

Reflection and Implementation on Youth Mobility at UbonRatchathani Rajabhat University (UBRU)

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Abstract

This article primarily aims to reflect the perspective of Youth University and preparation for youth mobility on campus at Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University. The proposed framework potentially be a guideline for future development of student mobility. The proposed frameworks strongly indicates that the youth mobility in universities requires 3 majors key elements including the educational system and accreditation framework, scholarship and exchange programs and the language barrier. The articles encourage universities to emphasize on these issues as the university agenda to create the learning environment and the development of university to meet internationalization of university and preparation for education growth in the 21st century.

Keyword: Youth Mobility

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Introduction

Currently connectivity of countries in the world mobilize humans to other places for various reasons. In education, mobility of learners is becoming the key concern of human development promoted by international organizations. In higher education, the role of universities encounter challenges from global changes which need more comprehensive knowledge to solve problems. Therefore universities tend to openly provide comprehensive courses in various forms for both domestic and international learners. On a campus many activities are initiated to create international platform of learning among university students. The activities for that include studying in class and participation on campus activities in other countries. One reason for that is the connectivity has linked people and economic growth in all countries.

ASEAN and Youth Mobility

When countries in ASEAN have been connected, the conveniences of travel mode of transportation allow people in four countries to explore and seek for opportunities in education inside and outside their home countries for various reasons especially their future career opportunity. The connectivity of countries in ASEAN main land countries allows students to engage in cross border education. Sattistics indicates the growth of student mobility in all parts of the world. The reasons for that include opportunities to learn to live in a different social contexts or future career in the country destinations. Mobile students believe that a diversified education provides them with increased confidence, maturity, linguistic competence and academic ability

More specifically, the net number of students studying abroad rose from 459,850 in 1999 to 1,208,061 in 2014. The British Council predicted in 2012 that India and China would contribute 35 per cent of the global growth in international students between 2011 and 2024. Among ASEAN countries, number of Chinese students and others tends to increase. The mobility of international student on the global perspective has been continouesly increased in countries.

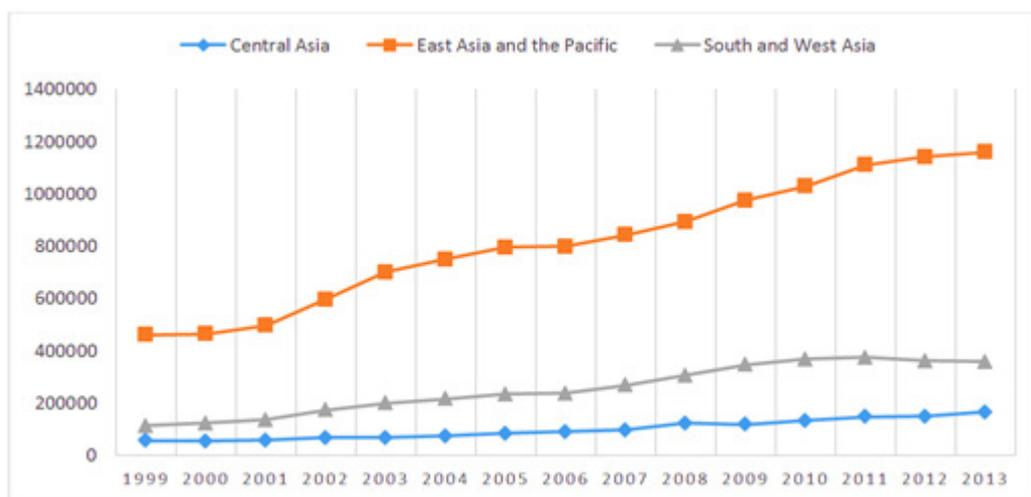


Figure 1 Outbound Internationally Mobile Students by Host Region, UNESCO Database (source: Mok K.H. & Xian (2012))

