

The Scenarios of Rajabhat Universities in the Group Emphasizing Production of Graduates and Social Development in Buddhist Era 2565

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Abstract: The objectives of this research were to study the present state of educational provision and to present possible scenarios of educational provision in the group of universities emphasizing production of graduates and social development in Buddhist Era 2565. The methodology used in studying the present state of educational provision were contents analysis and using questionnaire for the sample of 201 persons. The research employed the EDFR (Ethnographic Delphi Future Research) technique by studying 3 rounds with 22 experts' opinions and connoisseurship by 14 experts. The instruments for collecting data consisted of a semi-structured interview form and a 5 level rating scale questionnaire. The statistics employed in the analysis of data included the mean, standard deviation, median, mode and inter-quartile range. The results of the research revealed that Rajabhat universities in the group emphasizing production of graduates and social development had their educational provision in all the 10 aspects at the moderate level. A consideration of individual aspects found that the aspect of fostering of arts, culture and conservation of natural resources and academic service for society were operated at the high level while the other aspects were implemented at the moderate level. The development of scenarios for Rajabhat universities in the group emphasizing production of graduates and social development in Buddhist Era 2565 revealed 4 scenarios. The most possible scenario seen by the experts is the first scenario which anticipated the increasing of these Rajabhat universities group.

Key words: Scenario, Rajabhat universities, graduate production and social development, higher education, EDFR, Thailand

INTRODUCTION

Providing higher education at the present time and in the future needs creation of knowledge bodies and building a firmly based society. At the present time, higher education institutions can not produce manpower that meets the demand of economic and social development. There are surpluses of manpower in some branches while in some other branches, there are not enough. Because social sciences have been emphasized more than sciences and technology, most of the higher education institutions lack the potential for academic development to be nationally and internationally recognized. Neither have they been developed to reach the status of deregulated universities which are administered independently and can effectively perform their roles. Rajabhat universities as a group need to set the scope of their management in order to make themselves a quality organization to be able to reach their goals efficiently and achieve all the missions as a good organization. A good organization must be composed of all 4 components which are (Owens, 1987; Brooks, 2006):

- Structure
- Human
- Technology
- Task

Rajabhat universities as part of the Thai higher education system, need to identify clearly their positions. They need to develop methods of thinking and methods of working in new ways in order to solve their own problems and social problems as a whole. That is to say, they must rethink and try to understand certain important matters; setting the direction of the institution with a shared vision; developing the quality of their graduates; enhancing the body of knowledge; managing the organization efficiently; selecting a competing value and seeking resources for long-term development by Office of Rajabhat Institute Council (ORIC, 1996). Such changes can be anticipated to be in many different methods such as building a scenario based on research on the future which is a research basing on the belief that the future can be studied systematically because man is the one who builds the future. This is based on the

Futurism philosophy which is a belief relating to alternative futures of a group of people or a social group. The conceptual framework which comprises 10 aspects as follows:

- The aspect of structure of administration
- The aspect of personnel management
- The aspect of technology management
- The aspect of research and creative innovation
- The aspect of production of graduates
- The aspect of production and development of teachers and educational personnel
- The aspect of fostering of arts, culture and conservation of natural resources
- The aspect of academic service for society
- The aspect of promotion and continuation of the royal initiatives projects
- The aspect of establishment of the development network for the empowerment of the locality

Therefore, the objective of this study was to propose a possible Buddhist Era in 2565 scenario of providing education in Rajabhat universities that emphasize graduate production and social development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research employed methodology for both quantity and quality research. The research was divided into 3 phases:

- **Phase I:** A study of the present state of providing education in Rajabhat universities in the group emphasizing graduate production and social development
- **Phase II:** Building possible scenarios of providing education by Rajabhat universities in the group emphasizing graduate production and social development by experts using the technique of EDFR (Ethnographic Delphi Future Research)
- **Phase III:** Using a connoisseurship of possible scenarios by experts involved in the provision of education by Rajabhat universities in the group emphasizing graduate production and social development

A documentary study of general data of Rajabhat universities was carried out followed by a survey research and a study of reports issued by the evaluating teams of the Office of National education standards and quality assessment. Panel experts were interviewed and questioned on the scenarios of Rajabhat universities in the group emphasizing graduate production and social development. A connoisseurship was carried out through

a focus group discussion so that the experts could consider whether or not suitability, possibility and impacts that would occur were congruent with the changing context in the future.

