

## **“Moderate Class, More Knowledge” Vocational Subjects in Primary School Curriculum in Thailand**

---

Chaveewan Charoensap<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

This research focuses on the attitudes and opinions of administrators, teachers, parents and students on the vocational subjects in primary school curriculum in Thailand after educational reform 1992 and the Thai government policy ‘Moderate Class More Knowledge’ since 2015. Special emphasis is on curriculum and the teaching-learning process regarding vocational subjects in primary schools in Thailand.

As per the post-1992 curriculum, the teachers have to train the pupils to carry out skill-based activities using the new methods and techniques in the teaching-learning process. It consists of Work-oriented Experiences ; this deals with general practical work experiences and basic knowledge for career preparation and starts from grade 1. And it consists of Special Experience ; dealing with activities based on learners’ interests provided for those in grades 5-6. Each school can organize learning activities according to learners’ needs and interests. The vocational training aims to make the Thai children better equipped to face the rapid changing realities of life today in the AEC (ASEAN Economic Community). The nature of teaching and learning activities in schools is conditioned by the needs of the local communities by which the people can apply the acquired knowledge and basic skills

---

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Graduate Studies, Phitsanulok University, Thailand

to improve their quality of life and their community. These courses have made the learning process more enjoyable as well as more socially useful. The educational reforms of 1992 made certain parts of the curriculum, including general subjects, compulsory for all schools in the country. With regard to the optional subjects, it was realized the each province and each district had different needs. The school education committee consists of school teachers, school administrators, parents and community leaders whom design the optional subjects which are suited for their areas.

Research results found more than 90% of administrator, teachers, parents and students agree with the Thai government policy 'Moderate Class More Knowledge' on the vocational subjects in primary school curriculum in Thailand after educational reform. They know predominately skill- based subjects and good work habits and ability to work cooperatively with others. It is useful for the students' opportunities at AEC workforce in the future. And found that, most of the teachers as well as Thai students are still very weak in English. During Thailand has joined AEC thus not only vocational subjects are in need, but much fluency in the English language.

Suggestion, the problem can be allayed by improving English language training for all teachers and students. And the most important is that the teachers have to observe and let the students learn and tryout which vocational subject is the best for their skill and goals by themselves, what they would like to be in the future, and then they can plan for their career and continue to learn more in the higher vocational college.

**Keywords:** Moderate Class More Knowledge, Vocational Subjects, Primary school curriculum, AEC (ASEAN Economic Community)

## Introduction

As per the post-1992 curriculum, the teachers have to train the pupils to carry out skill-based activities using the new methods and techniques in the teaching-learning process. Work-oriented Experiences, dealing with general practical work experiences and basic knowledge for career preparation which start from grade 1. Special Experience, dealing with activities based on learners' interests provided for those in grades 5-6 only. Each school can organize learning activities according to learners' needs and interests. The total time allotment for primary curriculum is six academic years, with not less than 40 weeks for each academic year and not less than 25 hours or 75 periods per week. The time allotted for each period is 20 minutes. The total of the learning periods above 200

days or 1,000 hours. The area of special Experiences for grades 5 and 6 provided 200 hours extra times for activities based on learners' interests. The pupils have become the centre of the schooling process and have been motivated to express their idea about what they would like to study. The teachers supervise and advise them in these matters. The students have more skill-based activities in school and have become proficient in basic skills. The need of based skill and work oriented subjects offered in primary schools for basic knowledge and skills in work, good work habits and ability to work cooperatively with others.

The vocational aims to make the Thai children better equipped to face rapid changing realities of AEC today's life. The vocational skill which training at schools help the students to find gainful employment to the country's and AEC's welfare. The skill specialization system of learning is characterized by objective and specialized curriculum to help the learners develop vocational knowledge and skills by which they can work as entrepreneurs and paid workers. The nature of teaching and learning activities in schools is conditioned by the needs of the local communities by which the people can apply the acquired knowledge and basic skills to improve their quality of life and their community.

