Human Capital Development for ASEAN Community

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Abstract—The main purpose of this research paper was to study the requirements for human capital development in order to be ready for ASEAN Community. Thai education institutions are encountering a challenging course of change to be effective members of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015. It was vital that everyone and every organization participate in the process of becoming part of the ASEAN community, a pluralistic society. Thai universities will be required to partake in the human capital development in a variety of fields. In order to assist the whole nation to enhance potential development, there was a need to collaborate with other ASEAN leading universities to do researches to ameliorate the qualifications and capabilities of university management, administers, professors, and staffs.

Keywords—ASEAN, Education, Human capital development.

I. INTRODUCTION

ASEAN Community comprises three main pillars: ASEAN political and Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and ASEAN Socio-Culture Community (ASCC). One of the important goals of ASEAN community is to successfully form a single entity from the 10 member countries by the year 2015. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affair [1], the ASEAN blue print consists of four processes. First is to become a single large market and production base. Second is to increase their potentials in competing. Third is to develop their economy with equity. Fourth is to become integrated with the world market. There is a great hope that ASEAN will be a strong and influential enough to have power to negotiation on the world stage. However, there are many factors that ASEAN members need to prepare for in order to achieve their goals.

Human capital development is the process to enhance the potential labor force in terms of knowledge and skills. In order to achieve better performance, the latest Thai education ACT requires a professional development for all lecturers and professors. High quality of university would result in high quality graduates. Low quality universities often lack budget, and therefore have low qualification professors and staff, and insufficient technology and learning materials. The Thai Higher Education Committee [2] provides three important policies: 1) Both professors and staff must be able to work with full potential, 2) both professors and staff must be able to work with security and safety, and 3) both professors and staff must receive sufficient training to be able to provide a

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quality teaching system.

Thai education institutions are encountering a challenging course of change in order to be an essential member of AEC in 2015. Therefore, it is imperative to prepare organizations and their employees to be ready for the ASEAN community. This research paper was aimed to study the human capital development for the ASEAN community.

The objectives of the research paper were to study human capital development in order to be ready for ASEAN community and to suggest a guideline of how to enhance human capital development.

II. LITERATURE REVIEWS

The Association of Southeast Asians Nations (ASEAN) was preceded by the Association of Asia (ASA). The ASA was established on August 8, 1967 and was signed by foreign ministers of five countries-Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. This was known as the Bangkok Declaration. Brunei Darussalam became the sixth member on January 8, 1984 after gaining independence. Vietnam became the seventh member on July 28, 1995. Then, Laos and Myanmar joined two years later in 1997. Finally Cambodia, after an internal political struggle, joined on April 30, 1999. Therefore, there are 10 members of ASEAN. In 2007, ASEAN celebrated her 40th anniversary since its inception. Besides trying to improve member economies, ASEAN has also focused on peace and stability in the region.

The fourth meeting of ASEAN held in 1992 emphasized the need to hasten the development of the region's identity and solidarity, and to promote human resource development by strengthening the existing leading universities and higher education institutions. Finally, the meeting created a charter for the ASEAN university network; the main focus was to promote human resource development.

Human Capital Development can be divided into two subtopics which are the principles of human resource development and the concept of professional development and advancement. Nowadays, modern organizations view their employees as an important assets whose current value can be measured and future value can be ameliorated by effective training. High quality employees can accelerate the organization performance. Therefore, the success of the organization is the success of the human capital development. Prunprasert and Noppakun [3] stated that workforce planning and development is needed to be done across organization. Key skills and competencies are needed to be identified and the gap filled within organization. In their view, the workforce planning and development comprised three parts: 1) job

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requirements performed by employees who have certain skills and these skills need to be developed 2) important activities in the organization need to be done by employees who have special skills and these skills need to be acquired. 3) Integrate the needs of both the organization and employees into a common goal.

Since educational employees are working for modern organization, they also need professional development and an advancement system. The concept of professional development can be classified into three views. The first view focuses on the meaning on professional development. There are three meanings of this view: 1) professional development means the way to enhance employees' ability to work in terms of knowledge, performance, skill, and attitude 2) professional development means the creative way to enhance an employees' ability to perform his specific task 3) professional development means the process that supports employee to be able to increase their ability, knowledge, performance, skill, and attitude.

Thanapongthorn [4] stated that there are two main concepts of human resource development. Traditional concept does not focus on the human resource development. It is unnecessary for any organization to provide any training. Employees need to improve their skill, knowledge, and attitude by themselves and with their own expenses. The organization often focuses on recruiting the best possible employee. On the other hand, the modern concept focuses on the process or activities that can maximize the ability of employees. It must be a regular process of investment in the enhancement of the ability, knowledge, and skill of their employees. There are two supporting ideas. First, there is a need to regularly improve the employee's knowledge, skill, and ability. Otherwise, employee cannot be promoted to a higher position. Second, without regular training and developing, an employee's skill or knowledge will become obsolete. The important idea concurred with Charoenwongsak [5] who suggested that there is constant change in regards to knowledge, technology, and management techniques. Therefore, it is essential for any organization to keep their employee sharp at all times.

The second view focuses on the training. There are also three meanings of this view: 1) training means the process for employees to learn and increase their specific skill for their particular task 2) training means the process for an employee to learn and change their behavior in the direction defined by the organization 3) training means the process for employees to learn and expand their knowledge and use their new knowledge to effectively increase their performance. The third view, however, is the combination of first view and second view.

