

The Study of the Curriculums for Production of Social Studies Teachers in Thailand

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The Asian Conference on Cultural Studies 2019
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The objectives of this research were to study characteristics of the curriculum for production of social studies teachers in Thailand. The main objectives included the study of the curriculum objectives, desirable attributes of graduates, activities to promote students' learning development, guidelines for curriculum development in compliance to national policies, and problems in curriculum management. The representative sample implemented in this research consisted of the lecturers in social studies curriculum selected from 9 of 43 universities located in all geographical regions of Thailand. The instruments of this research were semi-structured interviews for qualitative analyzing techniques: content analysis and inductive conclusion)

The results were concluded as follows:

1. The curriculum objectives were to produce teachers with potentials in learning management by applying technology as learning media, and with specialization in the field of social studies.
2. Graduates were equipped with 3 desirable characteristics: 1) expertise in learning management, 2) deep insight of contents, and 3) capability to integrate body of knowledge in the field of social studies.
3. Regarding activities to promote learners' learning development, local identities were applied to create relating activities as well as to focus on interactive activities in order to develop learners' skills essential for the 21st century.
4. The channels of curriculum development were in compliance with the national policies to improve the curriculum, and the activity arrangements were conducted according to the teacher production policies in both national and education ministry levels as well as the core curriculum for Thai students.
5. Frequent changes of government policies sometimes caused inconsistency in curriculum and learner development. In addition, the budget is insufficient for managements in various issues.

Keywords: Curriculums, Social Studies, Thailand 4.0

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Introduction

Thailand 4.0 is a political vision of Thai economic development or government economic development model under the leadership of General Prayut Chan-o-cha, the prime minister and the leader of National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO). With the vision of “Stability, Prosperity, Sustainability”, the important mission of the government is to drive the national revolution in various issues in order to adjust, systemize, redirect, and create guidelines for national development in order to cope with new opportunities and threats which change rapidly and extremely in the 21st century.

“Thailand 4.0” is the determination of the prime minister to adjust economic structure into “Value-Based Economy” or “Innovation-driven Economy”. In fact, at present, we are in the economic model “Do more, Get less” so we need to change into “Do less, Get more”. In other words, the drives for changes are in 3 important dimensions: 1) changes from producing “commodity” products into producing “innovation” products; 2) changes from driving the country by industry into driving the country by technology, creation, and innovation; and 3) changes from goods production sectors into more service sectors. Therefore, “Thailand 4.0” is the transition of the entire system in 4 main components: 1) changes from traditional farming at present into smart farming by focusing on management and technology to enhance agriculturists to be richer and to become entrepreneurs; 2) changes from traditional SMEs or SMEs with government supports into smart enterprises and Startups with high potentials; 3) changes from traditional low value services into high value services; and 4) changes from low-skill labors into labors with high knowledge, specialization and skills.

To develop Thailand according to Thailand 4.0 Policy, it is clear that education is one of the main components. Education must be reformed according to the policy in the same direction. Therefore, educational management at all levels needs to consider whether educational curriculums and guidelines focus on developing learners conforming to attributes of people in the era of Thailand 4.0.

Educational management in social studies is still lack of analyses to clearly connect the paths of educational management for developing learners according to Thailand 4.0 Policy. Particularly, the curriculums for developing learners to become teachers to educate students with knowledge and competency as well as strong fundamentals enough for further study in higher education. In order words, curriculums for teacher production has been varied in different periods of time.

Teacher 1.0, Teacher 2.0 or Teacher 3.0 are teachers who determine to teach knowledge for students to learn, understand and apply such knowledge in the forms of theories, principles, research, rules, regulations, announcements, guidelines, norms, values, cultures relating to various courses in schools, and others learning resources for students to apply and solve problems in everyday lives. These teachers helps students to learn and use existing knowledge for the benefits of their everyday lives.

In the 21st century, robot technology is advanced with high accelerating rates of development. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used for invention, innovation and management so human beings and AI can corporately develop various innovation more rapidly than expected in many fields. As a results, teaching students to become

Student 3.0 is insufficient. In the 21st century, Teacher 1.0, Teacher 2.0 and Teacher 3.0 need to be upgraded into Teacher 4.0 in order to be capable for preparing students to be Student 4.0 with successful living in the 21st century.