The sample:

- The sample for the survey consisted of 201 administrators of different levels from Rajabhat universities in the group emphasizing graduate production and social development
- A 22 experts in building scenarios of Rajabhat universities
- A total of 14 experts specializing in seminar for examination of scenarios of Rajabhat universities

Instruments for data collection: There were 4 instruments for data collection; a questionnaire, a form for recording data, a semi-structured interview form and an evaluation form.

Data collection and analysis:

- For data collection using the questionnaire, a questionnaire was mailed to each individual respondent and it was to be returned within 15 days
- For the interview, the researcher personally contacted and explained to each expert the rationale and the objectives of the research and made an appointment for an interview and data collection by the researcher at the place of the expert's preference
- Data collection from the members of the seminar was carried out through analyses of notes and evaluation forms. All of the instruments were examined and were found to be perfect. They were categorized and were ready to be analyzed

The qualitative data obtained from the notes and the semi-structured interview forms were analyzed in descriptive analysis. The quantitative data were obtained from a questionnaire which contained 174 items on work implementation in Rajabhat universities, 205 items on the study of scenarios of Rajabhat universities and from a rating-scale questionnaire containing 8 items for evaluation of scenarios of Rajabhat universities. The evaluation questionnaire was for the experts to choose the statement that suited their opinion most to be analyzed against the established criteria that had been set.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present state of providing educational implementation of Rajabhat universities in the group emphasizing graduate production and social development:

From the collection of data from concerned personnel comprising Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, Deans,

Directors of the Office of Policy and Plan in Rajabhat universities and the chairpersons of the teaching staff's councils in Rajabhat universities using a questionnaire, it was found that the implementation on the aspect of supporting factors and implementation according to the missions of Rajabhat universities in the group emphasizing graduate production and social development were at the moderate level.

This might have been caused by the fact that Rajabhat universities have recently become universities, according to Rajabhat university Act B.E. 2547 on June 15, 2004. It was the time of adjustment for Rajabhat universities in order to perform their duties as a comprehensive university. Furthermore, Rajabhat universities had very little financial support compared with other state universities. In addition, the students who enroll in Rajabhat universities are those who failed to enter a famous university or those who have chosen a Rajabhat university as the last choice. Most of them had their learning achievement at the moderate level. In terms of personnel, there is a shortage of personnel in both number and academic qualifications. From these factors, the sample saw that the 10 aspects of implementation of Rajabhat universities were in the moderate level because of limitations in implementation. The overall opinion is incongruent with Reungwichathorn (2008) who reported that organizational structure has important influence on the relationship among officers, work efficiency, feeling, personality, learning, officer's growth and other aspects related to living and working.

In addition, Charoenwongsak (1998) who stated that the policy of modern higher education; excellence of educational administration has 4 components decentralization of education to gain equality in every dimension, adequate supply and development of personnel such as tenured teaching staff and visiting teaching staff using modern approach of educational administration such as participation of concerned parties and international collaboration in providing education capital and budget administration.

The findings were in congruence with Wiratchai and Jetjamnongnuch (2007) who had synthesized reports on external quality evaluation of higher education. The results of the synthesis of most Rajabhat groups revealed that Rajabhat institutes should raise the standard of graduates and find strategies to prepare for being comprehensive universities by supporting more researches for learning process development by increasing the number of tenured teaching staff with qualifications that meet the higher education standard and developing teaching staff's qualifications and academic ranks.

