Approaches for Developing Rajabhat University for Local Development: A Case Study of the Rattanakosin Group and Central Regions

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Abstract

The research titled "Approaches for the Developing Rajabhat Universities for Local Development: A Case Study of the Rattanakosin and Central Regions" aimed to survey data related to the potential of Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin and Central regions for local development. The study sought to analyze key issues related to education management for local development according to the Rajabhat University Development Strategy for Local Development and to propose guidelines for the future development of Rajabhat Universities for local development.

The research methodology employed a mixed-methods approach in three phases, utilizing various research techniques, including document research, surveys, focus group discussions, and evaluations. The research instruments consisted of a survey questionnaire regarding the potential of universities for local development, conducted among the population of Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin and Central regions, which included 14 universities. The focus group discussions and self-assessment evaluations involved analyzing data through content analysis, frequency distribution, and percentage.

The potential of Rajabhat Universities for local development was classified based on the percentage of achievement of the 38 indicators, divided into four groups: 1) High potential, achieving criteria of 75% and above; 2) Moderate potential, achieving criteria of 50% to 74.9%; 3) Potential that should be further developed, achieving criteria of 25% to 49.9%; and 4) Need for significant development, achieving criteria below 25%.

Keywords: Local Development; Potential; Teacher College; Rajabhat University; Rattanakosin Group and Central Regions

Introduction

The training of teachers in Thailand commenced with the establishment of a teacher training school at a children's nursery in Saphan Dam, Samphanthawong district, Bangkok, on October 12, 1892, which is now known as Phra Nakorn Rajabhat University. The teacher training system underwent significant expansion over the years, with various agencies—such as the Office of the Basic Education Commission, the Office of Vocational Education Commission, and the Department of Physical Education—collaborating to enhance teacher training. In 1954, the Teacher Training Department was formed to unify and enhance the effectiveness of teacher development. This laid the foundation for educational opportunities across diverse localities. By 1960, the Ministry of Education elevated teacher training schools to "teacher colleges," leading to the establishment of 32 colleges offering advanced education certifications and bachelor's degree programs accredited by the Teacher Training Council. In 1975, the Teacher College Act was enacted, designating these colleges as educational and

research institutions mandated to produce bachelor-level teachers, which included a broader scope of graduates in science and liberal arts. (Kundalaputra, 1992: 55) By 1985, these teacher colleges were organized into university networks to improve administrative coordination, resulting in 36 colleges integrated into 8 collaborative universities. Each institution established research centers to enhance educational services. A significant milestone occurred on March 6, 1995, when King Bhumibol Adulyadej granted a royal seal to Rajabhat Institutions, leading to increased pride and commitment among staff to develop these institutions into higher education organizations focusing on local community development. (Boonchai et al., 2016: 19).

On April 20, 1997, additional Rajabhat Institutes were established to address regional educational needs, bringing the total number of such institutions to 41. The Rajabhat University Act of 2004 (2004: 3) represented a significant transition, redesignating these institutes as "Rajabhat Universities" and introducing new missions centered on local development. Following this, several transformations occurred, such as Nakhon Phanom Rajabhat University merging with Nakhon Phanom University and Suan Dusit Rajabhat University becoming Suan Dusit University. Operating under the Rajabhat University Act of 2004, each university can set specific regulations with council approval, emphasizing their role in local development and the enhancement of the nation's intellectual resources. Support from His Majesty King Vajiralongkorn has been directed towards these universities, focusing on quality teacher production and local development needs, resulting in a comprehensive 20-year development strategy (2017–2036) (2018 : 26) that prioritizes local, social, environmental, and educational improvements. This strategy revolves around four key areas: enhancing local economies and societies, producing competent graduates, elevating educational quality through knowledge integration and innovation, and creating effective management systems for national and international recognition. In fiscal year 2018, the strategy was implemented without specific government funding for local development. A pilot study conducted by the Office of the Education Council evaluated this strategy's implementation across selected Rajabhat Universities using a mixed-methods approach. Findings indicated that while one university demonstrated high potential for local development, others showed moderate capability. The study highlighted that the strategy allowed universities to align with royal directives, suggesting more funding for local development in fiscal year 2019, although challenges remained in terms of funding and effective implementation.

Based on the results of this pilot study, it is recommended that Rajabhat Universities adjust their operational plans to align with the new strategy. It is also proposed that the Office of the Education Council support the expansion of efforts to monitor and evaluate the roles and performance according to the new strategy for the fiscal year 2019 for 14 Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin Group and Central Region. Additionally, research should be conducted to develop proposals for the development of Rajabhat Universities aimed at local development. The fiscal year 2019 is designated as the first year that Rajabhat Universities have received funding specifically for local development, which is the basis for the research on the development pathways for Rajabhat Universities for local development according to the 20-year development strategy for Rajabhat Universities (2017 - 2036) (2018 : 26).