The curriculum to be followed by the primary schools in Thailand comprise of general subjects, mathematics, Thai language, English language, character development, work-oriented subjects, family veterinary etc. The way how to teach vocational subjects, the teachers use teaching – learning process by studying practice and visiting the working place such as visiting farm, faculty, and factory etc. Both of teachers and students enjoy teaching learning vocational subjects in the schools. The teachers are motivated and seeing the interest of the students to learn these subjects such as house work, cooking, farming, handicrafts, and so on.

For example, most of the schools in Thailand there are free mid-day meal for all students. Some schools have a farm then the students have to learn and have duty for take care of the animal in the farm, also plant some vegetables for mid-day food, if there are too much then might sell for buy the other food for them. The teacher might supervise the students and cooking food for mid-day meal along with them. The practical and application of basic skills close interaction between industry and education as also between media and education has made schooling job-oriented and interesting for the students. Knowledge of basic skills is an asset which not only helps students in finding employment but also enables them to help their families in household work.

Autonomy provided to the local authorities to formulate and implement basic skill courses relevant to local conditions has facilitated their process. Such a curriculum encourages parents to send their wards to school as it holds promise

of a better future for them. Incentives like provision of free books, stationery, bicycles and offer material and mid-day meal programmers also encourage poor parents economically to send children to school instead of engaging them in domestic or other types of jobs. Both students and their parents are highly covers in school. These courses have made the learning process more enjoyable as well as more socially useful.

Regarding educational management in school, the principal and vice-principal have been empowered to make decisions on providing education according to the pupils' needs and requirements. They could manage their school activities, work plans, budget, and academic matters and so on.

With regard to the optional subjects, it was realized the each province and each district had different needs and the education reform operation, referred to as the "Moderate Class, More Knowledge" policy, the participating schools will have to find the balance between active and passive learning. The plan includes motivating students to want to learn on their own (independently), as well as encouraging them to learn vocational skills, which will be beneficial to them when they have to compete in a tough job market.

Therefore, a number of optional subjects were introduced, which were predominately skill-based. The school education committee consisting of school teachers, school administrators, parents and community leaders designed the optional subjects which were suited for their areas. This benefited the students, as the teaching process became more child- centered rather than teacher centered. The student will learn any vocational subject for predominately skill-based subjects which are good for their future. They come to know themselves, what they would like to be in the future, and then they can plan for their career and continue to learn more in the higher vocational college. With the guidance and support from leaders, including policymakers, planners and administrators in the education system, students who graduate are ready to enter the workforce and be employed in the ASEAN community.

## **Motivation**

The guidance and support from leaders, including policymakers, planners and administrators in the education system, students who graduate ready to enter the workforce is employed in the ASEAN community.

## **Approach**

The seminars on government policies “Moderate Class, More Knowledge” in the preparation of elementary school students’ basic skills, vocational curriculum labor - employment in the ASEAN - was held in Phichit Primary Educational Service Area Office 1. The officials, planners and administrators, teachers and parents were in attendance. Data distribution and query analysis was performed.

## **Objective**

To study the attitudes and opinions of administrators, teachers, parents and students on the vocational subjects in primary school curriculum in Thailand after educational reform 1992 and the Thai government policy ‘Moderate Class, More Knowledge’ since 2015.

## **Methodology**

### **Population and samples**

The sample population corrected from all population of 234 people consisted of administrators (39 people), teachers (117 people) parents (39 people) and students’ come along with their parents (39 people) after they were attendance the seminars on the Thai government policy ‘Moderate Class More Knowledge’ at Phichit Primary Educational Service Area Office 1 in May 2015.

### **Variable**

The variables consisted of basic variable and the variables research are as follows:

1. Basic Variables related to the personal status of the respondents.
2. Research variable in terms of Management “Moderate Class, More Knowledge” Vocational Subjects in Primary School Curriculum in Thailand.

### **Instruments**

The researcher has set a questionnaire as a data collection tool consisting of 3 parts as follows:

**Part 1** is a general questionnaire of the respondents. This is a checklist of 5 questions about 1) Sex 2) Age 3) Educations 4) Experiences in

primary school 5) Roles in schools such as administrator, teacher, parent and student.

