



EDUCATION IN AUSTRIA AND THAILAND

A analytical comparison about the differences
and similarities in both education systems

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Introduction

Education is an important indicator on how successful countries can behave and operate against others. Education helps people broaden their spectrum of knowledge, hold their own mind and reason and avoids societal embarrassment. Furthermore, educated people are able to argue against the illogical, keep up with evolutions and adapt new techniques for higher productivity.

As I have the pleasure to participate in the education system of Austria and Thailand I want to compare both of them and find the differences and similarities by analysing significant economic indicators in both countries.

Overview education system in Austria

The Austrian public school system is free of any fees and pupils in Austria have to be in the education system for at least nine years. Austria is well known for the range of different vocational schools. The can be attended between one to five years and should prepare students for university or work life. Furthermore, our education system is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary education¹

The Austrian education system provides a lot of opportunities for children from the age of zero to six, especially when both of the parents, which is often the case, are working. Very young children from zero to six can stay at nurseries and young children from three to six stay in kindergarten. Furthermore, it is possible that children can obtain preschool for one year at the age of five. Moreover, in rural areas there are a lot of parents how take care of a small group of children, especially when the next nursery or kindergarten is too far away.²

Pupils in Austria have to stay in the education system from the age of six to fifteen. At first they have to attend primary school for four years. All the pupils in Austria attend primary school no matter of their abilities. Afterwards, we have a few opportunities to choose when finishing with primary school. At the age of ten we can either choose junior high school, new middle school or higher general secondary school. High school has the lowest and higher general secondary school the highest standard education. These school types last for another four years.

¹ <http://www.abc.berufsbildendeschulen.at/> (2016, October 12)

² <http://www.migration.gv.at/en/living-and-working-in-austria/children-and-education/educational-systems/> (2016, October 30)

When Austrian pupils finished the four years they can either stay in higher general secondary school or go to a certain vocational school. After another four years in higher general or five years in a vocational school they finish school with the A-levels which enables them to study at a university. There exist a lot of different types of vocational schools in Austria, which all have a very good recommendation and are appreciated by companies very well. Pupils can choose from different specialisations in vocational school. Technical studies and humanities are available just like business and housekeeping. However, pupils in Austria have the possibility to attend nearly every kind of specialisation in vocational school.

When attending university students can choose out of a range of different options. Moreover, the government provides the university for free and also promotes students who wants to study abroad. However, in last decade the quality of the Austrian university suffered, because of declining amount of money the government provides for university improvement.

Overview education system in Thailand

The Thai education system can be divided into primary-, middle-, secondary-, vocational- and tertiary education. Education is provided by the Thai ministry of education. Furthermore, the government provides a free basic education for twelve years which is guaranteed by constitution. Moreover, the Thai government announced fifteen years of free basic education in 2009.

In primary education the Thai children are going two to three years to kindergarten. Afterwards they join primary school for 6 years. Thai students wear mandatory school uniforms from kindergarten to university, which is very different to Austria, because we do not have school uniform at all.

After finishing primary school Thai pupils join middle school for three years in which they can choose out of a range of different core subjects:³

- Social science
- Physics
- technology
- Foreign languages

³ [http://www.classbase.com/countries/Thailand/Education-System \(2016](http://www.classbase.com/countries/Thailand/Education-System (2016), October 23)

Within secondary education Thai pupils who want to continue their academic career attend high school where they can choose out of a range of free electives. English programmes, science and maths and social sciences should prepare for university. However, they also have the opportunity to attend the vocational education system.⁴

The vocational education system is implemented in high school, which is very similar to the Austrian system. Pupils who favour a more practical system usually intend to take vocational schools. In vocational education they get a vocational diploma, but furthermore a higher diploma which enables them to go to university.⁵

The tertiary education system offers private and public universities which are regulated by the Thai government. Altogether there are 170 higher institutions which offer higher education. However, Thailand experienced a shortfall in the number of new students. The most recognized and broadly known universities are Thammasat University, Chulalongkorn University, Kasetsart University and Mahidol University. In comparison to Austria there is a difference in the minimum time needed for completing the university degrees. Pupils in Austria need at least three years for their bachelor and two years for their master. However, in Thailand the minimum time for the bachelor is four years and for the master one to two years.⁶

