

C H A P T E R

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**การบริหารจัดการหลักสูตรระดับอุดมศึกษา  
ของประเทศไทยในการตอบสนอง  
ต่อการศึกษาแบบสากล**

Curriculum Management in The Higher Education  
Level of Thailand Meeting  
Internationalisation Trends

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## บทคัดย่อ

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มีแนวโน้มมากมายในการตอบสนองต่อการศึกษาระดับสากลโดยการบริหารจัดการหลักสูตรระดับอุดมศึกษาของประเทศไทย งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งเน้นที่จะวิเคราะห์การปฏิรูปการศึกษาให้เป็นสากลในมหาวิทยาลัย 2 แห่งของรัฐ คือ มหาวิทยาลัยรามคำแหงและมหาวิทยาลัยนราธิวาสราชนครินทร์ และมหาวิทยาลัยเอกชน 2 แห่ง คือ มหาวิทยาลัยกรุงเทพ และมหาวิทยาลัยพายัพ

มีการสรุปว่า ยกเว้นในกรณีของมหาวิทยาลัยนราธิวาสราชนครินทร์ มหาวิทยาลัยเหล่านี้มีหลักฐานที่สะท้อนว่ามีกลยุทธ์ในการปรับเปลี่ยนหลักสูตรการศึกษาให้เป็นสากลเพื่อตอบสนองต่อความต้องการการศึกษาของโลก วิธีการเดียวที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์กรณีต่าง ๆ นั่นคือ ผู้วิจัยจะไปสำรวจในเว็บไซต์ของมหาวิทยาลัย เพราะไม่มากนักน้อย วิธีนี้จะทำให้เก็บหลักฐานได้เพียงพอในการพิสูจน์ว่ามหาวิทยาลัยเหล่านี้มีความพยายามเพียงพอ มีโปรแกรมอำนวยความสะดวก มีบริการและหลักสูตรพร้อมที่จะให้การศึกษาที่สมบูรณ์ที่สามารถรับมือและเผชิญกับความต้องการที่เปลี่ยนแปลงจากมุมมองเศรษฐกิจในท้องถิ่นไปสู่สังคมโลกได้

**คำสำคัญ:** การจัดการหลักสูตร/ ระดับอุดมศึกษา/ ความเป็นสากล

## Abstract

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There is a much sought trend in responding to the internationalisation of education by way of managing the curriculum in the higher education level in Thailand. This research aims to analyse the internationalisation of two public universities namely, Ramkhamhaeng University and Princess of Naradhiwas University; and two private universities namely, Bangkok University

and Payap University. It was concluded that, except for the case of Princess of Naradhiwas University, these universities have profound evidences of having strategies to internationalise their curriculum to respond to the demands of globalisation of education. The only method used in analysing the cases were for the researcher to visit the universities' website because, more or less, this method can already gather enough evidences to prove that these universities are doing enough efforts, programs, facilities, services and courses to provide a more holistic education that can confront and tackle the needs of a transitory economy, from local to a global perspective.

**Keywords:** Curriculum Management/ Higher Education Level/ Internationalization Trends

## Introduction

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The internationalisation of universities in Thailand is in fashion. De Wit posits in 2002 (in De Wit, 2011) the four broad categories of rationales for internationalisation: political, economic, social and cultural, and academic. He further argues that these rationales are not mutually exclusive; they may vary in importance by country and region, and their dominance may change over time. He further suggests that economic rationales are considered to be more dominant than the other three. In relation to these, academic rationales such as strategic alliances, status and profile are also becoming more dominant. Hence, this argument becomes the umbrella of motivations for countries to

respond and to act on how they can compete and the same time harvest the profits that this phenomenon is imposing and offering. Clearly, there is an indication of an economic inspiration to the internationalisation of higher education in the world and consequently, in Thailand. Although, looking into the impact of this shift in economic paradigm from local to national to global in scope of countries and the world, one sensible argument in many researches would be to see why the trend in higher education would be termed as internationalisation and not on globalisation. Further analysis of this structure conducted by Knight & De Wit (1999) indicated that globalisation is seen as the root cause of changes taking place in higher education and can simply be defined as the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, ideas across borders; while globalisation, as they contrasted to internationalisation of higher education, refers to institutional arrangements set up by governments, universities, and education agents that involve the delivery of higher education services in two or more countries. Hence, the adaption of internationalisation, rather than globalisation.