**Part 2** is a questionnaire about the operating conditions in policy management, reducing time to learn but increasing time for practice vocational skill followed Thai government policy “Moderate Class More Knowledge” and according to educational reform. How teachers train the pupils to carry out skill-based activities? Do they using the new methods and techniques in the teaching-learning process. It consists of Work-oriented Experiences ; this deals with general practical work experiences and basic knowledge for career. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items. The respondents were choosing agree or disagree.

**Part 3** is an open-ended question for respondents to comment and suggestions.

## **Procedures**

### **Creating research tools**

1. The researcher constructed a questionnaire, which was used as a research tool in the following steps.
2. Study and research on theory, texts, articles and related research then used the results to generate a questionnaire.
3. Analyze the consistency index between questions, and objectives, Item Objective Congruence Index (ICO) of 3 experts, and Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient (1951: 299).

### **Data collection action**

In this research, the researcher coordinated with the director (Mr.Pongchai Thaiwannasri) and the project manager’s government policies “Moderate Class, More Knowledge” (Mr.Piti Vitthayakan) of Phichit primary education office area 1 for cooperation, appointment and facilitator for the researcher and project collaborator. Collect data by used the questionnaire and interview in June, 2016. The researcher checks the completeness of the questionnaire and gathers information from the interview to analyze data.

### **Data analysis**

1. Analysis part 1 and part 2 of the questionnaire by Frequencies and Percentage.

2. The open-ended query analysis and gathers information from the interview as an analytics content analysis.

## Results

Research results found more than 90% of administrator, teachers, parents and students agree with the Thai government policy ‘Moderate Class More Knowledge’ on the vocational subjects in primary school curriculum in Thailand after educational reform. Most of them know and believed that predominately skill- based subjects and good work habits and ability to work cooperatively with others for the students. It is useful for the students’ opportunities at AEC workforce in the future. And also found most of the teachers as well as Thai students are still very weak in English. During Thailand has joined AEC thus not only vocational subjects are in need, but much fluency in the English language.

The research results with more details are in the tables as following: -

**Table 1:** This table shows the age of the respondents. (N=234)

| Age          | Administrators<br>(N=39) |              | Teachers<br>(N=117) |             | Parents<br>(N=39) |              | Students<br>(N=39) |              | Total<br>(N=234) |            |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|
|              | f                        | %            | f                   | %           | f                 | %            | f                  | %            | f                | %          |
| 7-16         | -                        | -            | -                   | -           | -                 | -            | 39                 | 16.67        | 39               | 16.67      |
| 17-26        | -                        | -            | 26                  | 11.11       | 8                 | 3.42         | -                  | -            | 34               | 14.53      |
| 27-36        | 2                        | 0.86         | 47                  | 20.09       | 13                | 5.56         | -                  | -            | 62               | 26.50      |
| 37+          | 37                       | 15.81        | 44                  | 18.80       | 18                | 7.69         | -                  | -            | 99               | 42.30      |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>39</b>                | <b>16.67</b> | <b>117</b>          | <b>50.0</b> | <b>39</b>         | <b>16.67</b> | <b>39</b>          | <b>16.67</b> | <b>234</b>       | <b>100</b> |

From the table 1 It shows the sample consists of 234 respondents ; half of them are 117 teachers (50%), another half of the respondents are 39 people (16.67%) each from administrator, parents and students. Most of the respondents (99 ; 42.30%) were 37 years old or more, and 62 (26.50%) of them were 27-36 years old. All the respondents from students were 7-16 years old.

**Table 2:** This table shows the Qualifications of the respondents by education level.

| Education Level | Administrators (N=39) |              | Teachers (N=117) |             | Parents (N=39) |              | Students (N=39) |              | Total (N=234) |            |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
|                 | f                     | %            | f                | %           | f              | %            | f               | %            | f             | %          |
| Primary school  | -                     | -            | -                | -           | 4              | 1.71         | 39              | 16.67        | 43            | 18.37      |
| High school     | -                     | -            | -                | -           | 21             | 8.98         | -               | -            | 21            | 8.98       |
| Bachelor degree | 21                    | 8.98         | 102              | 43.59       | 14             | 5.98         | -               | -            | 137           | 58.55      |
| Master degree+  | 18                    | 7.69         | 15               | 6.41        | -              | -            | -               | -            | 33            | 14.10      |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>39</b>             | <b>16.67</b> | <b>117</b>       | <b>50.0</b> | <b>39</b>      | <b>16.67</b> | <b>39</b>       | <b>16.67</b> | <b>234</b>    | <b>100</b> |

