

A STRATEGIC PLAN TO UPGRADE THE CAPABILITY OF CHIANG MAI COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN ASEAN COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research had objectives 1) to study the problems and impacts of educational management in Chiang Mai Community Educational Organizations, 2) to investigate the potential of the Organizations in educational management, and 3) to formulate the strategic plan of educational management in the Organizations in ASEAN community. The participatory studies were conducted in 11 communities in Chiang Mai. Qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed to identify the problems, impacts, and organizational potential; and to formulate strategic plans by SWOT Analysis.

The problem of community educational management was the system of the management was ineffective which had an impact of students' learning quality leading to uncompetitive of those students in other communities in ASEAN. The organizations had potential in linking with those learning networks to improve the educational management with ASEAN community.

The organizations have formulated 4 educational strategic plans in uplifting the educational management – 1) Turn around strategic plan, 2) Retrenchment strategic plan, 3) Aggressive strategic plan, and 4) Stability strategic plan.

Keywords: organizational potential, educational strategic plans, community educational organization

INTRODUCTION

Thailand became an official member of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) community in 1967. ASEAN studying subject in Thai schools at present usually focuses on teaching more of the broad and general knowledge about neighboring countries in ASEAN than the knowledge at local levels, especially how the local people have struggled to adapt to the establishment of ASEAN community which should gain more interest in the study and spread out to wider audiences. Teachers and other educational officers are main human resources who need to learn about and understand ASEAN community, both from above and below, in order to be able to pass on knowledge to students. Teachers and other educational officers should also take part in researching for new teaching techniques and in helping local communities, especially by directing local development which is increasingly affecting local community's lifestyle (Center for Ethnic Studies and Development, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, 2013)

From the National Academic Conference for Teachers and Guidance

Counselor 2013 regarding the impact of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)'s establishment on Thai education, it was found that most of the suggestions given to students were oriented towards "choosing the major with high demand in the job market after graduation". Students need to be aware of the consequences from Thailand joining ASEAN community on Thai job market's demand for the graduates as AEC has opened up new opportunities for the graduates to work in other ASEAN countries. However each ASEAN country has its own regulations which differ from others; for example, in some countries only native speakers are hired which will prevent Thai workers from working there; or there will be more competition in Thai job market due to incoming workers from other ASEAN countries. All of these will affect the overall demand and supply in Thai job market (Ramasuta, N. & Rohitsthean, B., 2013)

Somboon, S. (2013) reported the impacts on Chiang Mai as Thailand becoming a part of ASEAN Community as follows:

(1) A negative impact on a particular business factor may be beneficial to others.

For example, the fact that educational institutes are facing fiercer competitiveness from foreign investors may result in better quality in education for students, leading to more skillful workers.

(2) There can be a lack of vocational labors in a service sector due to the movement of labors in ASEAN countries. Comparing the compensation in various ASEAN countries, factoring in the cost of living of each country, it is found that accountants in Singapore and Malaysia earn 3 times more compared to those in Thailand. Consequently, workers in Thailand may be motivated to move out to other countries, especially to Singapore where there are less people in working age.

(3) There can be more impact on a broader perspective, not on a particular business factor. As seen with accountants who may move to other countries for higher compensation, other sectors may be affected because all companies need to hire accountants to create and inspect their financial statement.

With such issues regarding the education of local communities in Chiang Mai, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, an outstanding educational institute aiming to create sustainable development in local communities with a vision conforming to

developmental direction, is focusing on finding solutions for the aforementioned issues. In addition, since Chiang Mai Rajabhat University has many faculties specializing in a wide variety of fields, it is possible to provide services to solve the mentioned educational issues, especially with the aid from the Faculty of Education, fully equipped with several academic researchers with the vision supporting local development researches. followed the Strategic Plan for the Development of Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, 2013.

