

## **Educational Management in Asean Community: A Case Study of Education in Singapore**

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### **Abstract**

This research article studies on educational management in ASEAN community. The purpose of this research is to synthesize the state of educational management in the past and present in ASEAN community focuses on a case study of education in Singapore. Qualitative research was used for research design which consisted of documentary study and in-depth interview educators in Singapore. Data were analyzed using content analysis with a triangulation method. Results indicated that educational management in Singapore is focused on education and provision for long life learning and it is a national priority. It aims to help students to discover their own talents, to make the best of these talents and realize their full potential, and to develop a passion for learning. Singaporean students will be trained to achieve 21st century competencies by the encouragement of schools and parents, and they will be practiced to be a confident person, a self-directed learner, an active contributor, and a concerned citizen. Conducting educational research is simultaneously encouraged to contribute proactively to schools in the Singapore system, particularly in building school capacities that includes developing new pedagogies, implementing experiential learning modes, and conducting practitioner inquiry. Enhancing student learning experiences in the school system will be set for the final goal of research result.

**Keywords :** Educational Management, ASEAN Community, Education in Singapore

### **Introduction**

The preparation of the readiness into ASEAN community is very important for every organization. They need to prepare for the change that will occur in order to be part of ASEAN community. Educational organization is also needed to prepare for the readiness as well. Modern education and information technology are needed for helping to enhance the level of education into international standard, especially 7 occupations that will have free movement between countries within ASEAN community. These seven occupations are doctors, dentist, nurse, engineer, architect, explorers, and accountant. Therefore, the preparation of basic education to students is very important to train their learning skills for the quality of their future

occupations. The learning activity that will meet the target of students' achievement should be designed in variety and diversity and should cover 5 learning aspects which are 1) cognitive domain 2) affective domain 3) psycho-motor domain 4) process skills, and 5) integration. These aspects or skills of learning activities are usually used in general and worldwide (Khaemane, T., 2007: 1; Editorial department of Wittayajarn Journal, 2011 : 24-32).

Many organizations in each country have prepared for the readiness of entering ASEAN community in 2015 especially the organization that related to educational management. Some countries have issued planning approach and educational development was set in the strategy in order to develop education for produce qualify labors for team working of countries in ASEAN community. Brunei is one of the countries that is having the encouragement of students in vocational education to have an efficient and matches with seven occupations. Philippines are also awakened to study and research in action by using good role of model to be the pattern of doing learning activities as well as Indonesia. Moreover, planning of educational management for the readiness of entering ASEAN community is also happening in Singapore, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Thailand (Department of Technical Education, 2008 : 19-21)

In this paper will focus on educational management in Singapore, which is one of the countries in ASEAN community that having further development of the education system and go beyond other ASEAN countries. The main purpose of this paper is to synthesize the state of educational management in the past and present in ASEAN community in a case study of education in Singapore. Qualitative research was used for research design which consisted of documentary study and in-depth interview educators in Singapore.

### **Related Literature on ASEAN and ASEAN Education**

From related literature about ASEAN, three pillars of ASEAN are reviewed and the third pillar is related to Educational Management. Detail and information of all three pillars were found as below (Department of strategy and evaluation Bangkok, 2013 : 5).

The first pillar is ASEAN Political – Security Community (APSC) which based on peace and security of ASEAN countries are the aims to set up ASEAN Political - Security community. Every country helps each other to solve conflicts by peaceful way. Moreover, cooperation in political and security will bring achievement to ASEAN Countries as follows: 1) to encourage peaceful and secure, 2) to build on the cooperation to against terrorist, war criminal and prostitution, 3) to reduce confliction between ASEAN countries and focuses on human rights, 4) to prepare protection for the danger of disaster or natural disaster, 5) to promote political development, and 6) to make closed relationship with another country in ASEAN.

The second pillar is an ASEAN Economic Community which based on the ASEAN vision that ASEAN would be a single market and production

base. Those plans should be successful by the year 2015 which consisted of 5 points such as: 1) ASEAN will be a single market, 2) ASEAN must be a higher community in economic, 3) ASEAN will be esquire economy, 4) ASEAN can adapt in the world economy, 5) to building AEC, all ASEAN members will be receiving the usefulness in four aspects which consisted of (1) to be a single market and production base, 573. 9 million people can approach the market, (2) to be Free trade area will increase opportunities to investment, labor among community, (3) development of higher labor, and (4) to help each other in which economic development will reduce the problems of poverty in ASEAN community.

