

The role of academic professionals in the university of the future: a comparative pilot study

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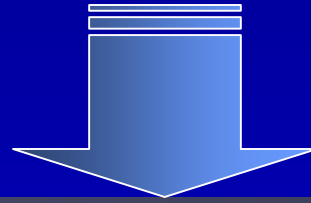
Purpose

- § Inayatullah and Gidley's trends driving the university of the future:
 - § maturation of the Internet and related technologies
 - § internationalization of the curriculum
 - § decreasing political and academic freedom
 - § economic globalization
- § Universities need to refocus their perspectives toward human capital development
- § ...but what does this mean for academic professionals?

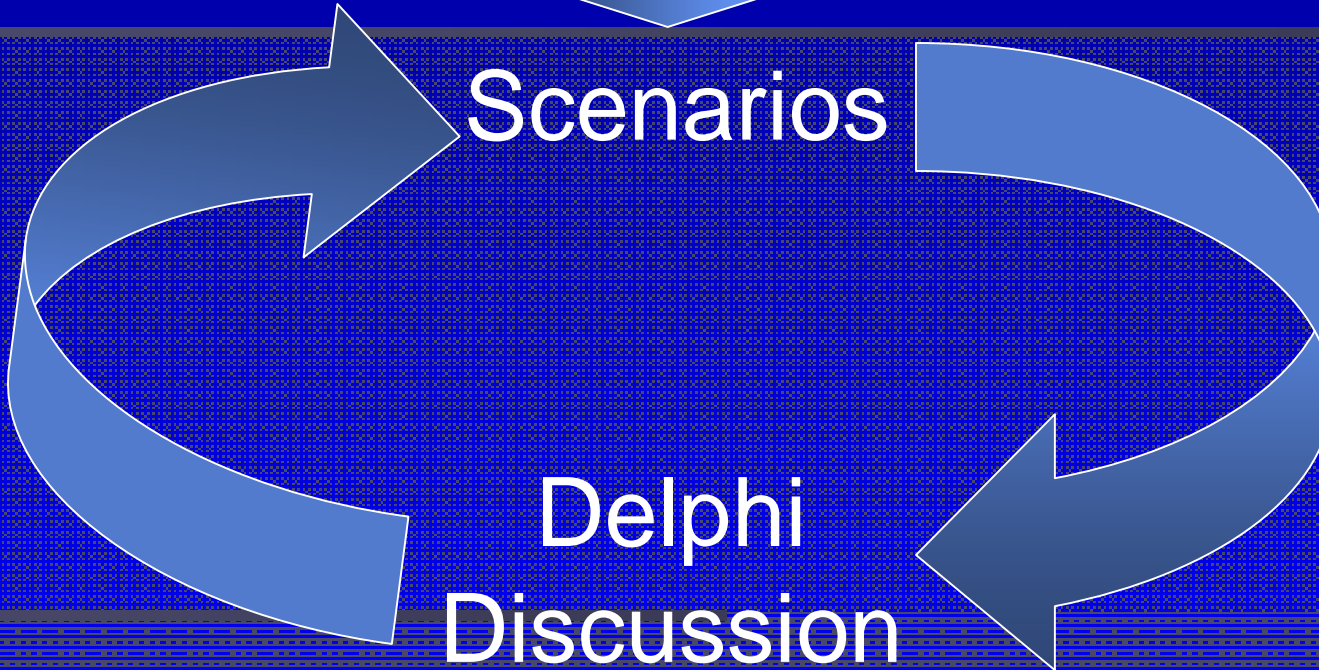
Our process: discussion-driving

- § Story- and scenario-generative
- § Survey gauges the views of academic professionals on the role of the public research university in Japan and the US
- § Data from the survey are used to generate scenarios and plugged into a Delphi-modeled discussion to refine plausible futures

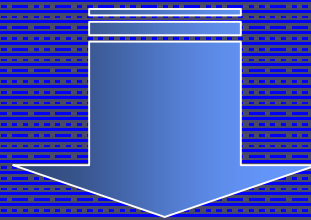
Survey Instrument



Scenarios



Delphi Discussion



Plausible Futures

Instrument

§ *Format:* Online survey (invitation letter & consent form included)