Research Objectives

        1. To survey information related to the potential of Rajabhat Universities for local development.

        2. To study and analyze key issues related to education management for local development according to the 20-year strategy for Rajabhat Universities for local development.

        3. To propose guidelines for the development of Rajabhat Universities for local development.

Research Methodology

        The research will employ a mixed-methods approach in three phases, with details outlined as follows: **Phase 1: Surveying Information Related to the Potential of Rajabhat Universities for Local Development:** The purpose of Phase 1 research was to gather data regarding the potential of Rajabhat Universities for local development. Data were collected from 14 Rajabhat Universities in the Rattanakosin and Central region to study their potential based on 38 indicators for Rajabhat Universities aimed at local development. These indicators were analyzed according to the 20-year strategy for Rajabhat Universities for local development (2017 - 2036), which includes the following: 1) Local Development Strategy: This strategy aims to integrate knowledge for local development across economic, social, environmental, and educational dimensions to ensure national stability. The indicators of potential and capability of Rajabhat Universities for localized development include the following criteria: 1.1 Percentage of students from the local area, and 1.2 Number of students in the local development teacher production program of the Office of the Higher Education Commission. 2) Teacher Production and Development Strategy: This strategy aims to produce graduate teachers with strong identities and exceptional competencies sought by employers. Graduates should possess four key characteristics that enable them to nurture students of all ages and be ready to enter the profession, having acquired competencies to adapt promptly to changes. The indicators of potential and capability in teacher production and development for Rajabhat Universities are as follows: 2.1 Percentage of faculty members in Educational Science with teaching experience in schools after graduation, and 2.2 Number of students in the program of the Teacher Training Development Office. 3) Quality Enhancement Strategy: The objective and goal of this strategy are to integrate knowledge into innovations to enhance the quality of education in terms of regional development, producing graduates that meet the needs of employers. Graduates should possess strong identities and four essential characteristics, demonstrating the ability to adapt to changes. Faculty and staff of Rajabhat Universities should be professionals with competencies recognized at both national and international levels. The indicators of potential and capability in enhancing the quality of education at Rajabhat Universities, along with the criteria for each indicator, are as follows: 3.1 Institution Age over 20 years, 3.2 Percentage of accredited courses, 3.3 Quality level of courses in Good level, 3.4 Number of courses disseminated through the TQR curriculum, 3.5 Percentage of students enrolled in regular bachelor's programs, 3.6 Selection rate of students for regular bachelor's programs, 3.7 Percentage increase in the total number of students in 2018 compared to the base year of 2016, 3.8 Average employment rate of graduates from 2015 to 2018, and 3.9 Average satisfaction level of employers regarding graduates from 2015 to 2018. And 4) Management Development Strategy: The objective and goal of this strategy are to ensure that Rajabhat Universities serve as local universities that contribute to the nation's stability and are

recognized at both national and international levels. The universities should have an effective, transparent management system with good governance and the capacity to adapt to their status as government-managed universities. The indicators of potential and capability in developing management, which is a leverage strategy for the development of Rajabhat Universities, along with the criteria for each indicator, are as follows: 4.1 Ratio of Academic Staff to Support Staff, 4.2 Percentage of personnel who are civil servants, 4.3 Percentage of faculty members who are civil servants holding doctoral degrees, 4.4 Percentage of faculty members who are civil servants and university staff holding doctoral degrees, 4.5 Percentage of faculty members who are civil servants holding academic positions, 4.6 Percentage of faculty members who are civil servants and university staff holding academic positions, 4.7 Financial stability ratio (Fixed Assets Ratio), 4.8 Assessment score for integrity and transparency in university operations for the year 2019, 4.9 Average effectiveness according to operational performance for the years 2018-2019, 4.10 Average effectiveness in implementing projects according to the new strategy and achieving the targets set for the new strategic plan for the years 2018-2019, 4.11 Average effectiveness in implementing projects according to the new strategy for local development for the years 2018-2019, 4.12 Average effectiveness in implementing projects according to the new strategy for teacher production and development for the years 2018-2019, 4.13 Average effectiveness in implementing projects according to the new strategy for enhancing educational quality for the years 2018-2019, 4.14 Average effectiveness in implementing projects according to the new management strategy for universities for the years 2018-2019, 4.15 Average results of internal quality assessments of the university for the years 2016-2018, 4.16 Average results of internal quality assessments of academic units of the university for the years 2016-2018, 4.17 Average results of internal quality assessments of support units of the university for the years 2016-2018, 4.18 Average results of external quality assessments by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) round 2 at the university level, 4.19 Average results of external quality assessments by ONESQA round 3 at the university level, 4.20 Percentage of the government budget for the year 2019 compared to the base year 2010, 4.21 Percentage of budget utilization, 4.22 Ratio between the government budget and income budget, 4.23 Government budget per student, 4.24 Research capability based on the number of published works from 2011 to 2018, and 4.25 Research capability based on the number of citations from 2011 to 2018. The data collected were analyzed using frequency distribution and percentage calculation, categorizing the potential of Rajabhat Universities for local development based on the percentage of indicators that met the criteria into four groups as follows: High Potential: Indicators meeting the criteria are 75% and above, Moderate Potential: Indicators meeting the criteria are between 50% and 74.9%, Need for Additional Development: Indicators meeting the criteria are between 25% and 49.9%, and Need for Significant Development: Indicators meeting the criteria are below 25%. **Phase 2: Study and Analysis of Key Issues Related to Education Management for Local Development According to the Rajabhat University Development Strategy:** The purpose of Phase 2 research is to study and analyze key issues related to education management for local development according to the Rajabhat University Development Strategy. The details of the operations are as follows: 1. Conducting Focus Group Seminars: The objective of these seminars is as follows: 1) To provide an opportunity for representatives from 14 Rajabhat Universities to collaboratively brainstorm, present, and exchange knowledge, as well as to engage in in-depth discussions to analyze key issues related to education management for local development according to the Rajabhat University Development Strategy, 2) To inquire about