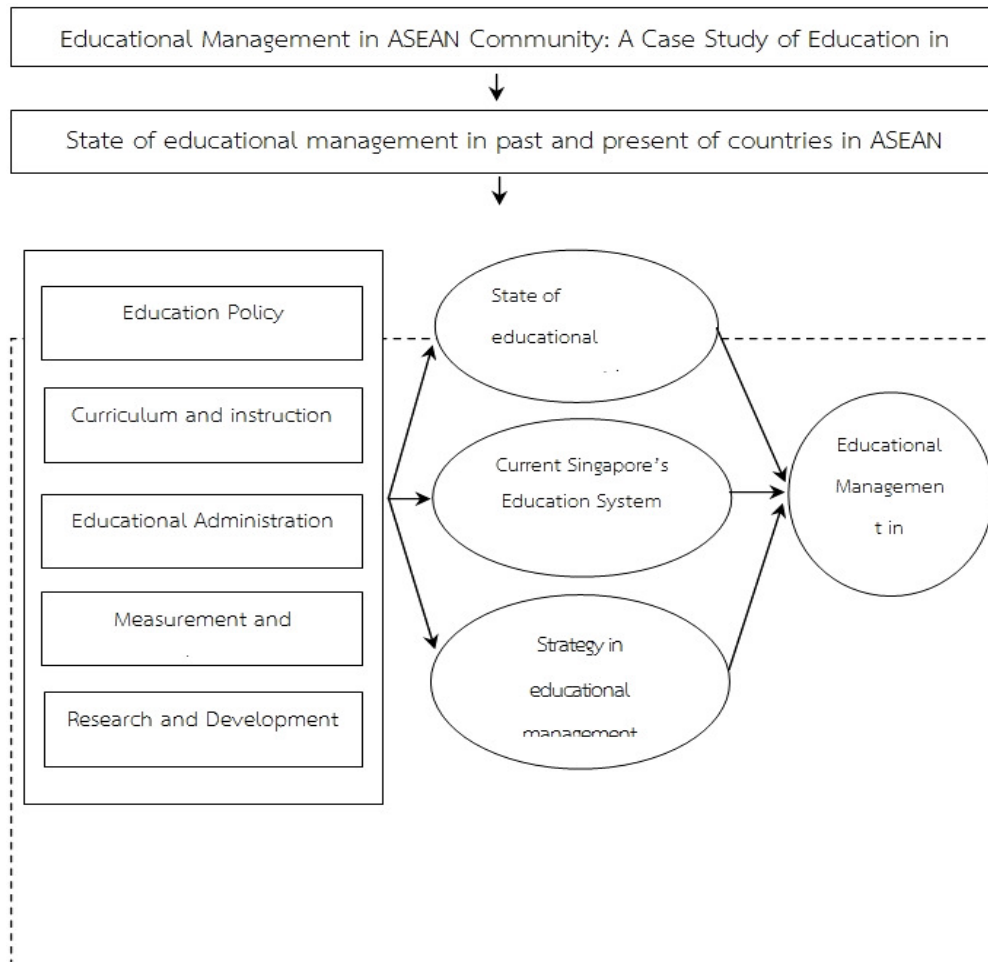
The third pillar is the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community which aims to contribute ASEAN Community to hold up living standard of people who living in this region, including building, sharing society among ASEAN members in order to 1) ensure awareness and understanding in diversity among people in ASEAN member, 2) develop familiarity and confidence building of ASEAN, 3) develop the unity in region, and 4) build the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community by enhancing every country to make sharing usefulness.

These three pillars will be the main target for all countries in ASEAN community to join in with each other in order to support each other of developing the South East Asia region to live together in harmony, peace, unity and prosperity.

According to the third pillar, Education is related to the development of ASEAN countries. For this reason, each country needs to prepare the best education for their people. Considering from the editorial department of the Wittayajarn Journal (2011), it has presented article called “Enhancing Education using Technology into World Level” for the preparation to enter the ASEAN community which will cause the change and movement of labor and investment. Therefore, educational organization needs to prepare for the readiness as well. Modern education and information technology are needed for enhancing the level of education into international standard, especially in seven occupations that will have free movement between countries within ASEAN community. These seven occupations are doctors, dentist, nurse, engineer, architect, explorers, and accountant. Therefore, the preparation of basic education to students is very important to train their learning skills for the quality of their future occupations. In addition, the study of educational management of ASEAN countries found that each country has given education for the first priority of country development and have developed continuously. People in all countries should at least graduate in basic education even though the opportunity of learning is not equal to another country. However, each country has tried to provide the opportunity for people to have equal education which depends on the state of society, economy, politics and culture of each country (Ministry of Education, 2006 : 63).