Teacher 4.0 uses teaching competency to develop students to become Students 4.0 by including learning activities for them to acquire skills necessary for the 21st century i.e. the skills of critical thinking, problem solving, creative thinking, innovation creation, collaborative learning and teamwork, leadership, use of information technology, telecommunication, use of computers and AI, calculation, self-study known as “7Cs”. In addition, learning activities have to be conducted in every course for integration of skill development on socials, morals, ethics, veneration, promotion of health and sanitation, good citizenship of the country and the world, new entrepreneurship, maintenance of public interests, preservation of natural resources, and prevention of global warming, adherence to customs and traditions, and profession ethics.

Teacher 4.0 focuses on a community with suspect, eagerness, curiosity and inquiry in class. Students attempt to find answers for what they are suspicious and want to know. Groups of students search for the answers through the learning process of problem-based learning (PBL) by starting from suspects and eagerness to learn, and then develop the way to solve the problem. Such problem is developed to search the answers by using the competency of Student 3.0, Student 2.0, Student 1.0, robot technology, and artificial intelligence.

Each student is not passive, but curious to inquire for learning and finding answers all the time. Students are active learners in the process of problem-based learning. Students can find answers from laboratories, workshops, entrepreneurs, demonstration plots, factories, companies, state enterprises or private business. Students find answers from real settings and workplaces in order to find the real answers. This leads to the terms of “Work-based Learning”, “Work-integrated Learning” or “Site-based Learning” both inside and outside schools. Entrepreneurs become a part of students’ classroom and the problem-based learning method enables students or teachers to find and create new knowledge and innovation. Teaching of Teacher 4.0 focuses on creative learning for producing innovation.

According to the discussion mentioned above, “teachers” are very important for educational system as people for developing students to have optimum potentials. Therefore, curriculums for teacher production should be considered carefully as a key element for learner development.

Accordingly, Faculty of Social Sciences at Srinakharinwirot University provides a master degree program in education in the field of sociology for producing teachers in Social Studies for basic education schools. A number of universities provide programs for teachers in Social Studies as well.

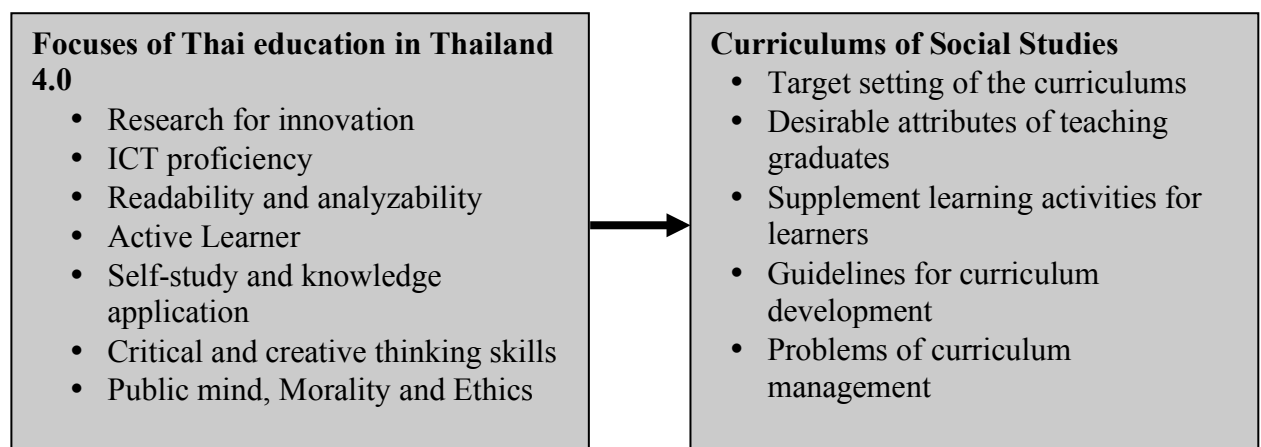
Researchers aim to analyze the consistency of Social Studies curriculums in the contexts of Thailand 4.0 in order to reflect whether the methods and the models of teacher production conform to the national policy.

Objectives of the Study

To study the curriculums for the production of Social Studies teachers in higher education in Thailand and Thailand 4.0 Policy, the sub-objectives are as follows.

1. To study the targets of the curriculums for the production of Social Studies teachers in higher education in the contexts of Thailand
2. To study the desirable attributes of teaching graduates in social studies
3. To study supplementary learning activities of students in the curriculums of Social Studies teachers
4. To study guidelines for curriculum development according to the national policy
5. To study the problems of curriculum management

Research Framework



Research Methodology

Population are lecturers responsible for the programs, lecturers in the universities providing Social Studies programs, or teaching social studies at undergraduate level from 36 universities around Thailand.

