

The Transition Period for the Development of Vocational Education Management in Thailand (Before 1957–2021)

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Abstract

The study of the period of vocational education in Thailand reflects the consideration of social and cultural contexts integrated into the way of life of citizens. The study results were from literature synthesis and interviews with those involved in government agencies and educational institutions. The researcher has linked time boundaries to the development of global social dynamics. This led to the backwardness of education management and led to the adoption of new ideas by developed countries. As a result, vocational education management in Thailand takes into account the geographical advantages linked to career choices. Until there is a vocational education policy to be in line with the direction of economic development. However, the Career Development Directions study before 1957 to 2021 has shown that the concept of education was the result of a unilateral effort by the government and was not trusted by schools and enterprises. Although the current focus is on building a network of cooperation between different sectors. But it also reflects the lack of readiness in many areas that need mechanisms to drive education.

Keywords: Transitional period, vocational education, education policy, developing countries,

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of developing countries reflects the direction of managing the stock and flow of talents transferred from the education sector to the industrial sector. With globalization and technology transfer pressing the production and development of vocational workforces, it is necessary to lay the foundations for



the development of the country's economic. Nevertheless, because the Vocational Education and Training (TVET) education structure cannot adapt to the changes, it creates a massive challenge for government agencies, schools, and enterprises. Especially during the COVID-19 epidemic crisis, this requires efforts to assess educational achievement and modify the curriculum to match future working conditions (Cooper, 2021; Cedefop, 2018). However, from the present situation of vocational education in Thailand, there are still gaps in many areas: inconsistency between supply and demand, shortage of educational personnel, and budget discrepancy (Tarat & Sindecharak, 2020), which these reasons are significant obstacles to the direction of the vocational education policy.

This study aimed to understand the critical period of vocational education development transition in Thailand, which has been considered a developing country for a long time and has a historical connection with many countries. This is coupled with the Reform of Vocational Education (RoVE) context that plays a vital role in delivering responsibility for strengthening vocational education. Including the events leading to the change of government to a democratic system. As a result, people have more access to education (Dahlum & Knutsen, 2016). Nevertheless, due to the complex and sensitive social context, it is an important test of the direction of vocational education shaped by the collective commitment of all parties involved. The period before 1957 until 2021 indicates the development of vocational education in the context of Thailand, and the information obtained can be used for guidelines, design conditions, and to compare the development of vocational education with other developing countries very well.

2. Literature Review: Importance of TVET in Developing Countries

Since human society began to transmit knowledge through behavior and letters scribbled on the walls and connected to valuable history. Thus, humans are beginning to recognize teaching and learning styles that can support social and cultural contexts (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2012). All countries have converged historical traces and adopted a variety of identities to formulate national development strategies. For developing countries, economic growth often coincides with the direction of education and research that can help reduce opportunity costs (Hoeft & Veenendaal, 2019; Damon et al., 2016). Interestingly, in developing countries are indicators of passing tests that are blocked by middle-income traps and require efforts to integrate knowledge from science, especially vocational education.

One thing that is clear for developing countries' strategy is to formulate education reform policies to reduce unemployment from changing populations. It plans and improves curriculum for the production and development of vocational workers to produce skilled learners according to labor market requirements. Vocational education management is like preparing for national development goals. It is planned based on Quality Assurance and Opportunities for Vocational Education and Training (VET) graduates (Oeben & Klumpp, 2021; Oxtoby, 1993). Of course, the emphasis on the value of vocational education is a reminder of the pitfalls of the education system's failure to meet society's expectations. However, these results are reflected by industry demands linked to the direction of economic development (Yeap et al., 2021).

The problem of education and training environments inconsistent with actual working conditions impedes sustainable development (Gyimah, 2020). As a result, the government had to intervene by applying new public management (NPM) since the late 1980s to prepare students for future work. However, the challenges that remain threatening today are occupational quality assurance, neglect of school counseling, limitations at higher education institutions, and insufficient basic skilled learners (UNESCO & ILO, 2018; OECD, 2015). Therefore, the management of vocational education is the foundation of developing countries to enhance their economy.

From the survey, it was found that Developing countries are more likely to publish TVET research than developed countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, China and Germany. This effort has established the necessary standards of vocational education. Covid-19 epidemic situation. It undermined neoliberal principles and a difficult political economy. This has resulted in a conflict over the balance of educational management (Avis et al. 2021; Murray et al., 2021). Of course, governments must formulate policies taking into account the component of VET from the direction of educational institutions to address the ongoing short- and long-term labor shortages (OECD, 2021). Along with collecting information on people's expectations for the development of the country.