## Conceptual Framework

From the study of related research and literature review about the state of educational management in ASEAN community and in a case study of education in Singapore, the connection between each variable has been shown as below figure.



## Results

Three aspects of the study are shown as the research result in educational management in the ASEAN community in a case study of education in Singapore which consisted of 1) State of Education in Singapore, 2) Current Singapore's Educational Management, and 3) Strategy in Educational Management that being shown in the following aspects.

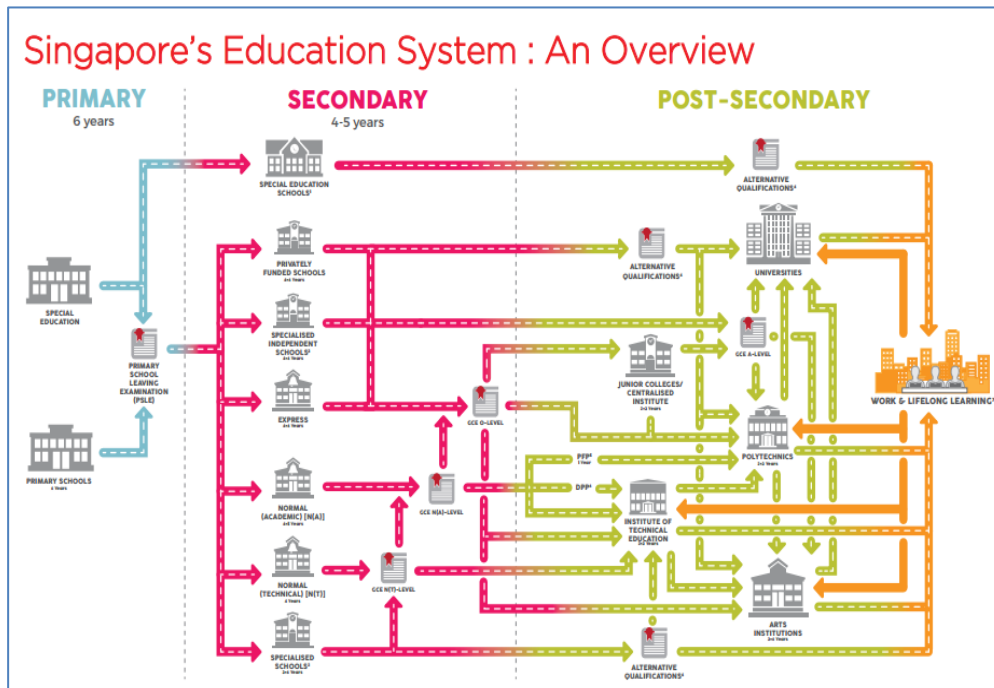
## **State of Education in Singapore**

Educational policy in Singapore, it used to set up the Singapore Institute of Adult Learning and now it has shaped to be the research organization and educational research implementation. It has the timeframe of change into many periods, the importance of the critical point in educational system in Singapore. Firstly, in 1985, it was the time of memory; it means that the students have to memorize the knowledge of the teacher. Secondly, in 1990, it used to be the time of critical knowledge. Thirdly, in 2003, it used to be the time of research for developing the knowledge. Fourthly, in 2010, it used to be the period of the transformative educational system in Singapore. It will be trained the student for 21<sup>st</sup> century skill by asking the most important question that “what is the best skill for the future students?”

In the above question, the policy maker is reminded about the national identity by building the national identity into the national curriculum. The part of the government budget, the government provided the budget by support the affordable student and give scholarships for student who has the capacity to study in the foreign countries. The national policy maker has to force the Singapore national believe in to the educational system like the best motto at that time as “the best people are the elitism to lead the country”. In order to build up the curriculum to support the social mobility, the educational policy has been changed to two critical points such as, in 1990, it is concentrated in the thinking school, and it used to change from “Teach Less, Learn More” to be the student center learning approach in 2004. In 1984, the knowledge of religious school had expanded because at that time Singapore had the moral crises, and it changed from the religious school to the civic school in 1990. Lastly, the vast transformation of the religious state to the secular state occurred in 1992

## **Current Singapore’s Educational Management Education System**

The Ministry of Education (MOE) aims to help our students to discover their own talents, to make the best of these talents and realize their full potential, and to develop a passion for learning that lasts through life (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 2017: Online).



