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THE ROLE OF ASEAN STUDIES CENTRE IN THAI BUDDHIST UNIVERSITY TO DEVELOP RESEARCH SKILLS BASED ON BUDDHIST INTEGRATION

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this academic article was to propose the role of ASEAN Studies Centre in Thai Buddhist University to develop research skills based on Buddhist integration. Documentary study and field study were used for the design. Field note and interview were used for data collection, and data were analyzed by using content analysis and analytic induction. Results of the study indicated that ASEAN Studies Centre has conducted the project of ASEAN research clinic in order to develop research skills for lecturers and graduate students since 2016. The main reason of conducting this project was the natural of research reports of the university is mostly conducted by using qualitative research. The current problems in the society have changed and it is getting more complicated than the past. Therefore, to conduct only qualitative research is not sufficient for solving problem in the society. Three years of the project has developed research skills consisted of 1) research design using meta-ethnography and mixed methods research, 2) research analysis using analytic induction for qualitative data and Structural Equation Model (SEM) for quantitative research, 3) technique of development grounded theory into SEM and advanced research statistics, and 4) Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research (EDFR). There were 136 participants to attend the activities of the project, 58.82 percent was graduate students while 41.18 percent was lectures and academic staffs. All research has conducted by integrating Buddhist principles for one of research variables. Lectures and academic staff have been developed their skills and be able to develop the proposal to submit and request research fund from of the National Research Council of Thailand. Graduate students have been developed to conduct research by using mixed methods research and continue increasing the number of research reports that are able to publish at international publication.

KEYWORDS:
ASEAN Studies Centre, Thai Buddhist University, Research Skills, Buddhist Integration

INTRODUCTION

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is one of Thai Buddhist universities that providing the part of an education management section to develop people on an individual level to gain the knowledge in Buddhism, Ajara, and behaviors in accordance with the framework of 9 aspects of graduate development. The development of body of knowledge in Buddhism by using area studies, research work, and searching students from the country of origin, including the creation of network of individuals, universities, and Buddhist organizations driven by the Buddhist Universities are the important roles as the center of learning. In addition, the promotion of international Buddhist communities in various countries around the world due to educational management, establishing a university network, organization, and network meeting of Thai Buddhist Universities are the international human resource development which Thai Buddhist university plays the role as the center of human resource development entirely [1].

The encouragement of faculty staff and graduate students are very important and necessary in the development of new body of knowledge in the organization. Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University has set the 2nd strategy enhance research and knowledge development in order to increase international Buddhist research potential [2]. In practicing, in order to make the operations of development research strategies, it is necessary to organize related projects or activities to enhance in order to achieve the goals of the strategic plan of the university. In the teaching and learning process of graduate students, students need to do a thesis and dissertation which is an important part of every program including the development of a research framework based on current research issues, becoming more complex in order for the faculty to have the opportunity to develop the research potential to keep up with the changes in society which to conduct research effectively. The

faculty needs to develop additional knowledge of diverse and modern research methods in order to support both the role of the thesis advisor and the role of research development as part of the profession. It is also increasing the potential in the development of research proposals for funding from the National Research Organization of Thailand network under the coordination of the National Research Council of Thailand.

ASEAN Studies Centre, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is a center that established for providing academic services, knowledge related to ASEAN service and collaborate with departments of universities and other agencies in the ASEAN community and have a research, information and Academic Services division that has a duty to perform research promotion work in order to create knowledge and put it into practice, presenting a modern research plan, research management and monitoring including organizing information systems to be a source of information about the ASEAN Community. From the mission of the ASEAN Studies Centre and from the research strategic plan of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, the ASEAN Studies Center was interested in establishing a research clinic to develop the potential of faculty and students. In this project management, there are 2 target groups for development which are group 1 is faculty of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University both central and regional and group 2 is graduate students that are both Thai students and students from ASEAN countries. In the activity management process, emphasizing research design that is appropriate for the science of the program in which students are studying, and for faculty has focused on activities that suggest the development of research projects to request funding from both internal and external universities as well as organizing activities to develop the capacity of the faculty's thesis counseling in the event that the advising students are interested in designing modern research that is integrated together between qualitative and quantitative methods. This is to increase the potential of faculty and students in conducting Buddhist research and to upgrade the quality of research that belongs to Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University to be international level. Therefore, the purpose of this academic article was to propose the role of ASEAN Studies Centre in Thai Buddhist University to develop research skills based on Buddhist integration. There are four main targets of research strategic development that focused on ASEAN Research project. Results of project development were shown as the following topics.