Therefore, researchers at the Faculty of Education conduct a research program called “Strategic Plan to Enhance the Ability of Chiang Mai Communities in ASEAN Community under the Academic Collaboration with Chiang Mai Rajabhat University: SCAC-CMRU” and a research project called “Strategic Plan to Enhance the Ability of Chiang Mai Community Educational Organizations in ASEAN Community”. The aim of this research project is to identify problems and impacts on local educational institutes in Chiang Mai, along with their capabilities, as Thailand becoming an ASEAN community member. This research project will propose a means to improve the performances of these local educational institutes with cooperation from Chiang Mai Rajabhat University. The

outcomes of this research project could be helped to strengthen the capability of the local educational institutes in Chiang Mai and ready Thailand to truly become a part of ASEAN community.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research had objectives 1) to study the problems and impacts of educational management in Chiang Mai Community Educational Organizations, 2) to investigate the potential of the Organizations in educational management, and 3) to formulate the strategic plan of educational management in the Organizations in ASEAN community.

RESEARCH SCOPE

Content: The educational problems and impacts of the educational management and the potential of Chiang Mai Community Educational Organizations under ASEAN community in order to upgrade and strengthen the capacity of the local educational institutes in co-operation with Chiang Mai Rajabhat University by using the formulated strategic plan.

Population: The communities from interested areas and Hang Dong district in Chiang Mai participated in the project were designated by stratified sampling method. Then primary data were collected from 12 communities from those districts.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



METHODOLOGY

Research Demography/Sample group/Participants

Step 1: The communities were designated by stratified sampling method from all interested districts and Hang Dong District.

Step 2: 11 communities in Baan Pong municipality in Hang Dong district were chosen as a sample group by purposive sampling.

Research Materials and Methods

1. The primary data were collected by a questionnaire and group interview,

2. The secondary data were collected from local educational organization documents, research papers and reports concerned with a preparation of joining ASEAN community,

3. The assessment instruments were an interview form, an observation form, and the assessment forms consisted of

3.1 a project participation purposed form,

3.2 a project screening form,

3.3 a comprehension assessment form before joining the strategic plan formulation, and

3.4 a form of community strategic plan formulation.

Data Analysis

1. Quantitative analysis: data were collected from those mentioned forms and then were analyzed to identify mean scores, frequency, percentage and standard deviation.

2. Qualitative analysis: those descriptions, suggestions and opinions from interviewees and forms were analyzed to retrieve the information by content analysis in conjugation with the quantitative information.

Discussion

1. The problems of and the impacts on educational communities were analyzed and comparing with previous related researches.

2. The capability of communities were discussed and analyzed using SWOT

analysis in the consideration of 1) internal factors such as: contexts, structures, strategies, conditions, limitations and supporting factors of local communities in Chiang Mai; and 2) the external factors such as the trends needed from ASEAN countries and from the observations and studied from the competitive strategies.

3. From discussion about means of upgrading the potential of Chiang Mai community educational organizations, it was agreeing to use a strategic planning approach by evaluating those internal and external factors and conducted a SWOT analysis to locate the strategy plan, study the feasibility of the strategy in order to upgrade the capability of the communities in conjugation with the National Economic and Social Development Plan.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

1. Problems and impacts on local educational institutes in Chiang Mai:

Problems and impacts on education at ASEAN level

1) Thai government set high priority on educational management; as a result, Thai educational standards have been improved swiftly and continuously, similar to those of Singapore, Brunei, Philippines,

Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. In addition, Thai government also provides supports and allocates budgets for educational institutes, scholarships and research funding.

2) The administration of Thai educational system management is decentralized, with clearly specific roles for each involving organization, leading to non-overlapping operations and swift fulfillment of their missions.

3) Thai government allocates a larger amount of annual educational budgets compared to other countries; however, these budgets are inefficiently utilized. The quality of students graduated at every educational level was still lower than other countries' level. On the contrary, Singapore and Brunei's governments also spent a large amount of money on their educational systems, but both countries efficiently utilize their budgets and their graduates have been widely acknowledged from other countries in the world.

4) Evaluation and examination in Thai education still focus on multiple choice formats which emphasize on the ability to memorize information but lack creative thinking, similar to the educational system in Myanmar. This results in graduated students with under-average performance lacking logical senses. Such workers usually

end up as non-skilled labors.