Wongsalee [6] explained that human capital development is the way to enhance knowledge, capability, and attitude towards job assignment to achieve an organization's goals. Heiderman [7] provided the meaning of educational professional development as the process to enhance an employee's knowledge, skill, and attitude to be able to be creative in pedagogy. In this view, the process of educational professional development consists of five processes: 1) assess the need for professional development 2) design the strategic plan for professional development 3) implement the professional development plan 4) evaluate the performance, and 5) provide participant empowerment.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research paper utilized the qualitative method. The data were collected by in-depth interviews and small group discussions. All the interviews had been conducted by the researcher. The informants could be classified into three main groups. The first group consisted of 6 persons who held the positions of university management such as Head of Department, Head of Program, and Head of Curriculum. The second group consisted of 12 persons who were lecturers, professors, and staff. The third group consisted of 12 undergraduate students.

The in-depth interview process was conducted by these steps. First, study all available documents, news, and research papers on the topic of ASEAN. Second, design the research tools and prepare interview questions. Third, conduct the in-depth interview. Fourth, do the data analysis. The research tool was designed to elicit information from the target groups. The interview question sheet consisted of two parts. The first part was about the demographic of the interviewees. The second part consisted of three different versions. The first version was designed to elicit information from the first group who were the management level of educational institutions. The questions focused on the policies and direction of Thai education towards ASEAN. The second version was designed to elicit information from the second group who were lectures, professors, and staff of universities. The questions focused on the pedagogy, professional development, and human resource development in higher educational institutions. The third version was designed to elicit information from the third group who were undergraduate students. The questions focused on learning process, human resource development, and cooperation between students and university in moving towards ASEAN.

The information from in-depth interviews was analyzed by using ground theory and symbolic interaction to find a common set of symbols and understanding, then using the interpretative phenomenological analysis to structure the essence of experience. Theoretical coding was utilized which the researcher attempted to apply to the data.

IV. FINDINGS

The findings revealed that the essential factors influencing the development of higher education towards ASEAN were the factors of understanding, the factor of personal potentials, factor of standard quality, and the factor of free opening education. In terms of factor of understanding, it was important to create awareness to Thai citizens that the ASEAN community will be a pluralist society. In terms of factor of personal potentials, it was important to enhance the knowledge and skill of all levels of university employees. In terms of the factor of standard quality, it was important to accept the

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competency standard of ASEAN. In terms of free opening education, it was important to cooperate and crate a network of ASEAN member countries and be ready for the free movement of students and labor force across the borders of ASEAN member countries. After analyzing the information thoroughly, it was disclosed that there was the need for improvement in three big areas. First, there was a need to improve the holistic body of knowledge or to increase the knowledge of being ASEAN and increase the knowledge to fit with the future job demands in ASEAN community. Second, there was a need to enhance the lecturers, professors, and staff of the higher education institutions to keep up with the new ASEAN standard. Third, there was a need to share information and to cooperate with the leading universities from ASEAN member countries.

V. DISCUSSION

From the above findings, the researcher had found the need to enhance the potentials of higher education administers, management, lectures and professors, so that the students would be ready for the ASEAN community in 2015. With this need, the first and foremost issue was knowledge management. It should be considered as a priority. All the participants in the in-depth interview and group discussions agreed that there was a need to prepare everyone, especially the ones in higher education institutions to be aware of the coming of the full establishment of ASEAN community. Then, then there was a need to formulate education policies in accordance with the future demand and supply issues of the ASEAN community.

The second important issue was to create professionalism and enhance the development of lecturers, professors, and staff to be up to the new ASEAN standard. There must be a constant training and encouragement of employees to pursue self-advancement. The third important issue was the collaboration between other leading ASEAN universities to create innovative learning processes and innovative research by signing the mutual of understanding (MOU) and make it active and productive. Important education policies must be formulated and disseminated among the higher education institutions. Education is an important mechanism to change attitudes to be optimistic within the bright peaceful ASEAN community. The focus of producing students for a domestic job demand will be obsolete. Therefore, the new and appropriate focus should be producing and preparing students for the ASEAN job demands. The goal should not be focus on an individual national identity but to focus on the ASEAN identity and to become an ASEAN population. The sustainable development and improvement of higher education will be the key to assist the whole nation in moving toward an ASEAN common vision.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

Policy suggestions from this research paper included five important areas. First, the budget of the education policy toward ASEAN community needs to be allocated with a sufficient amount for scholarship, exchange students, and exchange professors. There should be a center library of ASEAN information and information communication technology system. Second, an educational framework should be created coupled with the national education policy to prepare Thai education to compatible with the standard of the ASEAN community. Collaboration among ASEAN countries is vital in many areas such as to enhance the standard of education of the ASEAN members, expand education opportunities for ASEAN member citizens, and increase the participation of education management among ASEAN members.

Third, it is important to create a policy of understanding and appreciating the differences in terms of race, ethnic, religion, languages and so forth. For example, promote the learning of neighbor languages as well as encouraging the learning of English. Fourth, it is important to recruit and develop higher education institutions' personnel and staff. The world is in the stage of changing and changing constantly. Therefore, everyone needs to adapt themselves to change. Finally, it is important to create a policy that prepares the management of higher education institutions to understand the change and be able to lead the education system towards the ASEAN standard.

VII. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The future research in this area should focus more on the overall education policy of ASEAN member countries and the impacts of ASEAN in 2015 to the education in each member of ASEAN community. The interesting topics may include the qualification of higher education institutions' administrators, management, lecturers and professors that needed to be researched in both a qualitative and quantitative method. There should be more research on knowledge management and development for ASEAN employees.

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