RESEARCH CONTENTS FROM PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. Research Design using Meta-Ethnography and Mixed Methods Research

Meta-Ethnography. Meta-Ethnography can be seen in the article called "Research Synthesis: Emerging Trend in Buddhist Research Design for the Development of Organization [3]. Meta-ethnography was the appropriate research approach in Buddhist research design in order to develop new body of knowledge. Findings of this research synthesis which emerged from multiple cases had more vividly than from each case. Three major strategies were used for the synthesis methodology and were focused on creating metaphors. There were reciprocal translations, reputational syntheses, and lines-of-argument syntheses. There were seven steps of qualitative synthesis process in Meta-ethnography which consisted of identify research problem for the first step, and continued with second step by making decision for research selection. The third step was followed by reading and trying to understand all research papers. The fourth step was creating the conceptual framework of the correlation between each research paper and continued working on interpret, make connection and compare data for the fifth step. The sixth step was focused on the synthesis of interpretation. Lastly, summary and writing research report were used for the seventh step of conducting qualitative research synthesis by using Meta-ethnography.

Mixed Methods Research. There are four types of mixed methods research that applying in Buddhist research in the project that advised to the participants who attended the project of ASEAN studies Centre during year 2016-2019. These four types of Mixed Methods Research are shown as below figures [4]:

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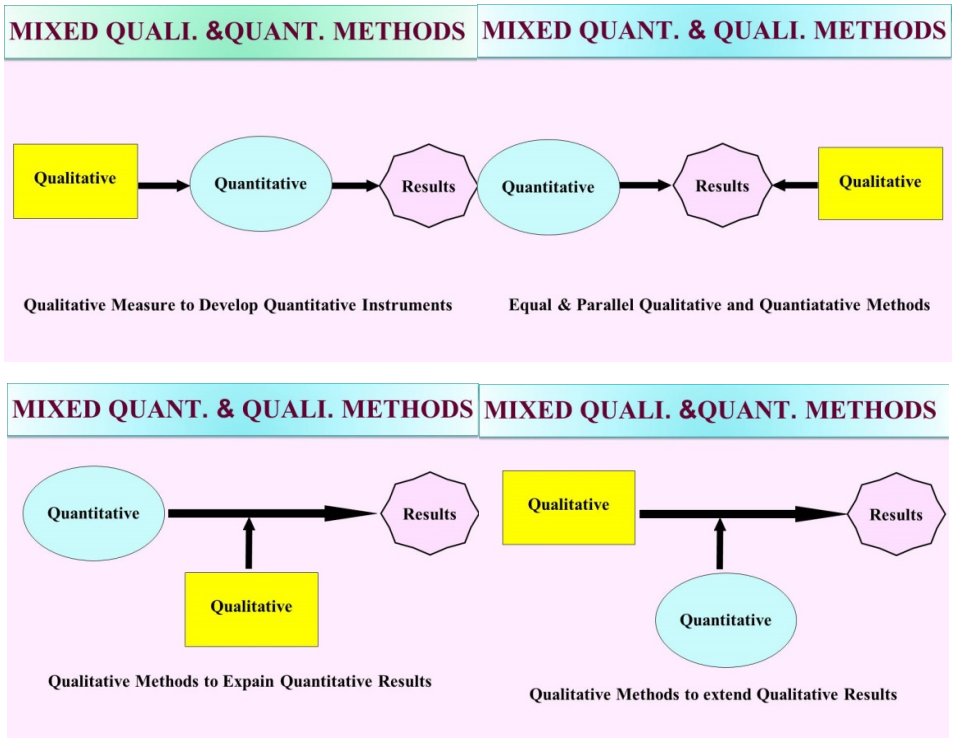

Fig. 1: Four types of Mixed Methods Research [4]

2. Research Analysis using Analytic Induction and Structural Equation Model (SEM)

2.1 Analytic Induction

Analytic induction is a research logic that used to collect data, develop analysis, and organize the presentation of research findings. Analytic Induction is qualitative data analysis that applied in the project in order to advise participants to practice and analyze qualitative data. Some example of using analytic induction to analyze and summarize that main concept that related to research question can be shown as below [5]:

Educational Research. The gap of educational problem should be implemented through classroom action research and religious principle. Results from qualitative data collection were shown as follows:

> *"In 2008, the Singapore has supported too much to do the research in educational section. In 2013, NIE is the organization that has trained the skilling and translation of educational system in Singapore. And set up the importance question concerning the research likes "How does it work in diversity school type?". It has a research ability to conduct and implement the educational system into the community. In 2018, NIE will focus on the impact of the research and set the model of research and implement it into the school such as the school practice. It will be the time to extension and implementation the research project. NIE is the institute that supported by the government of Singapore and National Research Fund of this country."*
>
> (Educator C1, **Interview,** 13 May 2016)

> "*NIE will scale up efforts to enhance the alignment between our research work and the pedagogical innovations and enhancements made in the schools. NIE researchers are encouraged to contribute proactively to schools in the Singapore system, particularly in building school capacities around areas that include developing new pedagogies, implementing experiential learning modes, and conducting practitioner inquiry. The end goal of such partnerships is to enhance student learning experiences in our school system."*

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(Educator C2, **Online Interview,** 20 May 2016)

"In Vietnam, it has to support the teacher to do the research except the main responsibility to teach, curriculum development. Teachers need to do research for helping student's learning. It has supported the new technological methods, new textbooks."
(Educator F1, **Interview,** 2 June 2016)

"The action research has mentioned in the educational system especially the master degree in education and teaching. Moreover, in school the teacher has forced to do the action research such as grade 1-3 the teacher has to do 1 action research per year and grade 4 to 12 the teacher has to do 2 action researches per years."
(Educator H2, **Interview,** 22 June 2016)

Fig. 2: Educational Research [5]

From Fig. 2 indicated that educational research will focus on the impact of the research by setting the model of the research. Action research is usually uses for conduct in the educational system and the end goal to enhance student learning. It is also being an alignment between the research work and the pedagogical innovations.

2.2 Structural Equation Model (SEM)

Statistical Analysis of Structural Equation Model (SEM) or Linear Structural Relationship (LISREL) is a newly developed analysis statistic by still being analytical statistics that use the same principles of analysis but with improvements by reducing the limitations and allow for more extensive data analysis. The SEM model was developed by Karl G. Joreskog in 1960. By integrating measurement models, it is based on component analysis principles and structural model that based on the principle of influence analysis with the parameter estimation method based on econometric principles. It can be said that the analysis of structural equation models is a newly developed advanced statistic (Kuhnel, 2001) concluded that learning about the analysis of structural equation models. Not only helps students to analyze data with many variables in research with theoretical support only, but learning about analyzing structural equation models. It is also helpful to help learners to learn the basic principles of all analytical statistics and have direct experience in understanding the role of statistical analysis in research. It can be seen that the statistical analysis of LISREL model has the potential to analyze the data as well as all kinds of statistical analysis [6]. The example of Structural Equation Model (SEM) analyzed using LISREL Program from the research entitled "An Instructional Model of ASEAN Cross Culture in CLMV Countries for Students in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University" was shown as below figure.

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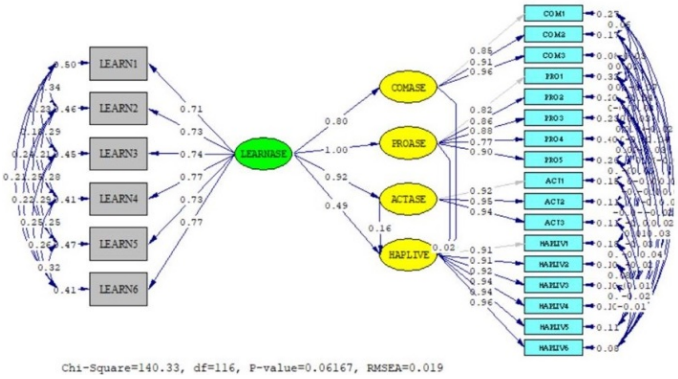

Fig.3: SEM Model that analyzed using LISREL Program [7]

2.3 Technique to Develop Grounded Theory into Structural Equation Model (SEM)

Technique to develop Grounded Theory into Structural Equation Model (SEM) has developed during conducting the project from year 2016-2019, and the step of this development is shown as below figure.

