

EE463 GLOBALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Evaluating Thai Educational Policies by using PISA scores in 2012, 2015 and 2018

Group 6

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A very good analysis on the Thai educational system. Overview is well-written. The key issues could be better summarized.

The lessons learned and conclusion sections could be strengthened by making sure that

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the content flows directly from the issues and govt policy strategies, therefore ensure consistency

Overviews

~~First~~ Thai education development was ^{the} established in 1871 when King Rama the V issued the Command Declaration on Schooling, representing the starting point of formal education in Siam. Formerly in Thai educational system, ^B Buddhist monks were obligated to provide education which resulted in inadequate curriculum where education was merely limited in —male members—royal families and nobilities in the palace. The reformation of the educational system started again in 1887 when the king established a formal department of education in charge of all over the kingdom schools administration. And later this department transformed into the ministry of education in 1892. ✓

Educational system in Thailand can be divided into two parts which are formal and informal education. Classroom is the indicator to separate the formality of education. Children who study in classrooms where compulsory education is enforced were considered as an *formal education* otherwise—in community libraries, museums or any special telegram would be considered as *Informal education*. The compulsory courses once allocated in the 4-3-3-2 system (First four years in lower primary school followed by three year of upper primary school and three years in lower secondary school following with the last two years in upper secondary school). However, with this system, the majority of thai people —mostly in rural areas— cannot approach it due to the complexity and too many levels of classes. Later in 1977, the system was changed into 6-3-3 system with more simplicity and was used until today to guarantee that every Thai citizen can have the minimum level of education. This system consists of basic education for every thai student to accomplish and higher education for voluntary attainment. Basic education started from early childhood or kindergarten for three years followed by six years in elementary school and another six years in secondary schools. Students can subdivide their own path during the last three years of secondary whether they will study in general or vocational education. The annual school year divides into two semesters with two mid-year long holidays where first semester conduct during May up until October and second semester in November to March.

Thai educational system has been known for the fundamental failure in multiple decades. In this report, we will investigate the main cause of issues by focusing only on two inputs of education, the core curriculum and teacher's classification. We also evaluate the related educational policy implemented during the last ten year by means of PISA score (mentioned next). After all, we summarized the lesson learned from implemented policy and concluded the finding of this study at the end. The scope of this study will be focused within the year of 2010 and 2020 for the availability of data.

Evaluation national performance through PISA

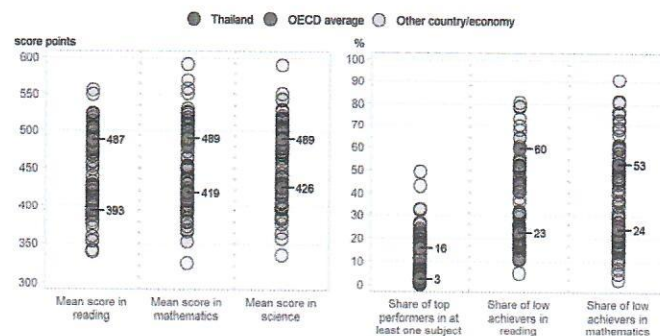
good overview of the background

good transition sentence to link with the following section

Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) is a programme under Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) where it is used to measure 15-year-olds' knowledge including reading, mathematics, science and skills of facing the real-life. The PISA can be the mechanism in order to evaluate students all over the world in comparison and can be interpreted on how the results of each country has received. PISA categorizes scores into seven levels from lowest to highest; 1b, 1a, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

According to the latest PISA results from 2018, Thailand in comparison to worldwide students results are below the OECD average in reading, mathematics and science. In reading, 40 percent of Thai students achieved at least level 2 proficiency in reading with the OECD average of 77 percent. In mathematics, 47 percent of students receive level 2 or higher this means students are able to understand how a situation can be represented mathematically. In science, 50 percent of students in Thailand received a level 2 or higher can be interpreted as students can gain and identify the correct explanation for familiar scientific phenomena in simple cases where the OECD average is at 78 percent. In conclusion, Thailand was at average level 2 in proficiency and was below OECD average in three categories of knowledge. There were about 34.6 percent of students that showed low performances or achieved level 2 or below. In terms of good performances of students that are able to achieve level 5 or 6, only 2.7 percent of Thai students were able to achieve at least one subject. Overall, Thailand's PISA 2018 exam ranking in comparison to other countries was 68th out of 79 PISA-participating countries and economies.