It can be said that TVET in developing countries lays the foundation to drive the digital economy and society in the future. This is caused by cooperation between the education and industry sectors. Thus, it is a joint ecosystem action plan that includes learning, training, and research activities (ECOVEM Consortium,



2021). In addition, the reengineering of teaching management standards during the Covid-19. This creates opportunities for vocational development in accordance with the dynamics of the global society.

3. Methodology

The research methodology is based on a contemporary, credible, and international review of the Office of Vocational Education's historical and academic papers. Considering the timing is necessary to link important events to identify the development of vocational education. Moreover, in-depth interviews were carried out with 24 executives from 6 public sectors, namely the Office of the Vocational Education Commission (OVEC), the Eastern Economic Corridor Office of Thailand, the Board of Investment (BOI), Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Office of Industrial Economics (OIE), and the Thai Chamber of Commerce and 18 vocational colleges that have been established as a coordination center for production and development of vocational manpower.

Data collection took place after the literature review was complete. The researchers then used these data to pose interview questions to capture issues and connect timelines. After collecting preliminary data, the researcher will arrange and synthesize from the current situation in order to understand the direction of vocational education policy.

This article begins with a review of the Vocational Technical Education and Training (TVET) guidelines in developing countries to understand the context of current vocational education management. The guidelines presented are in order of 1) the formation of vocational education prior to 1957 which reflects the occupational lifestyle of Thai people in the past, 2) the acceptance and adaptation of education by Cooperation and assistance from abroad, 1958-1996, 3) covering globalization leading to awareness of the preparation of vocational workforces from 1997-2008, and 4) analysis of vocational education policy making since 2009-2021, which reflects the development direction of vocational education management in Thailand.

4. The transition period of TVET development and policy in Thailand

4.1 Formation of Vocational Management: Before 1957

The beginning of vocational education management in Thailand arises

from the context of the people's occupational needs by adopting a lifestyle and wisdom inherited from ancestors to adapt to life. Due to the terrain of Thailand, most of the plains are suitable for cultivation and handicraft occupation. Therefore, the former Ministry of Education has set up the first national education plan suitable for occupation. The teaching was called 'special education' under the Education Program of 1898, which was an application of the British education management model and was revised to the Education Program in 1902 by taking the Japanese education plan as a guide (Thappraser, 1985). In 1909, education was divided into two categories: 1) general education, teaching subjects about reading, writing, numeracy, and accounting, and 2) special education, teaching about occupation, such as medicine, artisan, cultivating. This is considered a significant turning point in Thai education because the first education reform was for modernity (Tungkunan, 2016).

Indeed, educational reforms in Thailand are a consequence of the unpreparedness of the education system, which shows its backwardness and inconsistency with Western development trends. It views education as a tool to elevate people's knowledge to escape slavery, produce civil servants, and maintain national independence (Namuang, 2010). However, in the view of critical Thai scholars, it is seen that the development of education in the western style is born from the idea of competition, not life. Education and unemployment are significant problems in Western countries. As for the education system that separates knowledge from work, there is a problem of unemployment (Wasi, 2014).

The trend of career development led to the establishment of Thailand's first vocational school in 1910 under the commercial name school Maha Phruettharam Temple and accepting students aged six years and over only. Later, many other schools were established, such as Poh-Chang School, Primary Agricultural Teacher Training School. Until 1932, Thailand changed its regime from absolute monarchy to democracy, and the first Thai Constitution was drafted to give the people the supreme power (Preechasinlapakun, 2013). Along with the announcement of the National Education Plan of 1932 (No. 1) as a guideline for educational management, it divided into 1) general education, which is the study of general subjects, consisting of four years of primary education, four years of lower secondary education, and four years of high school and 2) extraordinary education, which is vocational education at the upper secondary level, such as agriculture,



commerce, industry, and craftsmanship. The goal of education management is to encourage all Thai citizens to receive an education suitable for their equality.