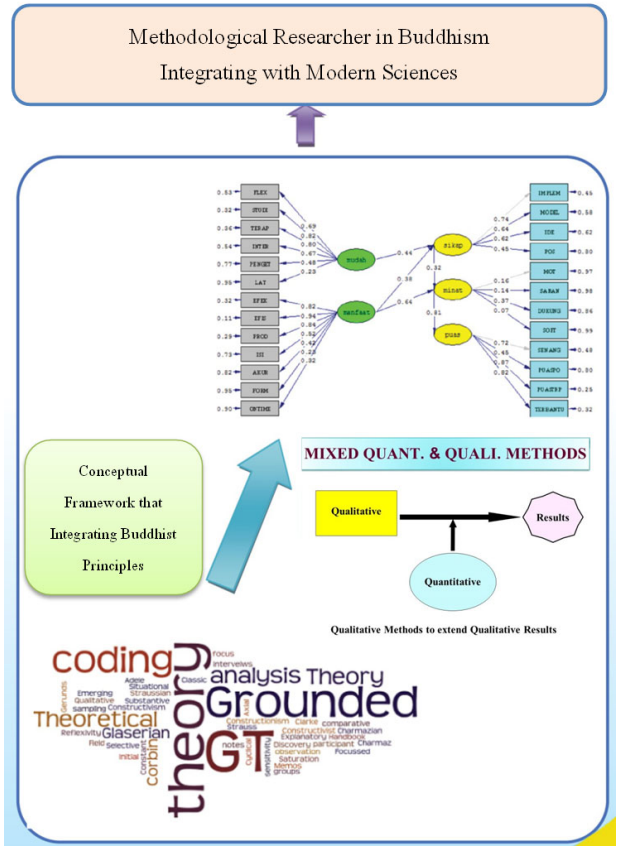

Fig. 4: Step of Grounded Theory into Structural Equation Model (SEM) [8]

From Fig. 4 showed that step of Grounded Theory into Structural Equation Model (SEM), it showed the process of development to be a methodological researcher in Buddhism. They should start from the ability to develop themselves to be a specialist from qualitative research methodology in order to develop grounded theory and continue to develop quantitative variables to conduct structural equation model (SEM). Then, they will be able

to analysis by using advanced statistical program to see the results of fit model. These researchers should be able to apply Mixed Methods Research to be the technique of research development.

2.4 Ethnographic Delphi Future Research (EDFR)

The example of EDFR research design of the research project entitled "trends of educational management for unity and peace of countries in ASEAN Community" [5]. Details of research design were shown as below:
Future Research using Ethnographic Delphi Future Research (EDFR) was designed in this research project and it has been developed by Poolpataracheewin, J. (1997, 2003) [9]- [10]. Seven steps will be used for the design.

Step 1 Setting the experts and identifying target groups. This is a step of identifying the target group of the study. The qualification items of the target group are also needed to specific as well. Then, researcher need to plan for in-depth interview, participatory research, observatory research, action research, and practical research.

Step 2 First round of Ethnographic Delphi Future Research (1st round of EDFR). For the first round of Ethnographic Delphi Future Research, semi-structured interview and called Non-Direction open ended was used for data collection for focusing on the scenario of the most probably events. Semi-structured Interview will be used for data collection for the first round and will use for interview experts. Experts have freedom of answering in order to analyze and synthesize for creating Delphi tool. The steps of creating and validation of research tool were as follow: 1) to study related research and literature in order to set the frame of create interview questions. 2) To set interview questions for data collection in field study. 3) To assess interview questions by experts in education field. Completed questions, appropriated questions, and clearly language will be assessed. 4) To try out by using questions to practice asking to the similar target groups in Thailand. 5) To adjust and update questions by reducing unclear questions after try out.

Step 3 Data Analysis and Synthesis. For the data collection from field study, there are three processes that will conduct simultaneously with data collection which are data reduction, data validation, and data analysis. The first process is data reduction which comes from field study. This data will be set into related topics and to interpret into interested variables. The second topic is data validation and it is the process of assess the correction and the reliability by considering the task from conversation and the sufficiency. The third process is data analysis, four steps of data analysis will be used in this process consisted of the first step is coding, the second step is basic analysis, to analysis the context of research variable, the third step is the analysis for answering research questions, and the fourth step is to validate and correct data including present results with figure. The steps of data analysis of qualitative data will be completed until researcher has enough information for answer research questions. Three methods are being used for data analysis which consisted of 1) content analysis for describing data, 2) typological and comparison analysis, and 3) analytic induction for conclusion that following the research objectives.