opinions and track the progress of the responses to the survey on the basic information and potential of Rajabhat Universities that the research team sent out for data collection in Phase 1, and 3) To clarify the guidelines for compiling the report "Education Management for Local Development According to the Rajabhat University Development Strategy," with the research team facilitating the seminar. The scope of the focus group seminar topics includes: 1) Adjusting the strategies and management structures appropriate for the universities according to the new strategic plan with four strategies as follows: Strategy 1: Local Development in the areas of economy, society, environment, and education. Strategy 2: Producing and developing quality teachers and developing innovations in teacher production and development. Strategy 3: Enhancing the quality of education to achieve excellence at Rajabhat Universities. And Strategy 4: Developing the management systems of Rajabhat Universities to be excellent, modern, and governed with integrity as local development institutions, 2) Suggestions regarding the overall development of Rajabhat Universities to meet the criteria of being local development institutions, 3) Effectiveness according to the annual operational plans for the years 2018 and 2019, and 4) Good practices for each strategy recorded in regional focus group seminars. 2. Guidelines for Preparing the Report "Education Management for Local Development According to the Rajabhat University Development Strategy": In organizing regional focus group seminars across four regions, the research team would clarify the guidelines for preparing the report "Education Management for Local Development According to the Rajabhat University Development Strategy" for university representatives. The scope of the report's content includes: 1) A brief history and background of Rajabhat Universities, their status, structure, and basic information for the academic years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019, covering the number of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs; the number of students at these levels; the number of faculty categorized by qualifications (bachelor's, master's, doctoral) and academic positions (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor); the number of support staff; government and income budgets; funds and reserves; and performance evaluations of annual operational plans for 2017 and 2018, 2) Evaluation results of the annual operational plans for 2018 and 2019, 3) Achievements of the universities regarding the new strategies overall and for each strategy (four strategies, 16 tactics, and 14 goals) during the fiscal years 2018 and 2019, categorized into five levels, 4) Evidence and accomplishments supporting the evaluation of success levels in item 2, both overall and per new strategy, including factors contributing to moderate, high, or very high levels of success, and addressing issues and obstacles along with suggestions for improvement in cases of low or very low success, 5) The key strategies and significant plans/projects for the fiscal year 2020 that would enable the university to achieve the overarching and individual new strategies, improving by at least one level, and 6) Recommendations for driving the university forward and suggestions for Rajabhat Universities overall to achieve the new strategies as per royal guidance. **Phase 3: Development of Proposals for Rajabhat University Development for Local Development:** The objective of Phase 3 research is to create proposals for the development of Rajabhat Universities aimed at local development. The details of the operational plans are as follows: 1) Compile and synthesize the research results obtained from Phases 1 and 2, 2) Draft the guidelines for the development of Rajabhat Universities for local development, 3) Review the appropriateness of the draft guidelines for the development of Rajabhat Universities for local development by convening meetings to gather opinions from experts and revise the draft report according to their recommendations, and 4) Organize

meetings to consider the draft guidelines and make adjustments after presentation at the meeting.

Research Findings
1. Overall Potential of Rajabhat Universities for Local Development

The study of the potential of Rajabhat Universities for local development involved analyzing 38 indicators that reflect the potential of 14 Rajabhat Universities. The data were subjected to frequency distribution, percentage calculations, and classification of the universities' potential for local development based on the percentage of achievement of the indicator criteria. The overall findings are as follows:

Table 1 Indicators of the potential of Rajabhat University for local development achieved by Rajabhat University (n=38)