In the diagram below you can see the trend of Thailand's students' trend in performance for reading, mathematics and science. You can see by the graph in all three knowledge categories Thailand has always been below the OECDs average. In science and mathematics the PISA scored in Thailand has quite remained constant. Whereas,, in reading the reading performance in PISA 2018 dropped significantly ever since PISA 2012. The declining performance trend is quite concerning as currently the COVID-19 virus has impacted the studies. This trend could set expectations of more decline in the future because of the delays of the school system during the pandemic.



good use of graph

Key issues

Thai education system

Human resources is one of the most valuable resources needed for the nation to develop in the long term. However, there are many factors that pull Thailand back from going forward to a better future. For the past 20 years, education in Thailand has been developing at the same time with globalization but still not reach the same quality throughout the nation. Thailand also has a huge gap between Thai education system effectiveness to the developed country such as Singapore which is also in the Southeast Asia region (measured by PISA score).

First factor that affects the development of Thai education system is the curriculum. The basic education core curriculum is where all Thai citizens have to complete this from Grade 1-12. The goal of the basic core curriculum is the aim of full development of the students in all aspects - morality, wisdom, happiness and potentiality for further education and livelihood. This curriculum is prescribed in eight learning areas: Thai language, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, religion and culture, Art, Occupations and technology and lastly foreign language. These elements are just basic things that every student should receive from the school equally. The point is, how effective the curriculum is for Thai students.

Correspondingly, the government has to measure and evaluate the equality and standard quality of the basic education core curriculum that students have been learning by providing the mandatory examination to grade 6, grade 9, and grade 12 which is called O-NET (Ordinary National Educational Test) administered annually by Public Organization, NIETS (National Institute of Education Testing Service). According to the O-NET results in the 2014-2017, the test results did not come out as well as they should be. The main subjects that will be taken into account are Thai language, English language, Mathematics and Science. Thai students have been forced to focus on mathematics and science a lot in school but these two subjects got very low mean scores which is approximately 30 over 100 from three grades. It is indifferent from this results in other subjects but a little bit higher. So it can be concluded from the examination results of the national educational test that this curriculum has not reached the standard of good education quality. These results are gathered from all participants over the nation. Therefore the standard deviation is very high (the max and the min is very high) which can imply that there is an inequality among the schools in each region.

The inequality is clearly illustrated by the O-NET score report with the Thailand map from the NIETS website and the results are the same from every grade and year of examination. Scores are divided into three ranges: High, medium and low range. The only

province that is in the high score range is Bangkok, the low range is from the northeast region and the rest are in the medium range score. Although every student has to study the same basic education core curriculum, there is still a high gap in standard quality of education between students in Bangkok and other regions.

Rather than focus on the system, most people have been focused on useless rules and regulations. Review of the experience that all Thai students found out during their studies could be the student must underline here with this colour of pen, this kind of socks is not allowed in the school so they have to pay a new one at the school store, or remember this prayer and in next one hour will have an oral exam. This miscellaneous has been told for quite a long period that it should be improved in Thai education. It should not be focused anymore and should pay attention more to the curriculum.

Moreover, there is corruption in the Thai system. In the case of Thailand, the government allocates a huge amount of budget for education but in the end, we have seen a slow improvement or no improvement in the system. The spending was around 4% of the GDP, which is 20% of the public authority financial plan however it ranks at the bottom for quality of education which can be said that it does not improve at all. So, some questions will come up in your mind about where the rest of the budget will go if not on education then where since no one has seen any development.

Quality of teacher

Teachers are another important factor contributing to the education system. Their jobs are absolutely linked to the education system. The education system consists of several positions and the teachers are the one who is closest with the students. They not only teach the students the lesson in the class but also teach the students the life lesson. Some of them can even be the students' role model. Therefore, the teachers have a large impact on the future of students. So, if the teacher has unpleasant qualities, the student is affected.

In Thailand, there are many problems with the teacher that could impact on the quality of the education system that leads to the problem of unqualified students and then can lead to the substandard labors in the economic system. The problems of the teachers are as follows. The information from the legislative act of teacher salary in the year 2021 states that the beginning teacher salary is 15,050 baht. When comparing with other occupations salaries and the cost of living, the Thai teacher salary is considered to be very low. Compared to other countries that have a good progress in the education system, for example, Finland, being a teacher in Thailand, he or she had to face a low paying job. Due to the too low income and the fact that some of the teachers lack in morality, only teaching for money, leads to the lower attractiveness in this occupation and the lack of the incentive in doing their best. Moreover, some teachers are indebted because of the low income, hence

they even concentrate more on their lives than teaching. Consequently, this makes the quality of the lesson lesser than it should be.