The Success of Student Mobility and University

To succeed the development plan, education institutions plays one of the most important role to help promote the development and facilitate business growth in these countries. For the reason, in the international stage ASEAN emphasize the development of equality education for all country’s members through projects and initiatives. It is the process that acknowledges diversity of higher education systems and cultures within the region, while simultaneously seeking to create a ‘common educational space’ (Wallace, 2000). Student and youth programs have been recognized by youth as a platform for share ideas and initiatives and responsibility as a member of social machnism for sustainable development. The role is indicated in the sustainable development of UN as indicated in the global development goals in 2030. In the global level, statistics shows the fast growing of youth mobility for academic purpose especially students from Asia. This phenomenon implies that the volumn of student input in institutions shall be internationally diversified. Among others, Chinese and Indian youths are major students which share 35 percent of outbound students. The growing number of international students worldwide has reach 5 million in 2014— an annual increase of 10 percent.

As the role of mobility has been promoted and the commencement of ASEAN in 2015, the education development plan of countries was then recognized in plan of universities to meet the same standard of quality. The achievement of those goals brings about the flow of students in the region. By that attempt, numbers of ASEAN youth shall increase as the problem of educational differences are solved and suits then served for all. University as an education in the region has been mentioned in many official declarations as one of the important stakeholder to promote human resource development in the region. An ambitious plan on youth mobility, aimed at enhancing youth development as being a university youth mechanism to support the integration of universities across Southeast Asia.

Research methodology

To explore the experience of students who participate in this program, observation method was carried out. The sample of this research was 20 students from other universities who participate in this program.

A Framework of ASEAN Youth Development and Student Mobility

The framework of student mobility is one of the key policies among others on education for ASEAN community. Many countries in ASEAN are now struggling to join the ASEAN University Network in order to facilitate and upgrade universities to meet standard requirement for countries in the community. In this paper, a model of youth mobility was developed. This model aims to provide a study framework for UBRU on student mobility.

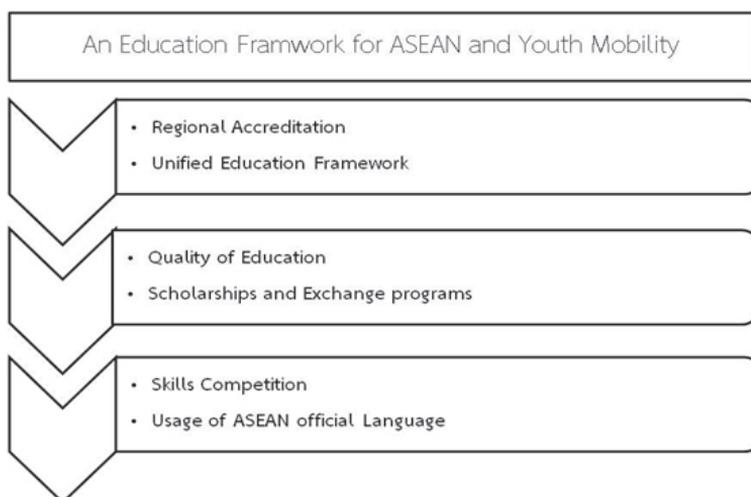


Figure 2 An ASEAN Youth Mobility Framework by Morshidi (2014)

UBRU and Implementation of Student Mobility

To implement the ASEAN Youth Mobility, activities of youth among universities are necessarily reconsidered and planned by stakeholders. However, at the current situation UBRU has successfully initiated and implemented some youth activities while some youth programs are currently initiated to meet international requirement on student mobility at both by students and faculty levels.

The Regional Accreditation and Unified Education System

As a university, institutions has been claimed to be founded over 100 years. The primary goals of the institutions tended to emphasize on teaching and developing human resource to serve community development. However, the role of Rajabhat University has been drastically changed since the changing of the name from Teacher College to a university. A variety of courses and programs then are promoted with the increasing number of students. Among students, there are also international students in the educational system. The university launched international students programs to facilitate learning environment for international students such as providing basic short courses required for international students who then enroll in the educational system at UBRU. Other than that, student projects for international students during their internship programs have been developed. In this current challenge of education, the university is challenged by technology and connectivity of education. Universities system needs a more flexible system on accreditation with international university network. This new sytem on accreditation will then provide more opportunity for international student flow.