- 4 public universities
- 9 national universities
- 23 Rajabhat Universities

Samples for the interview are lecturers responsible for the programs and lecturers in the universities providing Social Studies curriculums, or teaching social studies at undergraduate level from 9 universities accounting for 25% of all universities providing Social Studies programs.

- 1 public university
- 2 national universities
- 6 Rajabhat Universities

Data Collection

Researchers collected data by interviewing lecturers responsible for the programs or lecturers relating to curriculum development and management in the production of Social Studies teachers. The appointments were made in advance for the interview

including with the interview instruction for the interviewees to consider before the interview date. Each interview was conducted individually and in group discussion at about 45 minutes – 1.30 hour.

Data Analysis

The researchers analyzed the data qualitatively by using content analysis from studying the documents of the curriculums for the production of Social Studies teachers as well as the relevant papers. In addition, the analytic induction was also used to interpret the data for making conclusion from the interview.

Summary of the Results

According to the objectives of the study on the curriculums for the production of Social Studies teachers at the higher education level in the contexts of Thailand and Thailand 4.0 Policy, the researchers analyzed various documents concerning Thailand 4.0 Policy as presented in the following details.

Targets of Thailand 4.0

“Thailand 4.0” is the new model for driving Thai economy by focusing on modifying the economic structure into “Innovation-driven Economy” in order to step over the country’s middle income trap. When the economic contexts change, entrepreneurs, especially those in the industry sectors, have to adapt themselves for making their business grow in new economic contexts with strength and sustainability. Driving economy and industrial business sectors under “Thailand 4.0” Model have to start from building the internal strength i.e. the upgrade of innovation in order to strengthen entrepreneurs, communities and networks of all sectors in the country. When the domestic structures of economy and society are strengthened, the external connections have to be done simultaneously in regions such as ASEAN countries and the connections of the world economy.

In the past, Thailand has continuously developed since the first era called “Thailand 1.0” with the main focus on agriculture such as production and sales of farm plants, horticultures, and domestic animals etc. The second era was “Thailand 2.0” which focused on light industry such as production and sales of shoes, leather goods, beverages, ornamentation, bags, and clothes etc. The third era was “Thailand 3.0” focusing on heavy industry and export such as production, sales and export of steels, automobiles, oil refinery, natural gas extraction, and cement etc. However, In Thailand 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0, national incomes were at the middle level so economic structures need to be improved urgently. This leads to the fourth era with the new title “Thailand 4.0” as New Engines of Growth with high incomes. Accordingly, the targets for driving “Thailand 4.0” are the step into “high income country” by innovation with technology application. If Thailand is really driven, the overall economy will enable Thailand to step over the middle income trap, and to reduce dependence of other countries in order to reduce inequality as well as to make balance in economy and society for real stability, prosperity, and sustainability.

Education in Thailand 4.0

Education 1.0 was in 1960, known as Curriculum B.E. 2503. (In the past, King Rama VI, Phrabat Somdej Phra Mongkut Klao Chao Yoo Hua, legislated National Primary Education Act B.E. 2542 in which the study were based on textbooks, but were not prescribed as curriculums.) At this time, the focus was on students' 4 skills: cognitive education, moral education, handicraft education, and physical education. The evaluation was done as holistic assessment by rating in percentage. Students with more than 50% were determined as pass whereas those with less than 50% were considered as fail and had to restudy in that grade level for the whole academic year. Teaching methods were mainly lectures to give details, writing contents on the blackboards or taking dictation. Students obeyed in whatever the teachers told them. Students did not access any learning resources, just listened to the teachers. Textbooks were very essential and teaching aids were blackboards, chalks, flashcards, and pictures. Duration structure was 4 : 3 : 3 : 2 i.e. 4 years in lower primary education, 3 years in upper primary education, 3 years in lower secondary education, and 2 years in higher secondary education or 3 years in vocational education. The curriculums were subject-based with principles and approaches responding to social needs.

Education 2.0 was in 1978. Since societies changed with higher population, the curriculums had to be modified with the change of the whole system. The primary education was set in 6 years with the cancellation of grade 7 (Prathomsuksa 7) whereas the secondary education was set in 6 years. The abbreviation of secondary level (Matthayomsuksa) was "M.", pronounced in Thai as "Mor", for both lower and upper secondary levels. Teaching and learning were student-centered with various elective courses for students to choose according to their aptitudes and interests. Teaching media were more stimulating such as slides, videos, films etc. The evaluation was analytic assessment to assess individual courses in which the students who failed the examination could restudy only for those courses without restudying on the grade level for the whole academic year.