Indicator	No.	(%)
1. Age of Institution (Criterion ≥ 20 years)	14	100.00
2. Percentage of Programs Meeting Standards (100%)	14	100.00
3. Number of Programs Published According to the TQR (At least 1 program)	1	7.14
4. Program Quality Level (Criterion ≥ Good)	12	85.71
5. Percentage of Regular Undergraduate Student Admission (≥ 75%)	5	35.71
6. Selection Rate of Regular Undergraduate Students (≥ 1.50)	9	64.29
7. Percentage of Total Students in 2019 Compared to the Base Year 2016 (≥ 80%)	7	50.00
8. Percentage of Students from Their Own Local Area (≥ 50%)	7	50.00
9. Number of Students in the Teacher Production for Local Development Project by OHEC (≥ 1 student)	11	78.57
10. Number of Students in the STEM Project by IPST (≥ 1 student)	1	7.14
11. Ratio of Academic to Support Staff (1:1 – 2)	2	14.29
12. Percentage of Personnel Who Are Government Employees (≥ 25%)	0	0
13. Percentage of Government Employee Faculty with Doctoral Degrees (≥ 50%)	6	42.86
14. Percentage of Faculty, Including Government Employees and University Staff, with Doctoral Degrees (50%)	0	0
15. Percentage of Government Employee Faculty with Academic Positions (≥ 60%)	7	50.00
16. Percentage of Faculty, Including Government Employees and University Staff, with Academic Positions (≥ 60%)	0	0
17. Percentage of Education Faculty with Teaching Experience in Schools Post-Graduation (≥ 50%)	5	35.71
18. Financial Stability Ratio (Fixed Assets Ratio) (≥ 2)	1	7.14
19. Percentage of Government Budget in 2019 Compared to the Base Year 2010 (≥ 100%)	13	92.86
20. Ratio of Government Budget to Revenue Budget (> 3:1)	4	28.57
21. Percentage of Government Budget Disbursement in 2019 (≥ 96%)	4	28.57

Indicator	No.	(%)
22. Government Budget per Student in 2019 (Baht) (In 2007, the budget per student was 19,433 Baht, and in 2016, it was 42,493 Baht)	12	85.71
23. Integrity and Transparency Evaluation Score of the University Operations in 2019 ($\geq$ 85%)	11	78.57
24. Average Effectiveness Based on the Annual Operational Plan for 2017 and 2018 ($\geq$ 75%)	7	50.00
25. Average Effectiveness Based on the New Strategic Plan for 2018 and 2019 ($\geq$ 80%)		
25.1 Local Development	11	78.57
25.2 Teacher Production and Development	10	71.43
25.3 Education Quality Improvement	8	57.14
25.4 Management System Development	7	50.00
25.5 Overall Achievement of Indicators	9	64.29
26. Educational Quality Assurance Results		
26.1 Average Internal Quality Assessment of the University from 2016 to 2018 (Criterion $\geq$ 3.51)	14	100.00
26.2 Average Internal Quality Assessment of Academic Units from 2016 to 2018 (Criterion $\geq$ 3.51)	14	100.00
26.3 Average Internal Quality Assessment of Support Units from 2016 to 2018 (Criterion $\geq$ 3.51)	11	78.57
26.4 Average External Quality Assessment by ONESQA Round 2 at the University Level for 7 Aspects (Criterion $\geq$ 3.51)	14	100.00
26.5 Average External Quality Assessment by ONESQA Round 3 for 18 Indicators (Criterion $\geq$ 3.51)	14	100.00
27. Quality of Regular Undergraduate Program Graduates		
27.1 Average Employment Rate of Graduates from 2015 to 2018 ($\geq$ 80%)	6	42.86
27.2 Average Satisfaction Level of Employers from 2015 to 2018 (Criterion $\geq$ 3.51)	14	100.00
28. Research Competence		
28.1 Number of Published Works from 2011 to 2018 ($\geq$ 57 works)	10	71.43
28.2 Number of Citations from 2011 to 2018 ($\geq$ 13 times)	9	64.29

From Table 1, when considering the overall picture of the 14 Rajabhat Universities nationwide, the following findings were observed: 1) There were three indicators of the potential of Rajabhat Universities for local development that no Rajabhat University met, namely: (1) the percentage of personnel who were government employees, (2) the percentage of faculty who were government employees and university staff with doctoral degrees, and (3) the percentage of faculty who were government employees and university staff holding academic positions. 2) There were three indicators of the potential of Rajabhat Universities for local development that only 1 Rajabhat University, or less than 10%, met, namely: (1) the number of programs published according to the TQR (1 university or 7.14%), (2) the number of students in the IPST STEM project (1 university or 7.14%), and (3) the ratio of financial stability (1 university or 7.14%). From points 1) and 2), it was evident that Rajabhat Universities needed to enhance their potential as universities for local development by creating