The above efforts led to a second educational reform: education for life and society. The National Education Plan of 1936 (No. 2) was promulgated because it wanted half of the people to complete compulsory education as soon as possible, and the word 'vocational education' appeared for the first time in the education system. It also supports the establishment of more vocational schools in the central and provincial areas. After that, in 1938, a royal decree was issued to establish government regulations to establish the Department of Academic Affairs responsible for vocational education. At that time, the relationship between Thailand and Japan became more pronounced. This has been observed from a significant increase in the number of Thai students sent to study in Japan as the cost is much lower than in western countries. In addition, the middle-class people of Thailand began to pay more attention to independent occupations (Ratchatapattanukul, 2002). Later in the year 1941, there was the Great East Asia War. As a result, vocational education is affected by the lack of teaching equipment; students need to find shelter, teachers, and students are reduced. After the war ended, the name was changed to the Ministry of Education and set up the Department of Vocational Education instead of the Department of Academic Affairs to have goals consistent with vocational education management.

Subsequently, the National Education Plan of 1951 (No. 3) was promulgated, categorizing vocational education into three levels, namely lower secondary, upper secondary, and higher vocational secondary education. Each level has a period of study of not more than three years. There is also a special education arrangement for those who have already left school and additional hands-on education influenced by American education. In 1952, a royal decree was issued in the Department of Vocational Education to establish a technical college in each specific field of study. In addition, in 1956, it was approved that upper secondary schools could offer higher vocational education. This is considered a significant change in vocational education as it is the merger between general and vocational education to study at the same school.

4.2 Receiving cooperation and assistance from abroad: 1958-1996

The management of vocational education in Thailand began to see a more developed direction in 1958. The Department of Vocational Education

received assistance from the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) from the University of Hawaii. Because it is seen that Thailand has a slower development in vocational education than developed countries, which will affect economic development in the long run, but since Thailand has a centralized administration at the Ministry of Education, careful project planning is required. Especially the collaboration with international organizations and with Dr. Martin from the University of Hawaii as a coordinator who helped in changing 18 schools and adjust the curriculum from hand operation level training to practical training using modern vocational approaches of the American style, such as the training program for artisans, builders, electricians, radio technicians, etc. (Martin, 1962).

After that, the National Education Plan of 1960 (No. 4) was promulgated to respond to the diversity of professions in society, and the National Economic and Social Development Plan No. 1 (1961-1966) was formulated. However, because the country's context is in transition, the population is growing at 3.2 percent per year, and there is a tendency to slow down the economy due to a shortage of trained and specialized workforce (NESDB, 1967). The government, therefore, focuses on supporting scholarships for citizens to have higher education, especially in the category of industrial technicians. Later in 1965, the Department of Vocational Education received assistance from Germany to establish Khon Kaen Technical College in the northeast of Thailand because it is the area with the largest working-age population in the country. In addition, in 1966, it received assistance from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to improve the Chang Women School, including the establishment of the World Bank Loan Program for Vocational Development.

As most people realized the importance of vocational education, the National Education Plan of 1969 (No. 5) was promulgated by allowing a group of persons or a private sector to take part in the provision of higher education to alleviate the burden of the state. That same year, it also received assistance from Australia to set up a technical school and many other educational institutions to teach at the higher vocational certificate. Later in 1972, Thailand joined the Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan program to develop teachers and improve equipment for practice. After that, in 1974, the Act was promulgated to establish the college of technology and vocational education to produce undergraduate, vocational teachers and support research to provide academic services to society.



After government reforms in 1976, citizens realized the value of democracy, the development of arts and culture, and more resources. Therefore, the National Education Plan of 1977 (No. 6) was promulgated to improve education according to the country's society, economy, and politics. By changing the class system to 6:3:3, which is six years of elementary school, three years of lower secondary school, and three years of high school. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education has announced a technical vocational certificate program for students who have completed an ordinary high school and come to study vocational for another two years. Later in 1985, the concept was promoted to comprehensive vocational education and established a particular project office for coordinating and responsible for vocational education.

A significant turning point for Thai vocational education was the assistance of Germany again in 1988 to develop the Dual Vocational Education (DVE) system by providing full-time training courses in educational establishments and Internships in the industry for some weeks to reduce teacher competency limitations and outdated machines (Moonpa et al., 2019). Later, with received assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to establish an institute for the development of vocational teachers. In addition, the Danish government has provided loans for the development of vocational education in agriculture and industry, and other agencies such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations, Science and Cultural (UNESCO). Subsequently, volunteers from Australia, Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom came to exchange knowledge and experience in vocational education (OVEC, 2020), thus building solid international cooperation in vocational education.