5) Another weak point of Thai educational system, compared to other ASEAN countries, was the lack of English language skills. Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and Philippines all focus on teaching core subjects in English. This is especially true for Philippines where English language is a focused topic by family, educational organizations and society, starting at an early age. Workers in these countries are all proficient in English, which is their strong advantage when competing in the ASEAN work market since English is a widely accepted international language.

6) Political situation is another factor which compromises the development of Thai educational system.

Problems and impacts on education in Chiang Mai:

1) As the focal point for education in the northern part of Thailand, Chiang Mai's educational system has been continuously developed due to its importance; as a result, many high quality educational organizations, schools and universities can be found in Chiang Mai.

2) Similar to other regions in Thailand, the main problem for Chiang Mai students is their English proficiency. This may pose as a threat in ASEAN community

context. As an important economic area of Thailand, including tourism, logistics and goods production, it will be a great advantage as an ASEAN community member if local people in Chiang Mai can fluently communicate in English.

3) Due to the more popularity of general education over vocational education, Chiang Mai still lacks skilled labors with specific knowledge. Vocational workers, as a matter of fact, are very important for the development of Thailand.

4) There is still a certain degree of economic and educational inequality in Chiang Mai, in both urban and rural areas. The quality, the accessibility and the development of education are all different for each area in Chiang Mai.

2. Educational potential of communities in Chiang Mai

Strengths of education in Chiang Mai

1) There is a total of 1,156 educational organizations in Chiang Mai including: 12 governmental and private higher educational institutes; 7 Mahachulalongkorn Rajavidyalaya University, its campus and vocational educational institutes; and 8 international schools.

2) There is a total of 22,255 teachers/lecturer and 440,706 students from

every level of education in Chiang Mai. The teacher to student ratio is 1 to 21.

3) Chiang Mai governor office focuses on local education and its strategy emphasizes on improving educational standards.

4) Chiang Mai educational systems and organizations have been acknowledged as an important focal point in the northern region of Thailand.

5) Another strong point of Chiang Mai educational organizations is the curriculums aiming at training students to become entrepreneurs with local uniqueness, applying sufficiency economy concepts into education.

3. The weakness of education in Chiang Mai:

1) The inability of workers to communicate in a second language (English or Chinese) is a major concern for Thai people, Chiang Mai included. Educational institutes should concentrate more on teaching a second language for daily life and for work. If Chiang Mai people can communicate in a second language, it will become a significant advantage.

2) Chiang Mai is still lacking skilled labors with specific knowledge in certain fields. There should be a focus on producing workers whom the business

market needs, instead of just producing workers from general education field. For example, Japan is a country with capability to build its own cars; as a result, its government always provides funding for the universities to make sure they can produce enough qualified engineers to fulfill the market's needs.

3) The quick economic growth of Chiang Mai causes a wide gap in earnings, resulting in significant income inequality.

4) There is an inequality between urban and rural areas. The rural areas usually lack an opportunity to improve with poverty issues and low life quality compared to the urban areas. This leads to an inequality in education since the urban area has more chance to gain access to a better education.

4. Opportunities for educational organizations in Chiang Mai

1) Chiang Mai receives a fair number of budgets and knowledge from a wide variety of sources. Chiang Mai also utilizes its own basic capability such as folk wisdom, network of organizations with mutual interest, participation and support from many organizations such as local administrators and schools.

2) Chiang Mai has a capability to become the center of education due to its popularity among Thai citizen and foreigners

as a place for studying, work, tourism and even long term stay. Chiang Mai is already a focal point for investment and tourism and has a potential to connect with other countries including the Greater Mekong Sub region (GMS), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and ASEAN. Due to its fast development, Chiang Mai is the second largest city follows Bangkok. Tourism and its related businesses are important parts of Chiang Mai's economy responsible for a large amount of income. The city is also voted as the top destination by many world-class magazines. The economic growth also brings Thai citizen and foreigners into Chiang Mai to start their own businesses and attend educational organizations.