From table 2 ; all of the 234 respondents have been to school. There are 137 (58.55%) of the administrators and teachers completed bachelor's degree and 33 (14.10%) of them have master degree. Most of the parents (21 ; 8.98%) completed high school and some of them (14 ; 5.98%), have bachelor's degree, and very few of them (4 ; 1.71%) completed primary school level. All of respondents from the students (39 ; 16.67) still study in primary school.

**Table 3:** Shows the respondents of the years' experience in primary schools.

| Experience Year | Administrators (N=39) |              | Teachers (N=117) |             | Parents (N=39) |              | Students (N=39) |              | Total (N=234) |            |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
|                 | f                     | %            | f                | %           | f              | %            | f               | %            | f             | %          |
| 1-6             | -                     | -            | 22               | 9.40        | 18             | 7.69         | 39              | 16.67        | 79            | 33.76      |
| 7-12            | 7                     | 2.99         | 69               | 29.49       | 10             | 4.27         | -               | -            | 86            | 36.75      |
| 13-18           | 16                    | 6.84         | 16               | 6.84        | 9              | 3.85         | -               | -            | 41            | 17.52      |
| 19+             | 16                    | 6.84         | 10               | 4.27        | 2              | 0.86         | -               | -            | 28            | 11.97      |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>39</b>             | <b>16.67</b> | <b>117</b>       | <b>50.0</b> | <b>39</b>      | <b>16.67</b> | <b>39</b>       | <b>16.67</b> | <b>234</b>    | <b>100</b> |

From table 3 ; those with the most experiences in the schools (19 or more years) are 28 (11.97%) of respondents from 16 (6.84%) administrators, 10 (4.27%) teachers, and only 2 (0.85%) parents. There are 86 (36.75%) of respondents with 7-12 years' experience, 41 (17.52%) of respondents with 13-18 years' experience, and 79 (33.76%) of respondents with 1-6 years' experience from teachers, parents and all students, but none from administrator.



**Table 4:** Shows agreement numbers' attitudes and opinions of administrators and teachers on the vocational subjects in the primary school curriculum in Thailand

| Summary of questions and interviews   | Administrators<br>(N=39) |              | Teachers<br>(N=117) |              | Total<br>(N=156) |              |
|---|--------------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
|   | f                        | %            | f                   | %            | f                | %            |
| 1. Vocational subjects in the primary school curriculum after Educational Reform 1992 until now was useful for students.  | 39                       | 100          | 117                 | 100          | 156              | 100          |
| 2. The vocational subjects in primary school provided basic skills and knowledge needed to get a job in the community after they finished their studies.  | 37                       | 94.87        | 102                 | 87.18        | 139              | 89.10        |
| 3. The vocational subjects in primary school helped the students to get a good job in the AEC.  | 37                       | 94.87        | 102                 | 87.18        | 139              | 89.10        |
| 4. The vocational subjects in primary school helped the students to prepare future generations for a productive life with the core skills to continue learning.   | 39                       | 100          | 117                 | 100          | 156              | 100          |
| 5. The vocational subjects in primary school helped the students come to know themselves and which career would be good for their future ; or which capacity they are best at....   | 37                       | 94.87        | 117                 | 100          | 154              | 98.72        |
| 6. Thai Educational policy 'Moderate Class More Knowledge' is the best. The students should know how to earn knowledge which they are interested in by themselves.  | 30                       | 76.92        | 110                 | 94.02        | 140              | 89.74        |
| 7. The government should provide a high salary for the administrators and teachers in order to do good jobs.  | 39                       | 100          | 117                 | 100          | 156              | 100          |
| 8. The government should provide enough budget money for all vocational subjects' activities which are needed by the students and their community.  | 39                       | 100          | 117                 | 100          | 156              | 100          |
| 9. The government should support accommodations for the teachers so as to be comfortable at school. Then they would be more likely to continue working in the same school.  | 39                       | 100          | 117                 | 100          | 156              | 100          |
| 10. All administrators and teachers should know the English language better ; and have a change to practice English language by traveling to a different country where they can use English language directly and gain experience, and be able to use English language in and for daily life. | 30                       | 76.92        | 112                 | 95.73        | 142              | 91.03        |
| <b>Average</b>  | <b>37</b>                | <b>93.85</b> | <b>113</b>          | <b>96.41</b> | <b>149</b>       | <b>95.77</b> |