**Figure 1** The Singapore Education Landscape  
**Source:** <https://www.moe.gov.sg/education/education-system>

From figure 1 showed that students taking the mainstream curriculum in Pathlight School will sit for the PSLE, and may also sit for the N- or O-Level exams. Specialized schools offer customized programs for students who are inclined towards hands-on and practical learning. Some also offer N (T) - Level exams. These schools are Northlight School, Assumption Pathway School, Crest Secondary School and Spectra Secondary School. Specialized Independent Schools offer specialized education catering to students with talents and strong interests in specific fields, such as the arts, sports, mathematics and science, and applied learning. These schools are the School of the Arts, Singapore Sports School, National University of Singapore (NUS) High School of Mathematics and Science, and the School of Science and Technology. Eligible students of the Singapore Sports School can progress directly to Republic Polytechnic. Eligible students of the School of the Arts can pursue a diploma program at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts via special admissions after their fourth year of study. Alternative Qualifications refer to qualifications not traditionally offered at mainstream schools in Singapore.

The Polytechnic Foundation Program (PFP) is a diploma-specific foundation program conducted by the polytechnics over two academic semesters for students who have completed Secondary 4N (A). Students who

successfully complete the PFP may progress directly into the first year of their respective polytechnic diploma courses. The Direct-Entry-Scheme to Polytechnic Program (DPP) is a through-train pathway to polytechnics for students who have completed Secondary 4N (A). DPP students who successfully complete a two-year program at ITE and attain the required qualifying Grade Point Average (GPA) scores are guaranteed a place in a polytechnic diploma course mapped to their course. Adults and working professionals are encouraged to upskill and reskill through quality learning options in lifelong learning provided by our Institutes of Higher Learning as well as Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) training providers accredited by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA).

Singapore has a strong education system and students aim high and achieve very good results. This is recognized around the world. Singapore has good schools, with capable school leaders and teachers, and facilities that are amongst the best in the world. The system tries to build on these strengths for preparing the next generation of Singaporeans for the future. This is a future that brings tremendous opportunity, especially in Asia, but it will also bring many changes that cannot predict today. The task of schools and tertiary institutions is to give the young the opportunity to develop the skills, character and values that will enable them to continue to do well and to take Singapore forward in the future.

In recent years, the moving towards an education system is more flexible and diverse and aims to provide students with greater choice to meet their different interests and ways of learning. They will be able to choose what and how they learn will encourage them to take greater ownership of their learning. Broad-based education to ensure their all-round or holistic development in and out of the classroom has also been giving to students. These approaches in education will allow education providers to take care the young with the different skills that they need for the future. The system also provides every child find his own talents, and grow and emerge from school confident of his abilities. Students will be encouraged to follow their passions, and promote a diversity of talents among them in academic fields, sports and the arts.

Huang, D. (2016: 58) has additional provided information about the education system as follows: it has the basic education from pre-school, which means from early childhood that includes the kindergarten school (nursery 1 and 2) and then primary school. In primary school, it should be more academic and low social activity. Ministry of Education has its duty to unify the curriculum such as compulsory school. It will be a more social disparity, social challenges and changes, and it is the shadow of education in Singapore. The school has their duty to translate the national agenda and support the future agenda in the country. The agenda from the government has to be the national development such as the safety policy, the transparency, and the

manufacture for Singapore. It has to develop the school strategies such as preparing the student for the future job or career opportunity. The school has to set up the environment for studying such as the creative society, the innovation for student and society.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

In terms of teaching and learning, Singaporean students will be encouraged to ask questions and look for answers, willing to think in new ways, solve new problems and create new opportunities for the future. The curriculum has the possibilities for challenges with social issues such as social emotions and slow learner. The assessment tasks focus on the quality of student understanding and are likely to encourage teachers to design instructional tasks. These can provide rich opportunities to learn and encourage high-quality knowledge work and deeper learning. In addition, students are also being trained equally important to build up a set of sound values, so they have the strength of character and resilience to deal with life's inevitable setbacks without being improperly discouraged. As the result, they have the willingness to work hard to achieve their dreams.