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## Objectives of the study

The universities under study are two public universities namely, Ramkhamhaeng University and Princess of Naradhiwas University; and two private universities namely, Bangkok University and Payap University. The study looks into the framework of the curriculum, its designed programs, activities, and teaching

framework and how these have been made to respond to the internationalisation of the curriculum. The study focused its analysis on the written programs made available on its website. Moreover, this study aimed to describe how the curriculum management is done in the internationalisation of the curriculum of one private university in Thailand in response to the rising demand of the ASEAN union that will be fully integrated in 2016.

Researcher choose two public universities as one in the central area and one in the southern area, for two private universities, the same reason one in the central area and one in the northern area, these can represent universities in the broader area.

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## Methodology

This study uses the case study method adapting the Business School Approach as described by the Commonwealth Secretariat in 2010. The researcher decided to use the Literature Case Study variant of this approach which is developed by looking exclusively at already existing and published materials (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2010). This study then employs a document-based approach wherein analysis is made at a distance using documentary sources provided through the website of the university. This decision to use a limited method is backed up by experts. According to Bouma (2000), as quoted by Chalapati (2007, "A researchable question is usually a small fragment of a larger question. One of the hardest things for a researcher to do is

to confront a larger, burning issue by tackling only one small, manageable part of it” (p.13). He also further suggested, “It is better to answer a small question than to leave a large one unanswered” (p. 13). Hence the use of documentary sources was chosen as a method to answer the research questions.

### **Global Ideas and Theories**

Brandenberg & De Wit (2010) traced the emergence of the shift from globalisation to internationalisation of higher education and indicated that over the last two decades, the concept of the internationalisation of higher education is moved from the fringe of institutional interest to the very core. They reported that in the late 1970s up to the mid-1980s, activities that can be described as internationalisation were usually neither named that way nor carried high prestige and were rather isolated and unrelated and that in the late 1980s changes occurred. Internationalisation was invented and carried on, ever increasing its importance as new components were added to its multidimensional body in the past two decades, moving from simple exchange of students to the big business of recruitment, and from activities impacting on an incredibly small elite group to a mass phenomenon. Evidently, the international dimension and the position of higher education in the global arena are given greater emphasis in international, national and institutional documents and mission statements than ever before.

Moreover, Kritz, (2006) pointed out what specifically transpired with the emergence of the internationalisation of higher

education saying that, for decades, students have gone to other countries to advance their higher education and high-income countries have awarded grants and travel assistance to their teachers and researchers to enable them to collaborate with scholars and institutions in other countries. In addition, international research collaboration mainly involved individual faculty members from developed countries traveling to another developed country or to a developing one for research collaboration. As a result, internationalisation is a term that is being used more and more to discuss the international dimension of higher education and, more widely, postsecondary education. Because it means different things to different people, it appears in the literature in a variety of ways.

### Global Practices

Indeed, globalisation affects many sectors of society. Higher education is no exception. As to the United States' take on the internationalisation of higher education, Smithee (2012) claimed that the internationalisation of U.S. higher education has depended on leadership from a variety of sources in different strengths and purposes over time and this leadership came in the form of advocates for international education who were drawn from the stakeholders. It was also indicated in his paper that these advocates included practitioners, researchers, professional organizations, and alliances. It was also mentioned that leader-advocates contended with philosophical changes in the way higher education perceived itself and its actions. The struggle to

articulate the nature of international education in U.S. higher education institutions improved once it was realized that the focus should not be a thing, but a process.

