu and New Delhi has been severely impacted by Nepal-China collaboration, particularly in the areas of security and defence. The authors conclude that China's increasing involvement in Nepal has significant security repercussions for New Delhi since it signals an entrance into the country's sphere of influence.

The third article contributed by Esin Yurdagul entitled *Mathematical Approach To The Role Of Inward And Outward Foreign Direct Investors-Led Diffusion Of Innovation In Sino Economic Convergence-Divergence In Light Of Rogers' Diffusion Of Innovation Theory And Economic Convergence-Divergence Theory*. According to Esin Yurdagul, in 1962, Everett M. Rogers coined and developed his own theory of Rogers' diffusion of innovation. The last decades have witnessed innovation as prominent means of economic convergence. After forming a set of flow data through the amount of Sino inward and outward foreign direct investments remitted by dint of the table between the years of 1980 and 2021, Esin analyzed whether inward and outward foreign direct investors-led convergent or positive, or divergent or negative diffusion of innovation in Sino inward and outward foreign direct investments between each of five adopter categories under Rogers' diffusion of innovation adaptation curve occurred by normalizing Sino inward and outward foreign direct investment data. The research found in square bracket $[70.594,92 - 3 * 53158,76484, 70.594,92 + 3 * 53158,76484]$ in terms of Sino inward foreign direct investments where Sino inward foreign direct investment flow standard deviation σ increments went from -3 and 3 in 0.1 increments, and in square bracket $[69.955,88 - 3 * 126083,3926, 69.955,88 + 3 * 126083,3926]$ in terms of Sino outward foreign direct investments where Sino outward foreign direct investment flow standard deviation σ increments went from -3 and 3 in 0.1 increments, and whether the 68-95-99.7 rule led to what percentage of convergent or positive, or divergent or negative diffusion of innovation in Sino inward and outward foreign direct investments fell within a certain number of standard deviation σ from the mean μ .

Thus, Sino inward and outward foreign direct investments' initiatives and effective policies are not only preferred for the adaptive inward and outward foreign direct investors within the country, but also for the other countries' adaptive inward and outward foreign direct investors, i.e., the emerging and developing economies witnessing divergent or negative diffusion of innovation in their inward and outward foreign direct investments. The adaptive inward and outward foreign direct investors within the emerging and developing economies may internalize and gain more opportunities by leading to the presentation of the use and efficacies of the convergent diffusion of innovation in Sino inward and outward foreign direct investments and the establishment of a strong reference base, i.e., the Belt and Road Initiative, East Asian Export Processing Zones that may be applicable to the Special Economic Zones, Shanghai free trade zone, Open Coastal Cities, Open Economic Zones, Economic and Technology Development Zones, and High Technology Development Zones.

The fourth article in this volume explores the Langkawi Island population's perceived worthwhile life in (ikigai) the face of pandemic challenges. The article by Noor Syahirah Sazali and Rohayati Paidi entitled *Ikigai among the People of Langkawi Island* assesses the level of ikigai (energy or strength to continue living or moving forward), through three constructs: satisfaction, significance, and happiness. A combination of modified Q-method, the Time-use Survey based on the Questionnaire A of the 2021 Survey on Time-use and Leisure Activities, the English version of Ikigai-9 and the elements of the Ikigai Venn Diagram were used to build the research instruments. The five-page Q-data sheet was distributed to 24 participants which were selected using stratified sampling. The outcome implies that not all of the locals' ikigai were affected during the pandemic. Some of them even experienced an increase in ikigai during the period. Overall, the study also confirms that being able to do what we want to do is associated with an increase in life satisfaction, significance and happiness and eventually linked to an increase in well-being.

The last article written by M. Mayilvaganan and Nasima Khatoon entitled *DPRK'S Nuclear Conundrum And The U.S.-North Korea Negotiations: A Never-Ending Saga*. The authors examine the challenges of nuclear proliferation in the Korean peninsula since 2006 when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) first launched its nuclear test. The authors further argue that the Hwasong-15 Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) of DPRK that was tested in February 2023 heightening the tension between Washington and its ally Japan and Pyongyang. The United States (U.S.) diplomatic efforts to engage North Korea through bilateral means in recent times resulted in first historic summit at Singapore (2018) and later in Vietnam (2019). Though these are undoubtedly positive development, however, in the absence of any tangible deal even after the Hanoi summit, the big question remains can the U.S. and North Korea end their mutual misperceptions, and work towards a viable solution, which is the focus of the paper. The findings suggests that at the moment this is impossible given that the DPRK has isolated itself further by closing its borders.

Overall, the volume displays the contemporary developments of China, Japan and Korea in various dimensions. We hope that this volume would be useful in furthering the understanding and creating awareness of the East Asian region, not only to academics but also to the public at large.