Education 3.0 was in 2008. Because of the limitations of Education Curriculums B.E. 2521 and Basic Education Curriculum B.E. 2544, the confusion was found among practitioners in educational institutes. The problems included the crowded contents, whole day study, difficulty of course transfer, and problems of students' quality in terms of knowledge, skills, and desirable attributes. As a result, the curriculums were changed into The Basic Education Core Curriculum B.E. 2551 to increase students' competency and desirable attributes with availability of indicators. The curriculum was organized according to changes in societies, economy, cultures, and politics; advance in various sciences of the present world; competitive potentials, and creative collaboration in the world. The objectives of the curriculum focused on developing students to become good citizen with intelligence, happiness, and potentials to further study and careers.

Thailand 4.0 is created to solve various problems in Thailand such as failures in economy, politics, and societies with the blames on educational failures. The targets of Thailand 4.0 is to enable Thailand to create its own innovation. However, it is questionable whether the curriculum and teaching methods has responded to the Thailand 4.0 Policy. Although the curriculums has been modified and adjusted continuously for more than 50 years, it is time to modify the educational processes of

the country to respond to innovation creation, and Ministry of Education should be a leader to move forward with the schools as direct operation units as in the following ways.

1. Policy must be set or ministry regulations must be enacted for the number of students not more than 36 per class in order to enhance teaching effectiveness.
2. Schools must be prepared for readiness. At least one school in every sub-district, district or province should be equally ready in term of teaching media, equipment, teachers, and buildings to prevent the comparison of difference among schools.
3. Curriculums or course syllabuses should be improved, and the courses of computer science and technology should be upgraded to be core courses, not as a part of home economics.
4. STEM education and active learning should be integrated in teaching and learning in schools. To teach students to create innovation, project-based learning or task-based learning should be applied. Regarding active learning, students should learn from real practice and make their own pieces of tasks in individual work or group work, conforming to STEM. If the courses are content-based, students should be able to summarize the contents and then present their own tasks.
5. Indicators should be developed for individual evaluation of teachers' performance in order to know their strengths and weaknesses for develop teachers individually.

The trend of the country development focuses on driving innovation. The national education should be developed in compliance with industrial development in the era of "Thailand 4.0". When the content knowledge is open and easy to access, knowledge acquisition occur quickly.

Youths in new generation are digital native. Therefore, traditional teaching and learning in classes with reciting contents according to teaching plans and curriculum framework, and solving the questions are not suitable for modern education.

According to the changing factors mentioned above, it is seen that changing educational concepts is important. Apart from having cognitive skills, people who can develop the nation in the period of 4.0 should possess other skills i.e. skills from forebrain functions which come from non-cognitive skills. These skills include not being negligent, using critical thinking, seeking knowledge by oneself, creating ways to solve problems, and being persistent. These skills are considered as desirable attributes to be fostered in all youths.

Educating students with the contents in textbooks i.e. cognitive education, moral education, handicraft education, and physical education are still essential. Apart from these components, knowledge and skills should be cultivated with practice repetition until they can be expressed automatically. The concepts of consciousness, perseverance, diligence and investigation are taught by recitation, but they are fostered. At present, the teachers at all academic levels must perform both functions: educating knowledge and cultivating habits developed from forebrain skills. These can be achieved through teaching process and practice repetition in order to train the students to be persistent and be capable for continuously seeking knowledge by oneself through innovation.

Therefore, the guidelines for developing Thai education system according to the sustainable development policy are based on Education 4.0 through the integration of teaching/learning process by using technology for seeking knowledge and scaffolding knowledge. This is an education to the future by emphasizing on the production of people to really create innovation.

Research Results According to Sub-objectives

1. To study the targets of the curriculums for the production of Social Studies teachers in higher education in the contexts of Thailand

Universities which provide the programs for the production of Social Studies teachers have the targets in the same direction to develop graduates with teaching professional ethics, curiosity to learn, creative thinking in learning management, capability to develop media and learning innovation for learning management in the field of social studies. However, the focuses of these universities are different. For example, Nakhonratchasima Rajabhat University emphasizes on the application of communities as a base for learning management and as a means for connecting body of knowledge from the lessons to real conditions of communities. The university focuses on research aiming at students to create new innovation by applying body of knowledge as drives for media application for learning management in the university.

2. To study the desirable attributes of teaching graduates in social studies

Desirable attributes of learners are in 3 main factors: 1) expertize in learning management, 2) deep insight of contents, and 3) capability to integrate body of knowledge in the field of social studies for learning management.