### **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand. In terms of education, the aims of the ASEAN, among others, are to provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical and administrative spheres and to promote Southeast Asian studies.

To explain further the rationale for the harmonization of Southeast Asia, Olds & Robertson (2014) posit that the idea of regionalism in higher education in Asia or Southeast Asia is a very exciting endeavor. Southeast Asia has been integrating rapidly mainly through trade and investment. It was also observed that the region is witnessing increasing mobility of people in the region and between regions. This new context, then places higher education in a vital role in developing human resources capable of creating and sustaining globalized and knowledge-based societies.. The most common measure is the step towards a greater degree of integration in higher education policies and practices through concerted regional efforts.

Admittedly, there are benefits in creating a common higher education space in Southeast Asia. The more obvious ones are greater mobility, widening access and choices, academic and research collaborations, enhanced collaboration on human capital



investment, and the promotion of ASEAN and/or Southeast Asian within the fast changing global higher education landscape. The immediate advantage of such harmonization in higher education system is presented as easier exchange and mobility for students and academics between nations within Southeast Asia apart from member countries availability to access systems, tools and best practices for quality improvement in higher education.

## The Case Study

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Thailand prepared to participate in the internationalisation of its higher education institutions. Interestingly, there have been a sea of views that tackle the topic not only of Thailand's take globalisation but its move towards strengthening its policies and practices to internationalize its education, eventually its curriculum.

In a report made by (Yaakub, 2015) he argued that the key trends in higher education in the Kingdom of Thailand include high competencies workforce which provide venues for students to ensure that they will stay competitive in the international market place. To respond to this, the Kingdom provides scholarships to aid manpower development and capacity building. Another innovation is the formation of Regional Research Leaders which aims to accelerate the development of university research activities nationwide to enhance national competitiveness. Regional Hub in Higher Education Provision is the latest development in Thai higher education which is currently undergoing the second

decade of the national education reform with the goal to aspire toward good education quality. Ultimately, Thailand aims to become the regional education hub in South-East Asia with the aim of increasing foreign students. The Royal Thai Government has given high priority to upgrade quality of Thai universities to achieve international standards of excellence while upholding their academic freedom and social responsibility.

At the present level, specifically year 2015, there are obvious indicators that the education policies and practices in Thailand have emerged to be competitive. Indeed, Thailand has made a long way in improving its educational system to meet the demands of globalisation that has confronted the whole world as a whole.

This research has taken four universities as cases to analyse its curriculum and program management in terms of its internationalisation strategies. This research considered two public universities: Ramkhamhaeng University, Princess of Naradhiwas and two private universities: University, Bangkok University Payap University. The Internationalisation efforts in these universities can be traced through the following: mission, vision, administrative structure and staffing, curriculum, co-curriculum and learning outcomes.

## Results

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### Ramkhamhaeng University

The IIS-RU curriculum is also internationalized, more specifically by way of its courses offered in IIS-RU and it extends help to prepare students be part of the mainstream courses of IIS-RU by offering intensive English language courses before they officially become regular students. IIS-RU supports the community volunteer service to encourage IIS-RU student to work in remote area and participate in the local communities. The purpose of this project emphasizes on bringing the academic knowledge and charitable spirit activity to contribute the society and encourage student to have social responsibility. As a result of the volunteer experience, the students were expected to become more civic-minded and more awareness toward local community and society. Moreover, representatives from IIS-RU participate in conferences and exhibitions such as the Asia-pacific for International Education (APAIE) which was recently held in Beijing China. Joining this event gave a chance for IIS to build the academic network and education collaboration as well as to promote IIS-RU concerning its course offering and program of study to all interested participants.

It can be concluded that Ramkhamhaeng University emphasizes intensive English language and its activities is more likely to prepare students to participate in communities responsibilities.