stability for personnel and supporting academic and support staff in furthering their education and obtaining higher academic positions, as well as achieving financial stability, having standard programs, disseminating curricula, and having talented students with potential, such as IPST STEM project students studying at Rajabhat Universities. 3) There were ten indicators of the potential of Rajabhat Universities for local development that no fewer than 12 Rajabhat Universities, or 85%, met, namely: 1) Age of the institution (All 14 universities), 2) Percentage of programs meeting standards (All 14 universities), 3) Program quality level (12 universities or 85.71%), 4) Percentage of government budget in 2019 compared to the base year 2010 (13 universities or 92.86%), 5) Government budget per student in 2019 (Baht) (In 2007, the budget per student was 19,433 Baht, and in 2016, it was 42,493 Baht) (12 universities or 85.71%), 6) Average internal quality assessment of the university from 2016 to 2018 (All 14 universities), 7) Average internal quality assessment of academic units from 2016 to 2018 (All 14 universities), 8) Average external quality assessment by ONESQA Round 2 at the university level for 7 aspects (All 14 universities), 9) Average external quality assessment by ONESQA Round 3 for 18 indicators (All 14 universities), and 10) Average satisfaction level of employers from 2015 to 2018 (All 14 universities). These ten indicators represented the strengths in local development of Rajabhat Universities.

Table 2 Distribution of the Potential of Rajabhat Universities for Local Development

Potential	No.	(%)
High (75% and above)	1	7.14
Moderate (50% – 74.9%)	12	85.71
Should Further Develop Potential (25% – 49.9%)	1	7.14
Needs Development (Below 25%)	0	0.00
Total	14	100.00

From Table 2, when distributing the potential of Rajabhat Universities for local development across all 14 Rajabhat Universities, it was found that there is 1 university with high potential for local development (having indicators that meet the criteria of 75% and above), accounting for 7.14%. Twelve universities have moderate potential for local development (having indicators that meet the criteria of 50% - 74.9%), accounting for 85.71%. The remaining 1 university should further develop its potential (having indicators that meet the criteria of 25% - 49.9%) and deserves special support.

2. Analysis Results of Key Issues Related to Educational Management for Local Development Based on the Rajabhat University Strategy for Local Development

From the data collection via questionnaires regarding basic information and operational indicators of universities, including the study of the documentary series "The Power of Rajabhat for Local Development," which consisted of 38 episodes showcasing the implementation of the royal policy of His Majesty King Vajiralongkorn for the strengthening and sustainable development of local communities — truly embodying the core mission of the universities — from all 14 Rajabhat Universities, and from focus group discussions inviting the presidents, vice-presidents, or representatives of Rajabhat Universities to present and exchange knowledge about best practices of Rajabhat Universities in each region, it was found that Rajabhat Universities had adjusted their strategies and set goals for projects according to the university's strategic plan for local development, as prescribed by His Majesty's royal policy. Planning for development was conducted within the context of local communities in

the service areas of Rajabhat Universities and provincial strategies, with cooperation both within and outside the university covering all four areas: education, economy, society, and environment. The approaches to educational management and university development for local development were as follows: **1) Local Development in Quality of Life, Economy, Society, Environment, and Education:** Rajabhat Universities have adopted a comprehensive strategy to meet the developmental needs of their local communities by actively engaging with stakeholders and collaborating across various provincial sectors. This partnership has led to the implementation of local development projects that closely align with provincial development plans and respond to royal initiatives. The primary outcomes of this approach have been the generation of new knowledge and the enhancement of livelihoods, resulting in improved living conditions and a better quality of life for residents. As a result, household and community economies have been strengthened, transforming local areas into productive hubs that meet market demands and generate income. In addition to economic development, Rajabhat Universities support integrated research in regional sciences, fostering social development through innovative practices. Notable projects include the establishment of science and technology villages that focus on chicken farming and beef cattle production. These initiatives encourage the grouping of agricultural products and processing methods, promote organic farming, and optimize the breeding of paddy crabs. Innovations such as advanced water management systems, wood stove development, traditional pottery crafting, and indigo-dyed fabric production have emerged, with universities assisting communities in patenting their unique fabric designs. Collaborations with the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives have also proven successful, enabling savings groups to become effective models for sustainable poverty alleviation. Moreover, Rajabhat Universities have initiated agri-tourism homestays and integrated traditional Thai medicine practices to enhance the health and well-being of elderly residents, nurturing a new generation of socially responsible medical practitioners. Initiatives targeting environmental management have also emerged, addressing critical pollution issues by focusing on waste management, industrial wastewater disposal, livestock manure management, and the control of water hyacinth proliferation in canals. To enhance community engagement and promote sustainable development, Rajabhat Universities emphasize the collaborative definition of service areas with provincial authorities. This cooperation is essential for effective policy development and operational collaboration in forming provincial development strategies. Field surveys play a critical role in gathering data on community needs, challenges, and potentials, resulting in a robust database for informed analysis and area-based development planning. The development plans aim to align local initiatives with provincial objectives while promoting royal sciences and initiatives. Internally, universities must encourage collaboration among faculties and institutes to provide academic services that address local needs and align with national strategic goals focusing on social, economic, environmental, and educational progress. Establishing cooperative networks among communities, government, and private sectors is essential for integrating benefits across education, society, the economy, and the environment. Key priorities include merging local development initiatives with educational management, student activities, and cultural preservation to ensure holistic benefits for stakeholders. Environmental conservation and cultural heritage projects are emphasized, necessitating collaboration with external agencies to develop educational resources centered on arts, culture, and local wisdom. Strengthening foundational education through enhanced literacy and analytical skills is vital, fostering unity and responsibility within communities. Aligned with the royal policies of His Majesty King