However, the guidelines for vocational education management were more explicit when the National Education Plan 1992 (No. 7) was promulgated to balance the intellectual, mental, physical, and social aspects. Along with the emphasis on education and lifelong learning in accordance with the goals of the curriculum that can be applied in a career, as well as networking and cooperation in the development of community resources. An additional 93 colleges were established to expand educational opportunities to the local area. The following year also received assistance from the Japanese government to develop a vocational workforce. There is an Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (Japan) loan project to develop tools and equipment in educational institutions. In 1995, it received

assistance from the Belgian government to develop a workforce in the field of teaching materials development. As a result, Thai vocational education can develop an information technology network system and lead to remote teaching and learning management. For this reason, building international cooperation to reform vocational education also plays an important role in supporting regional socioeconomic development (Arribas et al., 2019).

4.3 Preparation for the vocational workforce: 1997-2008

The direction of production and development of the vocational workforce is a consequence of the promulgation of the 1997 Constitution, which emphasizes the protection of educational rights by the goals of national policy (Heymann et al., 2014) and participation of various sectors under the democratic regime. Moreover, create a mechanism to maintain the country's shared interests in economic, social, and cultural equality. Nevertheless, the entry of globalization and liberalization has a considerable influence on developing countries, especially investment conditions, which are essential elements of the import substitution industrialization and affect the country's economic direction (United Nations, 2018; Stallings, 2001).

Due to the arrival of globalization, the private sector and Thai academics have realized the importance of education which is the cause of the third education reform: education to lead a society of wisdom and learning. The National Education Act of 1999 was promulgated as the first law to focus on the education system and create a vision among stakeholders in education (UNESCO & United Nations, 2019). Subsequently, the National Education Plan was announced in 2002-2006 (No. 8) to develop people in all aspects, develop a social environment for learning, and the creation of Thai society to be a moral society. It has also formulated a policy to promote lifelong learning to develop vocational skills and contribute to economic productivity (Hyland, 2007).

It can be seen that the development of the vocational workforce has been continuously linked to the promulgation of the law. Along with the national vocational education standards and curriculum development policy proposal, the goal is to be in line with the national economic and social development plan and the national education plan. Resulting in the integration of policy implementation models and the process of change for continuous restructuring (Zarifis, 2000), causing the Department of Vocational Education to change its status to 'Office of the



Vocational Education Commission (OVEC),' later the Constitution was promulgated in 2007 stipulating that the education of professional organizations is an alternative education that can be self-learning and is protected by the state. But at that time, Thailand's Human Development Index was 0.778, ranked 73th out of 177 countries, reflecting that the quality of education could not adapt to the changes in the global context (NESDC, 2007). This is an important reason for the need to accelerate the improvement of production processes and the development of the vocational workforce.

However, the promulgation of the Vocational Education Act 2008 is considered a form of vocational education and vocational training management by the needs of the labor market by focusing on bilateral education arising from agreements between educational institutions and enterprises (Ministry of Education, 2008). In addition, there is also a fund for the development of vocational education and training for the development of vocational education standards under the development direction and preparation of the vocational workforce for the country's economic development.

4.4 Formation and Policy Formation of Vocational Education: 2009-2021

The promulgation of the National Education Plan (No. 9), which brings problems and obstacles from the original education plan to improve during 2002-2016, aims to integrate holistic education, balance people-centered development, and enable the private sector to participate in contributing to its achievements (Lambini et al., 2021). In this regard, the development of the quality of education will use knowledge as a base for national development. Focusing on the production and development of educational personnel to meet the labor demands of the domestic industry, leading to the fourth education reform: education to improve educational quality and standards in 2009 (Sirisunhirun et al., 2011), with a focus on participation at all educational levels.

Subsequently, the National Education Act (No. 3) of 2010 was promulgated, requiring that primary education considers vocational education, and policy implementation must be in line with the economic development plan and national society. Furthermore, it aims to provide schools with quality assurance systems to determine overall student development indicators and ensure appropriate development, job opportunities, and academic goals (Idialu, 2013). Later, cooperation with network partners from all sectors was established to develop quality people

and Thai society. This is considered a preparation for the transition from economic volatility.