Some of the teachers do not try to adjust themselves with the changing situation of the world. There are remaining inefficient old habits, for example, not allowing new innovations which are able to support the studying of the student such that they do not let the students replace a paper with an ipad for studying. Another old habit is some teachers use an assault to punish the students. Thairath, a Thai news station, specifies that violence only provides a bad result such as a stress disorder in students, which can affect the brain development. Continuously, there will be a riskiness that the problems of students' behaviors, learnings, physical health and mental health may occur. In conclusion, violence is not an efficient tool in order to teach students. ✓

Mismatch between the supply and demand is also the problem. The basic education of students is required. This implies that the demand for studying is inelastic. On the other hand, due to the low income or other reasons which lower people's incentive to become teachers, there is less supply of teachers. Economically, when supply is less than demand, it will cause the shortage of supply. In other words, there will not be enough teachers to teach all students in all subjects in every school. The insufficient number of teachers forces one teacher to teach many subjects. Thus, that particular teacher may not well understand a subject he or she is teaching. Then teaching mistakes can happen, and this will affect the quality of the education system.

In order to let one be teachers in the school, Thailand has very low standards in recruiting teachers and that caused the problem. Some news that can confirm this statement are as follows. From KomChadLuek (2017), Thai online newspaper, the TOEIC requirement for applying the Producing Teachers for Local Development project is 400 points that is very low, but still was demanded to reduce the criterion to 250 points. Thankfully, this request is not approved. However, the 400 TOEIC points seems to be a low standard for recruiting teachers. Also, based on the local news in Thailand, some of the schools recruit the teacher without checking their teacher licenses. These will cause the problem of teachers being unprepared to teach a particular subject and the lack of reliability. Therefore, the quality of teachers would be lower and then leads to the dropping in the quality of the students accordingly.

According to the article from the Thailand Office of the Higher Education Commission, overall teachers in Thailand do not have sufficient technique and method to teach the students, teachers themselves lack the skills in researching and also not able to measure students' potential properly. Furthermore, the data from Mathichon and Line Today, Thailand's news site, indicates that teachers have too many responsibilities and majority of them are non-education related, for example, they are required to do paperwork for their

The issues seen is quite a shortage.

teaching performance evaluation. In consequence, the teachers are not able to be fully prepared for their teachings, causing the students to not receive the teaching as well as they should.

In conclusion, Thai teachers have problems in both quantity and quality sides. A lacking number of teachers is mainly due to the low income of the teacher occupation. Also, this leads to the problem of mismatch between the supply and demand. The poor quality of teachers can be caused by the old habits they could not let go. In addition, the standards in recruiting teachers are very low which continuously cause problems to student learning.

Government strategies, policies and legislations

In order to solve a problem, the government came up with the solution. We will provide 2 examples of solutions that used to be implemented by the government. These solutions were implemented to intentionally solve the problems mentioned in the previous part which are the problems of the curriculum side and the teacher side. In order to determine the result, we will use PISA as our indicator, so we can see the effectiveness of a policy. Furthermore, since the PISA test is conducted every 3 years and our paper studies the time period of 2010-2020, hence we will use the PISA of the year 2012, 2015 and 2018 in order to compare the results.

Policy related to curriculum

In 2012, Thailand introduced a policy for curriculums, it was to induce more technology into the students education system. The objective was for students to be able to get more usage of technologies and help organize lesson plans more easily. They did this by giving 850,000 tablets to Grade 1 students where students had to return them every once a year.

As this policy was in 2012, looking at the PISA 2012 and 2015 in order to compare the effectiveness of the year before it was implemented and three years after. Scores in all three categories had decreased largely. We can interpret this policy as one of the factors that did not have effectiveness on influencing how the performance student came out. There is not any policy implementation after 2015 so far. As a result, we can conclude that there is no development on the curriculum side despite policies to improve.

Policy related to teacher's quality

The dominant government's 2017 basic education policies on the teacher side that is able to solve the problem of education in Thailand that we choose are, first, the Teacher assessment and second, the changes in the DLTV program.

Teacher assessment is a policy that the students must evaluate their teachers of every subject at the end of every semester. Since the students are the ones who are closest

to the teachers, then we are able to reflect the teachers' performance by looking at the students' responses. If the teacher's scores are not well, they will be organized by the government. Teacher assessment will encourage the teachers to improve themselves, devote themselves in teaching and teach more effectively.