Vajiralongkorn, these initiatives aim to instill desirable Thai values. The enhancement of interdisciplinary research capabilities and the establishment of learning centers focused on education and cultural preservation are designed to add social and economic value to communities. Furthermore, developing media systems and utilizing technology to support academic services complements these efforts. Regular supervision and evaluation of operational strategies are crucial for refining local development plans in accordance with Rajabhat University's strategic goals and royal policies, while organizing short courses that promote sustainability and address the needs of an aging population through comprehensive township data systems. **2) Production and Development of Quality Teachers and Innovation in Teacher Production and Development:** Rajabhat Universities have positioned themselves as a vital network for the production and development of teachers and educational personnel, effectively collaborating with various agencies within their service areas, as well as engaging with the civil society sector. This integrative approach involves teacher development institutes working in partnership with faculties of teacher training to address critical issues related to educational quality, reduce disparities, and foster positive attitudes among children and youth. These efforts specifically tackle literacy challenges, enhance the potential of early childhood education, promote critical thinking skills within basic education, and improve language proficiency. Additionally, Rajabhat Universities focus on establishing comprehensive educational data systems to support these initiatives. The core principles guiding the development of quality teachers at Rajabhat Universities emphasize alignment with local needs and the integration of missions that enhance community development. The universities view themselves as learning centers that promote innovation in teacher production and the establishment of professional learning communities. To improve teacher production processes, structured systems are implemented to ensure that candidates meet professional standards while embodying positive attitudes, strong foundational values, citizenship, and discipline in line with national requirements. The ultimate goal is to cultivate modern educators equipped with the competencies necessary for success in the 21st century. Furthermore, these universities concentrate on developing laboratories, media, and resources while utilizing innovative teaching methods such as CCR (Culturally Responsive Teaching) learning management, which integrates contemplative education with research-based learning. Programs that promote professional ethics and high-quality internships are implemented through professional learning communities (E-PLC), which collectively enhance local educational standards and foster English language proficiency among both students and faculty. Extracurricular activities organized within dormitory settings also serve as vital incubators for student development, encouraging aspiring teachers to engage actively with their local contexts. In addition to meeting employer expectations, these principles ensure graduates possess essential knowledge for managing the learning processes of children and youth effectively. Furthermore, coaching and mentoring systems have been established to enhance the qualifications of in-service teachers while nurturing a supportive teaching atmosphere. Key competencies such as English proficiency, digital skills, and STEM education are prioritized, particularly in areas experiencing educator shortages, including primary education. For instance, several Rajabhat Universities have constructed dormitories for teacher students, contributing to an impressive 100% graduation rate by providing extracurricular activities, primarily arranged for evenings and weekends. The "Teacher Love the Local" project has allowed these institutions to evaluate the developmental skills of future educators while connecting with students from underprivileged backgrounds, particularly in designated southern border areas. Initiatives like

"Excellent and Good Teachers Work for Social Development" have established structured training quotas for local administrative organizations, clearly defining students' competencies through a progressive model. This model outlines a clear journey from understanding teacher duties in the first year to assuming full teaching responsibilities by the fourth year, supplemented by life skills development and key performance indicators around obtaining professional licenses. Efforts to enhance English proficiency target achieving a B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) through initiatives led by the Teacher Development Institute. To further support new educators, a dedicated learning platform facilitates knowledge exchange among teacher graduates entering the profession, empowering them with essential skills to share information and sustainably improve educational quality in local community schools. Through these comprehensive strategies, Rajabhat Universities are instrumental in shaping effective educators who meet community demands and foster positive contributions to the educational landscape. **3) Development of Educational Quality for Excellence at Rajabhat Universities:** Rajabhat Universities implemented strategies aimed at achieving excellence in educational quality by creating modern curricula that integrate with local businesses and communities. They developed short-term and online courses to help graduates secure local jobs while focusing on practical skills for re-skilling, up-skilling, and new-skilling local residents. These initiatives aimed at community development and job creation were supported by a credit bank system that promoted community engagement. To foster internationalization, the universities utilized information technology to enhance educational management and improve the competencies and skills of students for the 21st century. This included establishing a quality assurance system for monitoring and evaluating educational management, in alignment with higher education standards. Faculty development emphasized student-centered teaching, effective communication, and technology proficiency. New teaching models, such as MOOCs and online systems, facilitated skill development, enhanced English proficiency, and promoted digital skills. Additionally, these universities fostered strong community relations and human resource management systems that enhanced personnel capabilities and established efficient budget management processes. The strategy also focused on defining the identity of Rajabhat University graduates through general education and creating conducive academic environments. By developing interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary curricula that blend practical experience with theory, the universities significantly improved graduates' readiness for career development. Initiatives addressing literacy issues in marginalized areas established a model to enhance students' understanding and analytical skills, ultimately improving overall learning quality and advancing educational outcomes through the effective use of individual student data. **4) Development of the Management System of Rajabhat Universities to Become an Excellent, Modern, and Governance-Oriented University for Local Development:** Overall, Rajabhat Universities undertook several actions based on this strategy, including reforming management systems, operational practices, and services by enhancing database efficiency with information technology tools to transition into a digital organization. They established systems to promote efficient academic administration and support modern teaching and learning management. A focus was placed on enhancing faculty and staff knowledge and skills, transitioning them into e-persons with new skills, and improving existing ones in line with the university's human resource development strategic plan, emphasizing IT skills aligned with digital literacy standards. They elevated service quality by creating an open environment for various stakeholders to access university resources through a one-stop service