### Princess of Naradhiwas University

Apparently, internationalisation is not yet the priority of this young university since it is more concerned “to respond to the local people’s desires for education” (Princess of Naradhiwas University, 2009) and hopes to develop the local economy. They went on to mention in their website that they can “service the education to neighboring countries,” which implies that they are eyeing for a participation and preparation for internationalisation. Evidently, the website displays activities such as their English Language Development Project (Princess of Naradhiwas University, 2015).

Noticeably, the website can also be read in four languages such as Thai, English, Arabic and Malay as the flags of these countries are used as icons to choose from by the website visitor.

Evidently, they show efforts to be in the circulation of internationalisation: PNU holds activities outside Thailand such as English camps in Malaysia; PNU acted as a collaborated-host with UUM under the name of “Lifelong Learning International Conference”; PNU send a scholar, of which all these are collaborated with the universities in Malaysia (Princess of Naradhiwas University, 2009).

Other than these mentioned above, there are not much updates on internationalisation based on the information indicated on all the webpages of their website.

Princess of Naradhiwas University holds activities outside Thailand to prepare students with English language countries and adapt well with foreign culture.

### **Bangkok University**

Bangkok University (BU) is the oldest and largest private university in Thailand. Located in the central business district of Bangkok, the university expanded its operation to Rangsit campus in Pathumthani province to accommodate its rapid growth (Wikipedia, 2015). The website informs that this university is a non-profit private university which is working as a center of knowledge to develop modern graduates with knowledge and practical skills to serve the country in the future (BU Overview, 2013). The webpage goes on to claim that “the university has made use of modern technology in teaching, as well as integrated new and appropriate theories and practices in courses so that students can benefit and apply them in their work. All these technologies, teaching media and capabilities of both Thai and foreign faculty make the University an institution of education of academic excellence and all the knowledge from various branches of research.” This goes to show that internationalisation of the university as a response to the demands of globalisation is very strong in this institution.

Bangkok University emphasizes modern technologies in teaching, also develops knowledge and practical skills to all students from many countries.

### **Payap University**

Payap University (PYU) established in 1974, is a private institution founded by the Church of Christ in Thailand. Payap is a founding member of the Association of Private Higher Education

Institutions in Thailand, and an active member of the Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia, as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning. Moreover, Payap's achievements were recognized by the Royal Thai Government in 1984 when it became the first fully accredited private university in Thailand. Since then the university has continued to progress, expanding facilities to accommodate the steady growth in the student body, investing in the continuing education and training of the faculty through university support of graduate education in the US and in other countries, and adding a wide range of international programs to attract students from across Southeast Asia and from other areas of the world (Wikipedia, 2015). The university offers undergraduate courses as well as graduate courses. Evidently, the university has traces of internationalisation. When one opens its website, it readily opens in with English pages. Interestingly, the website offers a very clear description of the university's internationalisation strategies.

Payap Universities was recognized as steady growth in education and adopted internationalization strategies for their vision and mission.

## Conclusion

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Remarkably, these universities, with the exception of Princes Naradhiwas University, have invested in putting up nice buildings and facilities such as computer centres, libraries, legal assistance for visa runs, ebooks, elibraries, admission application online and the like. These efforts entail a huge sum of budget but surely, these universities see profit monetarily and in producing quality and competitive graduates. Since this research based its analysis on what the websites reveal about its internationalisation strategies, there was not much indication of the challenges met by administrators and stakeholders in effecting changes to respond to the demands of globalisation and so with any indication on the instrument in monitoring the benefits and profits of the changes in the universities due to the internationalisation process.

It can be concluded that Ramkhamhaeng University emphasizes intensive English language and its activities is more likely to prepare students to participate in communities responsibilities. Princess of Naradhiwas University holds activities outside Thailand to prepare students with English language countries and adapt well with foreign culture. Bangkok University emphasizes modern technologies in teaching, also develops knowledge and practical skills to all students from many countries. Payap Universities was recognized as steady growth in education and adopt internationalization strategies for their vision and mission.

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