§ *Period:* 3 weeks

§ *Sample population:* Academic professionals (professors) in public research universities (“Research I” and equivalent) in the USA and Japan

§ *Sampling Method:* Clustered sampling

1. Randomly selected 3 public research universities from each country
2. Used simple random sampling method to select individual academic professionals from each institution

Survey Topics

- § What the role of the university *should be* in 2015
- § What the role of the university *will be* in 2015
- § Market orientations in academia
- § The future of academic freedom in the university
- § How should curricula be determined (i.e., through needs of market, needs of individual students, needs of disciplines)
- § The forms of knowledge production the market needs from higher education (i.e., technical education, liberal education, basic skills education)
- § To what extent universities should cater to market needs

Results: Respondents' Demographic Profile

	Japan (33 respondents)	USA (43 respondents)
Mean Age	49.6 years old	52.4 years old
Gender	Female: 1 Male: 32	Female: 10 Male: 33
Experience	21.8 years	23.1 years
Field	Hard Sciences: 24 Social Sciences: 6 Humanities: 1 Professional: 1 No answer: 1	Hard Sciences: 24 Social Sciences: 9 Humanities: 5 Professional: 2 Other: 1; No answer: 2
Title	Professor: 20 Associate Prof: 11 Others (Regent & Dean): 2	Professor: 13 Associate Prof: 11 Assistant Prof: 9 Others (Dean, Dept. Chair, Director, etc.): 10

Results : General Findings

- § Both US and Japanese academicians are pessimistic about the future roles of the public university and the contribution they will make in 2015 – though pessimism is stronger among Japanese academicians
- § Both US and Japanese academicians believe their status as professors, job satisfaction, and academic freedom will decrease in 2015 – though the sentiment is stronger among Japanese academicians

Results : General Findings (continued)

- § Japanese academic professionals are slightly more open about university–industry collaboration than their US counterparts.
- § 90.7% of US academicians do not believe that the university should tailor programs to primarily meet the needs of private industry, whereas only 45.5% of Japanese are against such an idea.
- § US academic professionals are more supportive of multi-/transdisciplinary studies than their Japanese counterparts.

Results : General Findings (continued)

- § Both US and Japanese academicians believe knowledge production needed by the market will occur through technical/vocational education, though Japanese academicians put more emphasis on this.
- § Japanese completely dismiss (0% support) liberal arts education as the form of knowledge production needed by market, whereas significantly more US academicians identify knowledge production in liberal arts education will still be needed by the market in 2015 (25.6%).

Potential scenarios for the university in 2015

§ Based on Godet's archetypical responses:

§ Do nothing

§ Reactive

§ Proactive

§ Explore possibilities with market-oriented and individual capital development-oriented futures

In 2015 - scenario I: “The survey says...”

- § University continues to contribute to academic research, industrial R&D, personal education, and life-long learning
- § Still contributes, but to a lesser extent, to economic growth, international competitiveness and employability of students
- § Universities will serve private industry –but perhaps reluctantly
- § Academic freedoms, prestige and job satisfaction decrease
- § Today’s academicians will work within academia or will be retired

In 2015 - scenario II: University focuses on serving the needs of industry

- § Academic research and personal education drastically reduced as focus is placed on industrial research and vocational education
- § Role of university is to enhance job skills
- § The university is focused on enhancing the community's competitiveness, but knowledge created will generally not be made available to the public domain
- § Departments reorganize to support transdisciplinary studies
- § Academic freedoms, prestige and job satisfaction decrease
- § Today's academicians will work within academia, private industry or will be retired

In 2015 - scenario III: University focuses on individual capital development

- § Individual-driven academic research will develop as the university simultaneously seeks out partnerships with industry
- § Role of university is to increase individual human capital possibilities, indirectly enhancing economic growth and international competitiveness
- § Transdisciplinary departments will support innovators in industry and academia
- § Academic freedoms, prestige and job satisfaction increase, as market demands increasingly value knowledge production from talented individuals
- § Today's academics will work in academia, in industry as entrepreneurs, and as consultants