5. Threats on education of communities in Chiang Mai

1) The lack of local officers to teach, in terms of quantity, quality and experience. Top executives have unsupportive attitudes and sometimes intervene with lower educational officers' duties.

2) Schools with students from different ethnic groups have an issue of different basic knowledge among students. Some schools also unnecessarily waste budgets on unsuitable activities such as

organizing field trips to create educational network with other organizations.

Strategies to raise the potential of educational organizations in Chiang Mai

The results from this study suggests that there are 4 strategies which can raise the potential of educational organizations

1. Turnaround strategy: In a situation where an organization has unsupportive internal factors but has strong external factors, strategies can be created from O (opportunities) and W (weaknesses) by using external factors to negatively mitigate internal factors. The results in this study indicate that, as a turnaround strategy, the local administrative organizations have requested budgets to organize educational workshop/ seminar for local officers by inviting speakers from both within and outside Chiang Mai.

2. Retrenchment strategies: In a situation where an organization has both unsupportive internal and external factors, strategies can be created from T (threats) and W (weaknesses) to avoid obstacles and to mitigate negative internal factors. The results in this study indicate that local administrative organizations have requested budgets to purchase educational equipment's for both inside and outside communities.

3. Aggressive strategies: In a situation where an organization has supportive

internal and external factors, strategies can be created from O (opportunities) and S (strengths) by using opportunities from outside to strengthen internal strong points. The results in this study indicate that local administrative organizations have promoted participations of local communities to educationally prepare to join the ASEAN community.

4. Stability strategies: In a situation where an organization has supportive internal factors but has unsupportive external factors, strategies can be created from T (threats) and S (strengths) to avoid obstacles and to utilize positive internal factors. The results in this study indicate that local administrative organizations have proposed several projects to organizations from both inside and outside communities requesting supports in the form of educational equipment.

Discussion

A study titled Strategic plan to upgrade the capability of Chiang Mai Community Educational Organizations in ASEAN has conducted a SWOT analysis to identify threats, obstacles, weakness and strengths of educational organizations in Chiang Mai. It was found on the strength that officers were suited for educational skills with respected educational qualification, and there were proper educational strategies

in local administrative organizations. On the weakness, the local administrative organizations provided inadequate educational workshops/seminars for the officials. On the threats, it was found that the educational technology was insufficient and out of date which was consistent with the study of Nuansi (2013). On the community potentials, it was found, based on the concept by BoonBongkarn & Kecharananta (2003). 4 possible strategies as follows: 1) Turnaround strategy: local administrative should request for budgets to support training in education for educational official invite speakers from both inside and outside communities; 2) Retrenchment strategy: local administrative organizations should request for budgets to provide the educational equipments for both inside and outside communities. This strategy was in line with guidelines on the readiness of the educational personnel in Armed Forces academies preparatory school for ASEAN Community done by Sudjai (2014) which proposed development of teaching techniques and medias as one of the strategies; 3) Aggressive strategy: local administrative organizations should promote the participation of local communities to improve the communities' preparedness for ASEAN community; and 4) Stability strategy: local administrative organization

should propose projects to organizations both inside and outside the communities asking for support in the form of educational equipment.

The communities in this study need to implement those 4 strategies at the management level. The management of organization resources could achieve its goals or missions by managing a relationship of the organizations to suit for their surrounding factors, especially the stakeholders. Strategic management could improve communication, participation and awareness of differences in social values and benefits. In addition, it could be used in decision-making based on logical thinking and, most importantly, it could help an organization truly achieve its goals and objectives, as mentioned by Bryson, J.M. (1995). Strategic management could be applied to both governmental and

private organizations. The strategies for both could vary, depending on missions and expectations from customers or clients.

SUGGESTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Future study should focus on an impact of ASEAN community on 210 local educational organizations in Chiang Mai. The communities affected by joining ASEAN community should then be selected as representatives for strategic planning to upgrade the capability of the community educational organizations in Chiang Mai. Further steps should be in co-operation with communities outside Chiang Mai in order to utilize the research's outcomes at the national level; and finally, a strategic planning with communities in 9 other ASEAN countries should be organized to achieve most of the mutual interests.

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