The table 4 show more than 95 percent (149) of the opinions’ administrators and teachers agree with the vocational subjects in primary school curriculum in Thailand after the education reform operation, referred to as the “Moderate Class, More Knowledge” policy since 2015. According to both administrators and teachers have a very important role to play in implementing it. They are of the opinion that the vocational subjects in primary school curriculum helps students develop their basic skills to a large extent. And that the students have basic skills and knowledge needs to take up jobs after they finish their studies. However some of them expressed the view that this curriculum helps the students develop their basic skills to only a limited extent. Quality of vocational training and skills development in primary education is important in order to prepare future generations for their productive lives with the core skills to continue learning.

The survey also shows most (90%) of the administrators and the teachers comment and require that the government should provide high salary for the administrators and teachers in order to do a good job. The government should provide enough budget money for all vocational subjects’ activities which is needed by the students and their community. The government should support accommodations for the teachers to be comfortable at school, so as to then give more cause to continue to work in the same school. All administrators and teachers should have a chance to practice English language by traveling to a different country where they can use and experience the English language ; where they can experience the language in real life, not just in a classroom.

From the interview it became known that all of the respondents were interested in good quality of education, in a vocational skill base and in organizing learning activities according to learners’ needs and interests at the school.

**Table 5:** This shows the attitudes and opinions of the parents and the students on the vocational subjects in primary school curriculum in Thailand.

| Summary of questions and interviews   | Parents (N=39) |       | Students (N=39) |       | Total (N=78) |       |
|---|----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|--------------|-------|
|   | f              | %     | f               | %     | f            | %     |
| 1. The vocational subjects are useful for the students.                                     | 39             | 100   | 39              | 100   | 78           | 100   |
| 2. The school provides basic skills and knowledge needs for the students and the community. | 37             | 94.87 | 37              | 94.87 | 74           | 94.87 |
| 3. The vocational subjects will help the students to get good job opportunities in the AEC. | 30             | 76.92 | 28              | 71.80 | 58           | 69.23 |

| Summary of questions and interviews   | Parents<br>(N=39) |              | Students<br>(N=39) |              | Total<br>(N=78) |              |
|---|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
|   | f                 | %            | f                  | %            | f               | %            |
| 4. The vocational subjects helped the students to prepare to continue learning vocational skill in the high level as well.  | 39                | 100          | 39                 | 100          | 78              | 100          |
| 5. The vocational subjects helped the students come to know themselves and which career will be good for their future or at which capacity they are best at....   | 39                | 100          | 34                 | 87.18        | 73              | 93.59        |
| 6. Both parents and students are happy with Thai Educational policy 'Moderate Class More Knowledge' because students know how to earn knowledge which they are interested in by themselves ; and have more times to help their parents at home. | 39                | 100          | 30                 | 76.92        | 69              | 88.46        |
| 7. The school should offer more vocational subjects for the students' needs.  | 39                | 100          | 39                 | 100          | 78              | 100          |
| 8. The school should provide free equipment for all vocational subjects' activities.  | 39                | 100          | 39                 | 100          | 78              | 100          |
| 9. The school should support the teachers or specialist programs for vocational subjects.   | 39                | 100          | 39                 | 100          | 78              | 100          |
| 10. The school should provide a foreign teacher for English language ; then the students will be happy and more interested in studying and having the ability to use the English language in their daily life.                                  | 39                | 100          | 39                 | 100          | 78              | 100          |
| <b>Average</b>  | <b>38</b>         | <b>97.18</b> | <b>36</b>          | <b>93.08</b> | <b>74</b>       | <b>94.61</b> |

Table 5 shows that more than 94 percent (74) of the parents and students agree with all the detail in the above questions and interviews. Only some are not so sure about or do not agree with the statement/question - such as No.3 question, that the vocational subjects will help get the students a good job opportunities in AEC. Because they don't understand and cannot speak English, they felt it would be difficult to work with the AEC. Otherwise they have no problem ; they like and agree that vocational skill in Primary school is useful for both parents and students.