system, with a satisfaction target of at least 80%. Principles for developing teachers into professionals were established to produce graduates that meet 21st-century competencies and professional demands. The strategy enhanced the role of alumni in building the university's image and trust, fostering unity and harmony within the organization. They developed the university as a lifelong learning center and academic refuge for local communities, emphasizing integration with local development and the creation of value from intellectual property leading to copyright registration. Management focused on principles of governance, ethics, and transparency, incorporating these into staff development programs and curricula, while raising awareness among all university members. Personnel were encouraged to collaborate with communities, reflecting the Rajabhat way of life, and an organizational culture of cooperation was cultivated to ensure commitment. Additionally, a database system was developed using IT for effective internal control and auditing. Management systems were improved by engaging with the community and adjusting regulations to align with new strategies. Partnership networks were created to support sustainable community services, developing management databases to enhance local excellence and reduce logistical costs, thereby increasing income and quality of life for community members. Example Case: Conducted outreach programs with provincial governors and heads of government agencies in every province to gather information on needs, establishing key policy issues that translated into mission-driven practices that promoted local development. This included defining the identity of students as "social engineers" by specifying four core competencies for students and developing them through groups of ten students, integrating work across various disciplines, with faculty advisors monitoring field operations to define issues and present development projects to committees. A budget was allocated for the development target of 1,000 groups, and student works were selected for presentation. These actions aligned with the new strategic approach and conformed to the policies of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation. Through students' fieldwork, the "9 Core Competencies" were compiled based on activities performed throughout the four years, resulting in certificates of participation in extracurricular activities (Activity Transcript), ultimately leading to becoming "social engineers." **5) Approaches for Overall Development of Rajabhat Universities to Fulfill Their Role as Universities for Local Development:** To become educational institutions responsive to spatial development in areas such as "Quality Agriculture, Sustainable Tourism, and Happy Society" and support sustainable Economic Corridor development while addressing the challenges of higher education in the 21st century, including the New Normal and impending University Disruption, Rajabhat Universities needed to adapt to meet these challenges. This included responding to changes in student numbers, curriculum adjustments, teaching management, and driving missions as community development universities. To achieve this, they proposed adjusting the university's vision, work plans, and internal management to become a community refuge, raising awareness, and changing mindsets within the university. They implemented the "Adjust - Elevate – Build" strategy by developing competency-based curricula aligned with labor market needs and creating a "new breed of graduates" through multidisciplinary integration to foster essential skills for the workforce, in line with the New S-Curve and special economic zones development plan. They also developed provincial township data systems and Big Data on economic, social, environmental, and educational issues, in collaboration with provincial authorities, to aid decision-making for local development. Integrated learning models (Work Integrated Learning: WIL) were developed to cultivate practical, applicable skills alongside technology

advancements, shifting instructors' roles to facilitators of learning and preparing students for entrepreneurship (Start-Up) while nurturing community consciousness. Collaboration with enterprises was promoted to create learning sources and an Entrepreneur Bank system, enabling curricula to select appropriate enterprises for student learning. The approach also included promoting learning skills, encouraging student participation in academic competitions, and establishing systems for developing 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, cross-cultural understanding, ICT literacy, career learning skills, and values such as compassion, discipline, and ethics. Short courses targeting New Skills/Re-Skill/Up-Skill were offered, and efforts focused on producing graduates, research, and academic services for local communities to foster Smart Communities. Practical graduates were trained to become social engineers through integrating research with local area development, and innovation centers were developed to address community issues, serving as knowledge transfer and career development centers. Efforts were made to enhance personnel capacity and improve human resource services in alignment with the Rajabhat University strategy for local development. The integration of teaching, learning, and local development was emphasized, alongside creating benefits from intellectual property. Monitoring and evaluation systems were developed to assess strategy implementation continually, and effective communication and collaboration were encouraged internally and externally with other Rajabhat Universities to rally resources, implement royal policies, and ensure continuous and sustainable improvement in educational quality and local development.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that almost all Rajabhat Universities have a capacity for local development at a moderate level or above, with one Rajabhat University exhibiting a high level of capacity. This may be because Rajabhat Universities are governmental institutions with legal entity status, focusing on being teachers' colleges since 1975, higher education institutions for community development since their establishment as Rajabhat Institutes in 1994, and elevated to Rajabhat Universities for local development since 2004. Therefore, Rajabhat Universities have over four decades of experience as higher education institutions for local development, possessing significant potential in this regard. However, there is one Rajabhat University that should further enhance its capacity and urgently requires support to be ready to drive the university's strategic plan for local development over the 20-year period (2017 - 2036), in accordance with the royal policies of His Majesty King Vajiralongkorn and the Rajabhat University Act of 2004 (Office of the President, Rajabhat University: 2018).