Step 4 Measurement Design for 2nd round of EDFR. Data from the interview the expert of the first round of EDFR was analyzed by using content analysis and used it for create questionnaires in Likert scale which showed the scale from 1-5 means the least to the most using number 1, 2, 3 ,4, and 5 respectively. Likert scale with rating scale was used to identify for creating closed questionnaires and covered all research questions.

Step 5 Second round of Ethnographic Delphi Future Research (2nd round of EDFR). Delphi conference was used for data collection for the second round of EDFR in order to assess results from the first round analysis. During a meeting will collect data by using questionnaires and return back results to the group. Then, researcher will request key informants to consider answers again which is about the education strategic plan and discussion within group is encouraged.

Step 6 Third round of Ethnographic Delphi Future Research (3nd round of EDFR). To identify the target groups of this study including the qualification of the target group, and then use computer Based Delphi for data collection. Data from the third round of EDFR was analyzed by using statistical analysis which consisted of median, mode, interquartile range, and to calculate the difference between the 1st quartile and 3rd quartile (Q3-Q1). The interquartile range of trends that shows equal or less than 1.50 will indicate that experts' opinion correlate to each other. However, if the interquartile range of trends shows greater than 1.50, it indicates that experts' opinion does not correlate to each other [11-[12]. Closed questionnaires with rating scale will be used for the third round and add one column for experts to give their opinions and to confirm previous opinion. However, if they would like to change into new opinion for relating to other experts, they can add in this column. The third round questionnaire is similar to the second round questionnaires. Researcher will show the median position and interquartile range of expert and the previous position of each expert about trend of each item. This will be the information for expert to use for decision making before complete the questionnaires. In

addition, one column for adding opinion in case of having different answer from group or the case having answer out of quartile range.

Step 7 Scenario Writing. The scenario writing is the step of analysis for the most probably trended and the correlation between expert groups including the desirable scenario. The criteria of scenario were set which showed the median equal to or greater than 3.5 and quartile range equal or less than 1.50 and summarize the final scenario of the research.

In summary, there are four aspects of research contents that conducted in ASEAN Research Clinic Project consisted of 1) research design using meta-ethnography and mixed methods research, 2) research analysis using analytic induction for qualitative data and Structural Equation Model (SEM) for quantitative research, 3) technique of development grounded theory into SEM and advanced research statistics, and 4) Ethnographic Delphi Futures Research (EDFR).

RESULTS OF PROJECT DEVLOPMENT

Results of the project indicated that there were 136 participants to attend the activities of the project, 58.82 percent was graduate students while 41.18 percent was lectures and academic staffs. All research has conducted by integrating Buddhist principles for one of research variables. Lectures and academic staff have been developed their skills and be able to develop the proposal to submit and request research fund from of the National Research Council of Thailand. Graduate students have been developed to conduct research by using mixed methods research and continue increasing the number of research reports that are able to publish at international publication. The overall opinion of the participants towards to the project was at high level ($\bar{x}$=4.25). There were 35 research and academic papers that attended to present at international conferences, and 2 papers was published in SCOPUS index and 4 papers were published in International Journal, and the rest of the papers were published at International Proceedings.

CONCLUSION

Three years of the project has developed research skills as the role of ASEAN Studies Centre in Thai Buddhist University that consisted of 1) research design using meta-ethnography and mixed methods research, 2) research analysis using analytic induction for qualitative data and Structural Equation Model (SEM) for quantitative research, 3) technique of development grounded theory into SEM and advanced research statistics, and 4) Ethnographic Delphi Future Research (EDFR). There were 136 participants to attend the activities of the project, 58.82 percent was graduate students while 41.18 percent was lectures and academic staffs. All research has conducted by integrating Buddhist principles for one of research variables. The high quality of research articles were accepted to publish at international level. Buddhist integration in this article can be defined into 2 methods: 1) to adjust the science of research methodology and modern science to Buddhism, which is to use Buddhism as the foundation and bring research methodology and modern science to explain Buddhism. This method is used knowledge in modern science and research methodology to explain Buddhism in modern age and can be easily accepted with reasonable, and 2) to adjust Buddhism to science by using research and modern science as a foundation and then add morality in Buddhism to the content of research and modern science in order to create a complete holistic view of religion and social world dimensions.

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