## Conclusion

The teachers and administrators agree that the Education Reform and the Thai Government Policy 'Moderate Class, More Knowledge' since 2015 special emphasis is on curriculum and the teaching-learning process regarding vocational subjects in primary schools in Thailand. It is useful for the student and their career in the future in AEC.

As per the post-1992 curriculum, the teachers have to train the pupils to carry out skill-based activities using the new methods and techniques in the teaching-learning process. It consists of Work-oriented Experiences ; this deals with general practical work experiences and basic knowledge for career preparation and starts from grade 1. And it consists of Special Experience ; dealing with activities based on learners' interests provided for those in grades 5-6 only. Each school can organize learning activities according to learners' needs and interests. The vocational training aims to make the Thai children better equipped to face the rapid changing realities of life today in the AEC. The nature of teaching and learning activities in schools is conditioned by the needs of the local communities by which the people can apply the acquired knowledge and basic skills to improve their quality of life and their community. These courses have made the learning process more enjoyable as well as more socially useful. The educational reforms of 1992 made certain parts of the curriculum, including general subjects, compulsory for all schools in the country. With regard to the optional subjects, it was realized the each province and each district had different needs. The school education committee consists of school teachers, school administrators, parents and community leaders whom design the optional subjects which are suited for their areas.

Research results found the most of the teachers and students enjoy the new process 'Moderate Class More Knowledge' of teaching – learning vocational skills and practice learning sessions. But most of the teachers as well as Thai students are still very weak in English. During Thailand has joined AEC thus not only vocational subjects are in need, but much fluency in the English language.

## Suggestion

Many of the above problems can be allayed by an increase in the Thai educational budget, improving salaries, English language training for all teachers and letting them use English language in the school daily life. Most important is that the teachers have to observe and let the students learn and tryout which vocational subject is the best for their skill and goals by themselves.

## Reference

- Bee, H. et al. (1995). *Developing child*. New York. Harper Collins College Publishers.
- Blenkin, G. and Kelly, V. (1998). *The concept of development curriculum, in Janet Moyles and Linda Hardgreaves (Eds.), The primary curriculum: learning from international perspectives*. New York: London.

- Cronbach, L.J. (1951) "Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests." *Psychometrika*. 16 (3), 297-334.
- Karuna, A. (1968). *Social background of woman under-graduates of delhi university*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Delhi, Delhi.
- Karuna, C. (Ed.). (1988). *Socialisation, education and women: Explorations in gender identity*. New Delhi: Orient Longman. .
- Netikamjorn, W. & Gershon, J. (2015). "*Moderate Class, More Knowledge*" *scheme unveiled nationwide*. Bangkok, Thailand: National News Bureau & Public Relations.
- Thailand Government. (1998). *Education in Thailand*. (pp. 9-11). Bangkok, Thailand: Office of the National Education Commission: Office of the Prime Minister Kingdom of Thailand.
- Thailand Government. (1999). *Education for all: The year 2000 assessment*. Bangkok, Thailand: Ministry of Education.
- Thailand Government. (2010). *Thailand development indicators 2000-2009*. Bangkok, Thailand: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board.
- Thailand Government. (2003). *Education in Thailand 2002/2003*. Office of the National Education Commission Office of the Prime Minister in Cooperation with Ministry of Education and Ministry of University Affairs Kingdom of Thailand. Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing.
- Thailand Government. (2012). *Summary of the population plan during the 11<sup>th</sup> national economic and social development plan (2012-2016)*. (pp.1-22). Bangkok, Thailand: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board Office of the Prime Minister of Thailand.