### **Educational Research in Singapore**

On the aspect of educational research, National Institute of Education (NIE) used to be the teacher training to be the leadership school and train the person to be the school principal. In 2000, The Nanyang Technological University has autonomous by itself and the NIE used to be the part of that University. It is the practice in the best line by providing the research study and service. In 2008, Singapore has supported educators to conduct research in the educational section. In 2013, NIE is the organization that has trained the skills and translation of educational system in Singapore and set up the importance question concerning the research likes "How does it work in diverse school type?" It has a research ability to conduct and implement the educational system in the community. In the future, the year 2018, the NIE will focus on the impact of the research and set the model of research and implement it into the school such as the school practice. It will be the time of transformative NIE itself, will be the time of extension and implementation the research project and NIE is the institute that supported by the government of Singapore and National Research Fund of this country. In terms of ASEAN, it will be focused on national discourse, national policy, and the national economy.

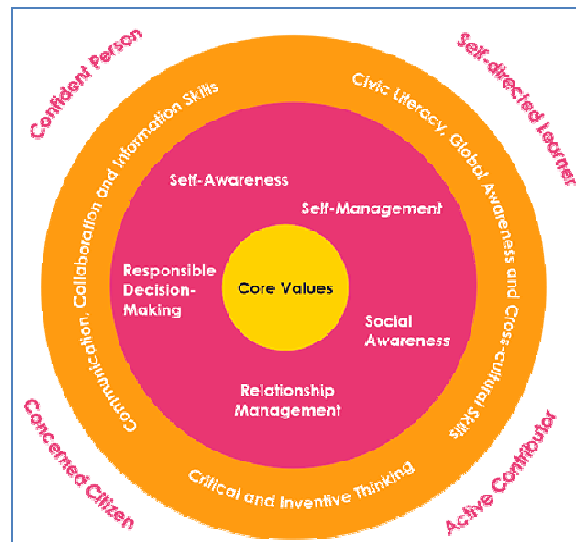
The Office of Education Research (OER) housed within NIE takes charge of education research in Singapore. Educational Research at NIE is guided by the Research and Development Framework, a policy-driven, evidence-based framework that guides academic and research staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Singapore schools and to build on NIE's



standing as a leading international research institution in order to enhance partnerships with key stakeholders including MOE, MOE Academies, clusters and schools, to grow teaching and research impact.

### Strategy in Educational Management

Strategy in educational management, Singapore has the education system that provides for lifelong learning and it is a national priority. Structure and system that is relevant and responsive to the ever-changing economic and social landscape is also focus for the development of educational management. Ministry of Education (MOE) also has constant plans and reviews of educational policies aiming to prepare young Singaporeans for the knowledge-based economy and sustain Singapore's world competitiveness standing. It is important to strengthen national identity, values, and social cohesion in order to sustain Singapore's multi-racial and multi-cultural society. In addition, to help our students succeed in a fast-changing world; MOE has identified competencies that have become increasingly important in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. These competencies, represented in the following framework, underpin the holistic education that our schools provide to better prepare our students for the future. It is predicted that schools and parents need to work hand-in-hand to help students develop these 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies as shown in below figure.



**Figure 3** Framework for 21st Century Competencies and Student Outcomes

**Source:** <https://www.moe.gov.sg/education/education-system/21st-century-competencies>

## Conclusion and Future Works

Educational management in Singapore is focused on education and provision for long life learning and it is a national priority. It aims to help students to discover their own talents, to make the best of these talents and realize their full potential, and to develop a passion for learning that lasts through life. Singaporean students will be trained to achieve 21st century competencies by the encouragement of schools and parents, and they will be practiced to be a confident person, a self-directed learner, an active contributor, and a concerned citizen. At the same time, National Institute of Education (NIE) researchers are encouraged to contribute proactively to schools in the Singapore system, particularly in building school capacities around areas that include developing new pedagogies, implementing experiential learning modes, and conducting practitioner inquiry. The end goal of partnerships is to enhance student learning experiences in the school system.

For future works, this research project will develop a framework of trends in educational management for the unity of countries in ASEAN community, and to propose trends and set a strategy of educational management for peace of countries in ASEAN community.

## Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge the research fund provided by Buddhist Research Institute, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. We also would like to give grateful thanks to Dr. David Huang and Professor Low Ee Ling from National Institute of Education, Singapore whom provide us the opportunity of the interview for Education in Singapore.

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