3. To study supplementary learning activities of students in the curriculums of Social Studies teachers

Supplementary learning activities of students are considered similarly in terms of field trips because knowledge of social studies are concerned with history, geography, economics, religions and citizen which appear in different areas. Taking students to real settings will make learning more concrete and easier to connect to the body of knowledge. However, each university has different focus. Rajabhat Universities emphasize on communities according to geographical area of the university location by assigning the students to do field trips for analyzing and synthesizing body of knowledge to apply for their further learning. On the other hand, public university focuses on assigning students to have wider perspectives on any areas around Thailand and to relate them into the overall perspectives.

4. To study guidelines for curriculum development according to the national policy

It can be concluded that the curriculums for the production of Social Studies teachers mainly focus on curriculum development according to the national policy of Thailand 4.0 with the goals for innovation development in order to keep up with digital age. Therefore, learning management focuses on developing learners to be media literacy and capable for media and technology application for learning management. In

addition, the focuses are also on innovation development, modern media for learning management suitable for students.

5. To study the problems of curriculum management

Since the policies from the government sectors frequently change, the development of curriculums and students sometimes lack of consistence. Moreover, the budgets are also insufficient for various managements.

Discussion

Active learning management is necessary in Thailand 4.0 for education in this era. The government policies emphasizes on education to promote student development and new creative innovation. In fact, looking back to the past of Thai society, the focuses have evolved around agriculture at the age of 1.0, light industry at the age of 2.0, heavy industry at the age of 3.0, and innovation at the age of 4.0. Therefore, the drives of the government sector to the age of Thailand 4.0 on education are important parts for preparing students to be ready for learning, cultivating them to be knowledge seekers with morality and being able to live with others. This means that learners in the 21st century should be developed by focusing on critical skills. At the same time, Thailand 4.0 focuses on developing the country to be modern with higher incomes, and to step over middle income traps by creating new innovation to be bases for the country development and the capability to do business with other countries. Education should be urgently reformed concretely on such as the skill development of communication, knowledge exchange, cooperation and commerce. At the same time, Thai students in the future should maintain Thai good cultures together with their learning of new modern sciences (Charoensettasil, 2016). Thai education in Thailand 4.0 must be able to upgrade education quality to make students have capability to support innovative thinking and self-reliance on technology (Charoenwongsak, 2016). Moreover, academic people on education state that learning management for teachers in the country in different periods as follows. 1) Learning management in Thailand 1.0 focused on teachers in the classroom and students learned according to the teachers' teaching models regardless of individual differences in the classroom. 2) Regarding learning management in Thailand 2.0, students learned according to their preferences and aptitudes with teachers who specialized in those files. The layout of desk and chair arrangement set the students to sit around. Teachers from various fields of study were expert teacher. Slow learners or students with learning difficulty were taken care of through remedial learning for them to keep up with their friends. 3) Learning management in Thailand 3.0 emphasized on learning-oriented in which lectures or knowledge transfer were reduced for allowing students to investigate by themselves to learn, understand and be confident with their knowledge. In other words, "Teach Less, Learn More" or TLLM. 4) Learning management in Thailand 4.0 focuses on active learners who are active, curious, knowledge seeking to continuously find answers. Classroom atmosphere is arranged as community of inquiry to encourage suspects, eagerness to learn and find answers. The expectation is for students to have creative learning for producing innovation, career making, and self-study. It is also expected for students to create knowledge according to individual interests and the forces of teamwork such as innovation-focused team (Sinlarat, 2016). Therefore, learning activities in Thailand 4.0 should be arranged to encourage students to be active learners who learn actively and curiously to find answers all the

time. According to the concept of active learning, learning activities are student-centered through activities of work-based learning, work-integrated learning, or site-based learning. As a result, students and teachers discover new knowledge, create new knowledge, and create new innovation (Phornsima, D., 2016)

According to the discussion above, stakeholders of curriculum development should design the curriculum and learning activities to promote students' self-study by focusing on real practice to learn by doing and be capable to experience by themselves in order to embed body of knowledge and be capable for applying them effectively.

Suggestions for the Application of Research Results

The results of this research reflect that the universities have different focuses so their graduates are also different. In addition, the guidelines for curriculum development in the future should be cooperated among all parties in policy setting for the teacher production by focusing in the same direction with policy stability and consistence for the production of the future teachers.

Recommendation for future research

Research on learning management should reflect the targets for the teachers production for the optimum benefits of the learners.

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