Recommendations
1. Theoretical Recommendation

1.1 The Council of Rajabhat University Presidents should collaboratively establish and develop an information system for the management and advancement of Rajabhat Universities in becoming area-oriented universities for local development. This should begin with a shared indicator showcasing the potential of Rajabhat Universities for local development, as presented in this research. The information should be presented to relevant agencies/stakeholders to maximize the efficiency of local development in accordance with the royal policies of His Majesty King Vajiralongkorn.

1.2 Rajabhat Universities are dedicated to local development; therefore, the Rajabhat University Council should be a Lay Board. This requires amending the Rajabhat University Act B.E. 2547 regarding the composition of the university council so that it comprises entirely, or almost entirely, external experts. Internal staff should include only the President, Chair of the Faculty Senate, and civil servants or university personnel. If amendments to the Act are not feasible, regulations for selecting experts should be revised to ensure the inclusion of those qualified to truly advance local development, allowing the university council to efficiently drive the strategic plan for Rajabhat Universities' local development over the next 20 years (B.E. 2560 - 2579).

2. Policy Recommendations

2.1 The Rajabhat University Council should instruct Rajabhat Universities to review and further develop their strategic plans to better align with the new strategies for the development of Rajabhat Universities for local development, in accordance with the royal policies of His Majesty King Vajiralongkorn.

2.2 The Budget Bureau should consider allocating budgets to Rajabhat Universities based on their different roles as area-oriented institutions for local development according to royal policies. This involves replacing strategic budget allocations with foundational budgets based on mission requirements, in-line with solving national area-based problems in the new strategic framework.

2.3 As universities are government sectors, such as Rajabhat Universities that have very few staff in academic and supporting roles as civil servants, with most being university employees, it is imperative to implement a Personnel Administration Act for university employees to ensure effective governance based on merit. The Agreement has already been approved by the Civil Servant Commission in Higher Education Institutions (O.H.E.C.) since B.E. 2559.

3. Practical Recommendations

3.1 The Rajabhat University Council should oversee Rajabhat Universities in implementing the new strategies effectively and efficiently. The university council should appoint committees to monitor, inspect, and evaluate the university's performance, particularly concerning the implementation and achievements of new strategies, including collaborative projects among Rajabhat Universities nationwide, and report to the council quarterly.

3.2 To ensure continuous and sustainable effective development of area-based universities for local development, Rajabhat Universities should offer opportunities for all parties, especially student leaders and students, to participate in planning and driving local development. An example is the "Social Engineer" project at Surat Thani Rajabhat University. Moreover, Rajabhat Universities should integrate local development work into regular missions, especially integrating it with curricula and teaching.

3.3 As area-oriented universities for local development, Rajabhat Universities should open spaces for local participation in areas such as student admissions, personnel recruitment and development, teaching and research, as well as local arts, culture, wisdom, and technology collaborations.

3.4 Rajabhat Universities should ensure wide communication of local development efforts both inside and outside the university. They should also promote the exchange of good practices in implementing local development projects according to new strategies among staff within the university and with other universities across regions.

       3.5 Rajabhat Universities should produce quality teachers by following royal policies, using a closed-production system, and applying innovations that instill teaching spirit, with dormitories used for learning and nurturing quality teachers for students.

       3.6 Rajabhat Universities should collaborate with local entities at provincial, district, and sub-district levels to conduct area-based studies to reduce disparities in access to quality education for youth and residents in local and regional areas.

       3.7 Rajabhat Universities should apply the principles of "Understand, Access, Develop" and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to develop target groups, particularly local residents holding state welfare cards, enabling them to become self-reliant economically and socially, improving their quality of life and thereby reducing the state's burden.

       3.8 Rajabhat Universities need to enhance their capacities for local development, especially universities within the group looking to improve additional capacities.

       3.9 Rajabhat Universities should study the organization and mechanisms for ongoing professional development of teachers and promotion of educational personnel according to the new capacity paradigm focused on learners, teaching quality, and professional education.

       3.10 Rajabhat Universities should support and encourage their faculty and staff to obtain academic positions and produce academic works that serve society more.

       3.11 Rajabhat Universities should continuously develop curricula to meet the eligibility criteria for publication according to the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (TQR).

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