Analytical comparison

Education spending in percent of GDP

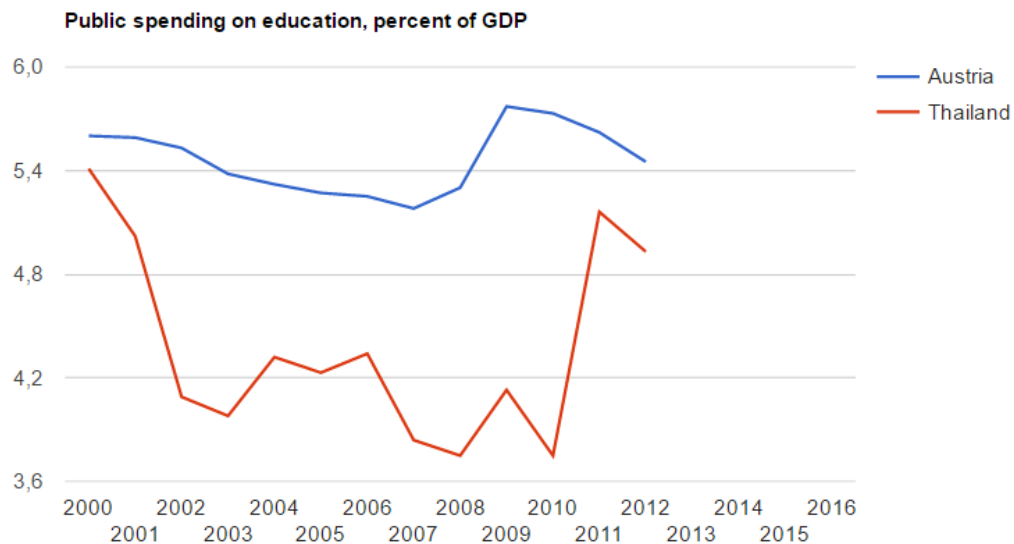
As we obviously see from this graph, the public spending on education in percent of GDP decreased notably in Austria and Thailand from the year 2000 to 2008. In case of Austria we consider an overall increase in the year 2009, but since then the public spending on education began to downturn slightly again. In Thailand there was a strong upward trend from 2010 to the beginning of 2012. However, the percentage of public spending on education has continued to fall again in 2012. In the same year Austria and Thailand experiencing a downward trend.⁷

⁴ <http://wenr.wes.org/2014/03/education-in-thailand> (2016, October 23)

⁵ <https://www.justlanded.com/english/Thailand/Thailand-Guide/Education/Introduction> (2016, October 12)

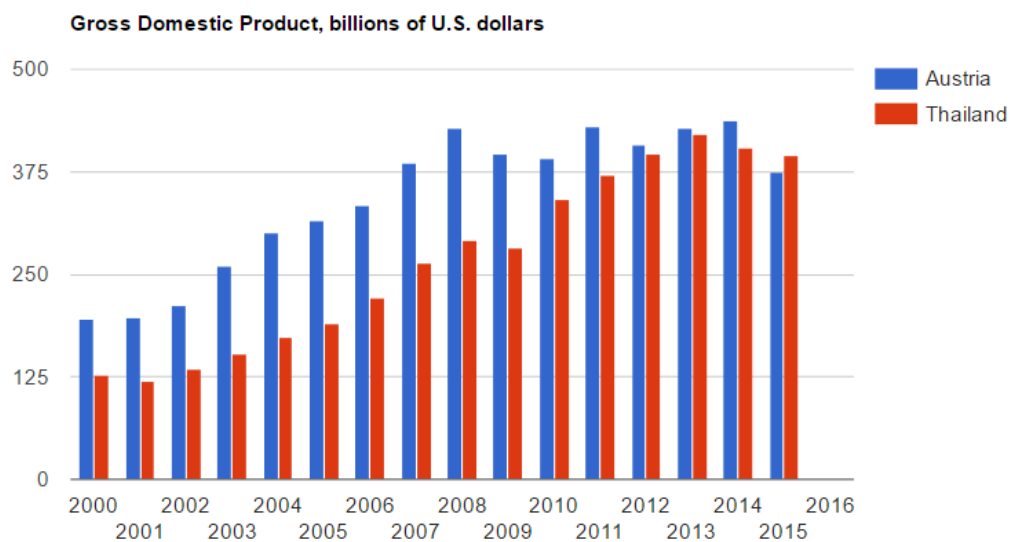
⁶ https://www.oead.at/welcome_to_austria/education_research/the_austrian_education_system/EN/ (2016, October 26)

⁷ <http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/compare-countries/> (2016, October 22)



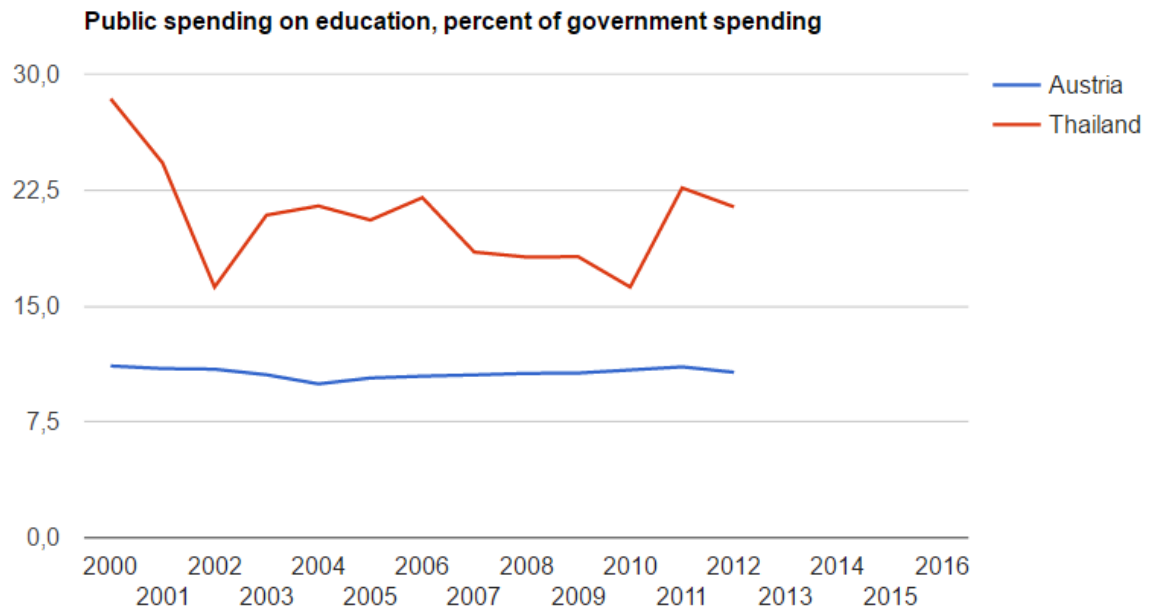
Measure: percent
Source: TheGlobalEconomy.com, UNESCO