DLTV or 'Distance Learning Television', originally, is the government policy to teach in a host room, which is Wang Klai Kang Won School, and do the live broadcast on DLTV channels on television. There are 15 DLTV's channels on air 24 hours a day, which are distributed to two parts which are first, from 8:30 AM to 14:30 PM. It is the lesson for students from Grade 1 to Grade 12 and the other part is the after hours classes. Since Thailand still has a lot of educational disparities such that some children in the countryside have difficulty in traveling and some schools have to face the challenge of a lack of teachers, this policy can help to mitigate the problem of the shortage of teachers and the problem of students located remotely.

For this new DLTV there will be a change of the data content in the program schedule from the content for Grade 1 to Grade 12 to only Grade 1 to Grade 9 since the students during this age require more support. The broadcast system has been changed from Standard Definition (SD) to High Definition (HD), a renovation of the signal station and host classroom, a development of teaching materials to be up to date, a replacement of live broadcasting by recording and an addition of broadcast channels.

Since both policies were implemented in 2017, we will compare Thailand's PISA between 2015 and 2018 to see whether these policies are effective or not.

The data from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment stated that in 2015, Thailand's mean PISA score is 409 in Reading, 415 in Mathematics and 421 in Science. However, in 2018, Thailand got 393 in Reading, 419 in Mathematics and 426 in Science. We can see that Thailand's performance does not improve so much in Mathematics and Science, even worse in Reading. So we can conclude that these policies are still not effective.

Lesson learned

Policies that supported the curriculum have been implemented by giving out tablets and more technology supplies to improve the quality of materials and convenience in learning for students. This policy failed as it is proved from the reduction in PISA score but it has yet not fully failed. Having technology inclined in the system is great as it does meet the objective. However, the government should focus on the curriculum as well as the style of teaching which was mainly to memorize lectures for an exam, not learning by doing. We suggest that the government provide interactive learning especially during middle school. This could help students' brains develop faster and absorb more information, resulting in more understanding of studies and lead to a higher test score in the long term. ✓

Another examination that will evaluate the quality of the curriculum from all students in Thailand that study in the basic education core curriculum which is O-NET. The overall outcome did not come as well as the ministry expected to have. There is still a large gap in the quality of education between the capital city Bangkok and the rest of Thailand especially the northeast region. The curriculum was not suitable for every region and the teachers were insufficient for every school particularly the neighborhood school. Moreover, the teacher's standard of quality did not match with the curriculum. Therefore, the consequences are the students that study in the well organized school will have a higher possibility to create better value in the future while the other areas are not yet well supported. Accordingly, the nation has to decrease the discrimination among schools. Not only the basic facilities that the student should get, but the environment around the education area must support them as well as the quality of teachers must follow the development of the education system. For all those reasons, it could elevate Thailand's education system to match up with the world's standard.

For teacher quality policies, The DLTV can really approach the teachings to more students, but the students who do not have a television are not able to watch the live broadcast. This policy can be improved by providing the devices. Although the teacher assessment can induce teachers to raise their quality, some teachers who are not up to standard can still continue teaching due to the lack of teachers. Therefore, even though this policy is effective in increasing the quality of teachers, it should consider raising the penalties for teachers to be more appropriate to improve this policy.

Lessons m:

- matching supply & demand?
- gaps between Bangkok & provinces?
- corruption?

Conclusion

Thai educational system is not outstanding in the world stage looking at the recent PISA score in 2012, 2015, and 2018. Out of 79, Thai was ranked after the sixties and only got level 2. The reason lies in the system itself—for this study, we only focus on core curriculum and teacher classification.

Curriculum is ineffective, causing a lack of ability for Thai students. Results from the national test contrast on how students were manipulated to focus on Math and Science over other subjects. Variations of scores widely prevailed to all over the kingdom which vigorously demonstrate educational inequality between rural and urban students. It has been agreed that Thai educational system focuses on everything instead of student learning. ✓

Quality of Thai teachers is also substandard. Starting from insecure recruitment, the problem of unauthorized teachers can be found in any school. Even for the certified teachers, the qualifications do not reach the benchmark as they should be. Average salary of teachers is scant leading to the problem of disincentivization and skill development. This also creates a shortage of teachers and puts too much work on a single teacher. Violence and punishment from teachers are still found in the system which further harm the student enhancement. Similar to curriculum issues, teachers focus on everything instead of teaching. ✓

After several policy implementations most of the problem remains in place. We can conclude that government actions toward the education system failed to address the issues. The causes may be caused by mistaken policy design indirectly to the point. Government centrally-planned policies may not suit the core of the problem in each area since we still see non-positive improvement in Thai education.

good conclusion. ps make sure
the conclusion flows from
previous discussion

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