The scenarios of Rajabhat universities in the group emphasizing graduate production and social development in B.E. 2565:

The experts found that scenario 1 in which Rajabhat universities in the future would be best prepared to provide education in all aspects is the most possible. This might have been for the reason that Rajabhat universities have had continuous experience in providing higher education so, they are prepared in terms of personnel, technology to support management and other factors which can adequately support higher education organization. Also at the present time, there is Rajabhat University Act of B.E.2547 which clearly prescribes roles and duties of Rajabhat universities in higher education organization. Therefore, in the future the role of Rajabhat universities in providing education must deal with the development of Rajabhat universities themselves in order that they can provide quality education in various fields which are congruent with customers' needs. What the experts saw is in congruence with Cao (2008) whose research findings revealed that private higher education institutions in China wanted to respond to the need of the internal market.

Many of them tried intensively to link private higher education to the labor market and some institutions even taught the students for prospective jobs and what the graduates receive. In addition, in his research, Eric (2009) found that programs taught at external centers must respond to the nature and community in which most programs operate. Also, Oyler (2009) found that the University of New South Wales and South Carolina University both had agencies and projects that added to the institution a international dimension and each of them realized that being international is extremely important for education in higher education institutions at the present time. Moreover, Wankaew suggested that considering the future of a university requires a wider perspective. That is, self perception, view on others and the overall view of the world arena must be adjusted and expanded.

Furthermore, in a seminar on Internationalization Process; experiences of the US Canada and Thailand, Van de Water stated that there were 3 basic aspects that challenged higher education institutions in their pursue of internationalization; programs of study; the learners and the teaching staff and personnel (Kanjaniyot and Dawgkhiaw, 2005). This is in congruence with Mazzola (2007) whose research findings indicated that international programs in graduate level and vocational courses encountered challenges which were the cost, time and the structure of decentralization of the university's administrative power. The opportunity was the attempt to link faculties together. Moreover, the Office of National Education Commission (ONEC, 2000a) conducted a

research on higher education for the mass and found that the principles of building unity in policy must be made concrete by setting the same principal goals of education for the mass. The subordinate goals and the principal missions should be assigned to various groups of different levels of higher education institutions. The subordinate goals must be clear and the different missions and responsibilities must be divided and can be coordinated without redundancy.

Decentralization of administrative power must be done to obtain freedom and agility. Education must be organized with balance of efficiency, equality and standard quality. The programs of study must be various and suitable for the locality for continuing education and life-long education of the community. Networks of resource utilization must be built, particularly the information network which has progressed a great deal. Furthermore, the Office of National Education Commission (ONEC, 2000b) stated that Thai higher education would be moving towards internationalization in various forms. Thai higher education institutions must encourage Thai people to associate with the world community and adjust themselves to internationalization and pioneering of basic research and research for development, Thai higher education institutions must be able to build and develop the body of knowledge of their own in order to guarantee economic development and well being. The higher education system must give higher priority to graduate studies and implement programs with more efficiency.

CONCLUSION

The development of scenarios for Rajabhat universities in the group emphasizing graduate production and social development in B.E. 2565 revealed 4 scenarios. The most possible scenario seen by the experts is the first scenario which anticipated the increasing of these Rajabhat universities. Because in future, these Rajabhat universities will improve all availabilities for self-development to strive to be a perfect university with unique identity regarding the mission of the Rajabhat universities. This may have positive impact on the future cooperation network of Rajabhat universities with others sectors in the country and abroad in terms of multilateral cooperative that will extend ability to compete in graduate production and social development as well as the selection for quality teachers, programs and a variety of learning models in the future the recommendations are as follows.

Each Rajabhat university has its own social and environmental context, internal and external, different from others, therefore each Rajabhat university should use the

research findings in the analysis of each aspect of its own potentials and use the data suitably in congruence with the potential in deciding the direction of the implementation of the university. In addition, most experts emphasized the role of Rajabhat universities for development of the locality according to the Rajabhat University Act B.E. 2547. Therefore, Rajabhat universities should promote and encourage the teaching staff, the faculties and the academic disciplines to emphasize working closely with the locality. This will make Rajabhat universities really dependable for the locality. The results of the research showed that the future trend of Rajabhat universities must be outstanding in terms of specific areas of expertise for competition and respond to the needs of customers. Therefore, Rajabhat universities should study and analyze clearly their own outstanding attributes in order to set future directions and provide proper support for future implementation in providing quality and standard education which is acceptable to academic society and trusted by customers in general.

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