When we compare the public spending on education in percent of GDP and the GDP growth rate we can clearly see, that the two numbers go along with each other. A high level of Public spending on education in percent of total government spending is an interesting indicator on how much countries value education of their people.



Measure: billion U.S. dollars
Source: TheGlobalEconomy.com, The World Bank

Education spending in percent of government spending



Furthermore, it also shows how much they want to take responsibility for the improvement of their education system. As we can clearly see in this graph, the public spending on education in percent of government spending in Austria stayed stable since the year. Moreover, there is no tendency that the amount of spending will go up.

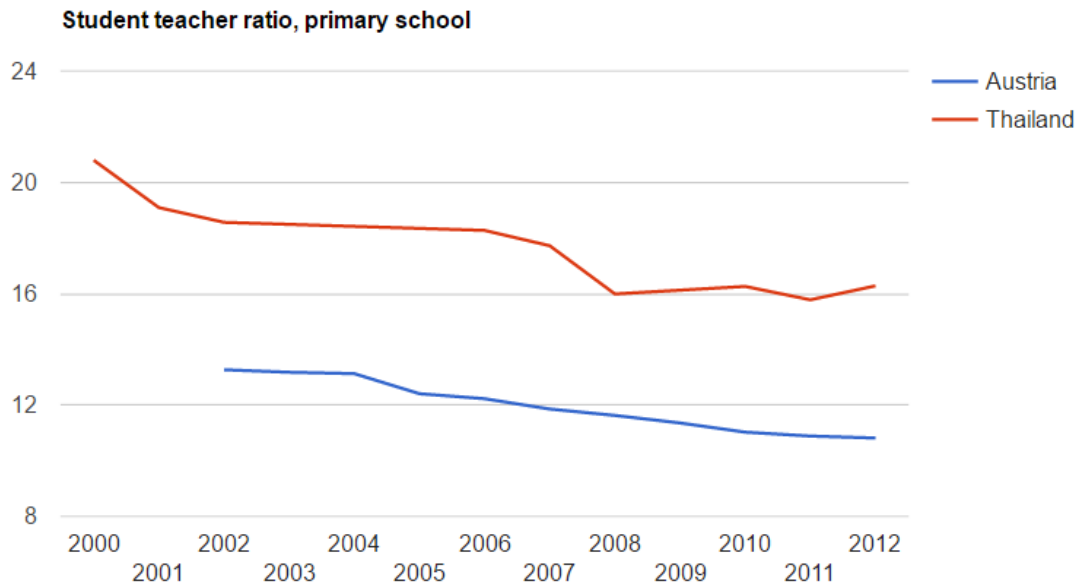
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When we take a look at the situation in Thailand we experience a volatile public spending on education in percent of government spending. However, there was a decline in public spending on education which can be interpreted either as the cause or the result for the shortfall in Thai pupils who study at universities.

Student teacher ratio in primary school

The student teacher ratio in primary school is the average number of pupils per teacher in which a low number is considered to be a desirable one, because the pupils get more attention.

⁸ <http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/compare-countries/> (2016, October 18)



The graph clearly indicates a downward trend in both countries from the year 2000 to 2011. Moreover, the downward tendency of the student teacher ratio in primary in Austria seems to continue, while Thailand experience an upward trend in 2011. Both countries should be aware of the fact that the student teacher ratio in primary school is, according to the world bank, a very important indicator for a stable growth path. ⁹

Conclusion

To sum up, the education systems in Austria and Thailand have remarkable differences. Especially the school uniforms are at the first view very different to Austria. Nevertheless, both education systems are organized in primary-, secondary- and tertiary- education. However, the pupils in both countries attend them at a different age but the system is very similar.

With the analytical comparison of the government spending on education in percent of GDP and government and the student teacher ratio in primary school I wanted to set up a comparison of the most interesting indicators in education. The greatest differences could have been experienced in government spending on education in percent of GDP and the least differences in student teacher ratio in primary school.

⁹ <http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/compare-countries/> (2016, October 26)

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