At that time, Thailand was facing changes and commitments to enter the ASEAN Community in 2015. As a result, the Office of Vocational Education Commission recognized the urgent need to formulate a strategy on 'Production and development policy of vocational workforce,' which is a framework for long-term operations since 2012-2026 by focusing on the creation and production of the vocational workforce to meet the needs of the labor market both in quantity and qualitative. This includes the development of the quantity and quality of teachers and educators, which requires planning from Project Based Learning (PjBL) to integrated assessment (Sudjimat et al., 2021). In addition, emphasis is placed on developing the quality of educational institutions and new learning resources to create an educational perspective from earning a degree alone to benefiting all aspects of life.

After that, in 2014, a more explicit management guideline was put in place and suitable for teaching and learning in the 21st century, trying to instill in students and parents that vocational education is a career of the future labor market (Watrawee, 2018), in conjunction with the 2017 constitution, requires all children to receive 12 years of education, from pre-school to free, quality compulsory education. That same year, the national education plan was promulgated 2017-2036 (No. 10), and the national economic and social development plan, No. 12 (2017-2021), which are considered to focus on vocational education policy. Furthermore, by defining additional educational management concepts under 1) principles of education for the people, 2) principles of equality and inclusiveness, and 3) principles of sufficiency economy philosophy under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This has resulted in consensus among different sectors in developing the vocational education system together (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017).

In addition, the implementation of the Vocational Education Policy in 2018 began to gain more attention when the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) was designated as a strategic area for investment in the industry targeted by foreign investors. The goal is sustainable economic, social, and environmental development. Along with driving Thailand towards a developed country (Eastern Economic Corridor Office, 2019), the development of targeted industries requires the preparation of a



vocational workforce for production processes and modern innovations. By establishing a coordination center to explore the demand for labor in the industry, along with the launch of a course to enhance education with the revolutionary technology of google for education, generation 1, with the application of educational applications (G-Suite for Education) to be applied in the management of new education.

However, from 2021 onwards, the concept of 'Education creates vocational people, builds the nation' under the policy and focuses on driving vocational education management. The focus is on bilateral training to equip students with skills related to future work and the creation of learning centers to enhance the potential of students and educators to meet the needs of the target industry. In addition, the current situation of vocational education management reflects that the new generation tends to choose to study more in vocational education because it recognizes the importance of skills necessary to earn a living and a self-sufficient career. The government has also promoted and supported educational development guidelines related to upgrading the country's economy.

5. Conclusions and possibilities

The dynamics of vocational education management in Thailand are due to changes in society and the civilization of development influenced by the civilizations of developed countries. However, the educational management approach that has arisen since the formation of vocational education reflects the dimension of development that has given importance to lifestyles and is brought in as part of people's career choices. Moreover, the context of Thai society, which is a developing country, has experienced increasing unemployment as a result of the demand for economic expansion (Abrokwa, 1995) and the structure of education that is still unable to adapt to the rapid and violent changes in the global society.

The backwardness of vocational education management is a vital link leading to cooperation and assistance from developed countries. This resulted in development due to a broader vision of international relations (McGrath, 2011), coupled with the prospect of Thai education reform at the time beginning to indicate the possibility of bringing 'Educational civilization' is applied to achieve the flow of vocational development. Nevertheless, Thailand still has a key weakness, namely excessive legislation due to political conflicts., which hinder the achievement of goals and

inequality in education. For the management of vocational education to prepare the workforce to meet the needs of the industry, it is necessary to consider the 'opportunity structure' and planning the growth of learners from socioeconomic backgrounds (Attwell & Hughes, 2019; Omoeva et al., 2018). The production and development policy of the vocational workforce has been established since 2012, which expects the direction of vocational education management to be in line with the needs of the targeted industries to raise the national economy. The phenomenon of policy driving reflected the development of vocational education management caused by both quantitative and qualitative problems in vocational education manpower. These efforts could be key lessons in determining the country's future development directions.

However, Thailand's vocational education management will overcome past crises, uncertainties, and the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic. At present, lessons must be taken from the efforts of 1) vocational reform, 2) recognition of transitional periods, and 3) awareness of society's expectations as a developing country. It will require cooperation mechanisms from communities, societies, educational institutions, enterprises, and government agencies to integrate data in various dimensions for linking before, during, and after operations through an ongoing evaluation process. To create and design methods to produce and develop vocational learners according to labor market demands, thus driving national expectations out of the middle-income trap and towards the developed countries.

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