Currently, a great recognition of the ASEAN University Network's (AUN) credit transfer has been well recognized and set as a goals for all education institutions for ASEAN Credit Transfer System which was established in 1995 .The purpose of this system is the award of credit for a subject for students in a given program to study and in another program completed by a learner prior to the program he/she is undertaking or about to undertake. When the institution recognizes that a subject or a group of subjects that have been completed at a different institutions equivalent to the subject or a group of subjects in the program that the student is about to undertake, the credit from the subject or group of subjects is transferred to the program the student is about to undertake. The equivalence between the subjects completed prior to the subject to be taken by the student is assessed based on the credit value, the learning level and the learning outcomes of the two subjects in question (Asia Corporation Dialogue, 2011). Most importantly, the system will automaticall develop educational system by learning from others system. Other than that, student mobility, credit transfers, quality assurance and research clusters were identified as the four main priorities to harmonize the ASEAN higher education system, encompassing 6,500 higher education institutions and 12 million students in 10 nations (Morshidi, 2014).

The standard and unified education system highly promote youth mobility. In other words, a standard model and system of higher education will foster and enhance mobility for students, faculty members and talents in the future of the university. By this attempt, university challenges in this century are roughly classified into 2 levels, the development of academic perspective and the implementation with social and community development. Both perspectives have been written in the university's goals and mission.

In term of academic development, classroom environment, teaching facility and technology are major indicators to foster learning environment. These also have been considered as the key elements influencing learning for all students. Then the innovations and application of outcomes from classes and projects should be applied to working environment. To achieve these goals students and faculties at all level are greatly help searching and developing practical models to serve learning and developing community as much as they can. At UBRU main campus, research centres and a community service centre play main roles developing core knowledges and innovation while the community service centre is officially authorized to work with networks community at all levels. However, to meet the standard requirement upgrading youth mobility, promoting working scale at international level with organizations outside the universities or with other universities networks is the new standard requirement.

Scholarships and exchange programs

Among other factors, scholarship and exchange program seems a concrete concept for youth mobility for universities since both of them allow and put students into university system. The student input for scholarship and exchange program reflect the university's recognition and potentials to work with organizations and social responsibility. The impacts of some scholarship closely relates to politics and diplomatic aspect. To achieve those goals, the university tends to balance more on student's input and social impact from the scholarship program. The students in the scholarship program should be effectively assigned and outstandingly performed as an valuable human asset to both student and university as the host investor.

At UBRU, full scholarship program for international students has been successfully promoted and conducted for students from CLV countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam). Currently, even the academic context of education in Thailand changed, international students tend to have more choice for education, UBRU scholarship program for international students still exists. The majority of students come from Cambodia and Lao PDR for post graduate level. For the student exchange programs, UBRU and International Educational Institute organize the student exchange program with countries in ASEAN and China. The programs are varied depending on purposes of each program. Some cultural exchange programs allow students to stay at the

host university for a month. Some programs students stay for a semester. All these programs facilitate student mobility in university and benefit them for future career.

To implement the youth mobility in ASEAN, UBRU has launched international exchange programs with networks universities in ASEAN including Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Cambodia, and the Philippines. At the same time, international students and faculties from other countries were invited to teach and work with faculties in teaching and researching in various fields. To promote youth mobility in ASEAN, UBRU Foreign-Thai Student Club was founded in 2014, primarily aimed to encourage UBRU students and international student to share platform of learning in international environment on campus. The organization played one of the key roles to facilitate youth mobility of international students from Vietnam, Lao PDR, Cambodia and exchange students in various programs.

Usage of ASEAN official Language

To implement the ASEAN Youth Mobility, student exchange program and youth development have been initiated and conducted to mobilize international youth move and providing international environment. To achieve those goals, the challenge of language used has been raised and discussed among educators. The English language is significant to the internationalisation of higher education worldwide. Countries in Asia are proactive in appropriating English for their national interests, while paying attention to associated national cultural identity issues.(Phan Le Ha, 2013). In Thailand the challenge has been discussed and policy on improving English become a main agenda and urgent task for policy maker and educational institutions at all levels.English in the case of Thailand and all universities has been energetically driven by the nation building agenda.

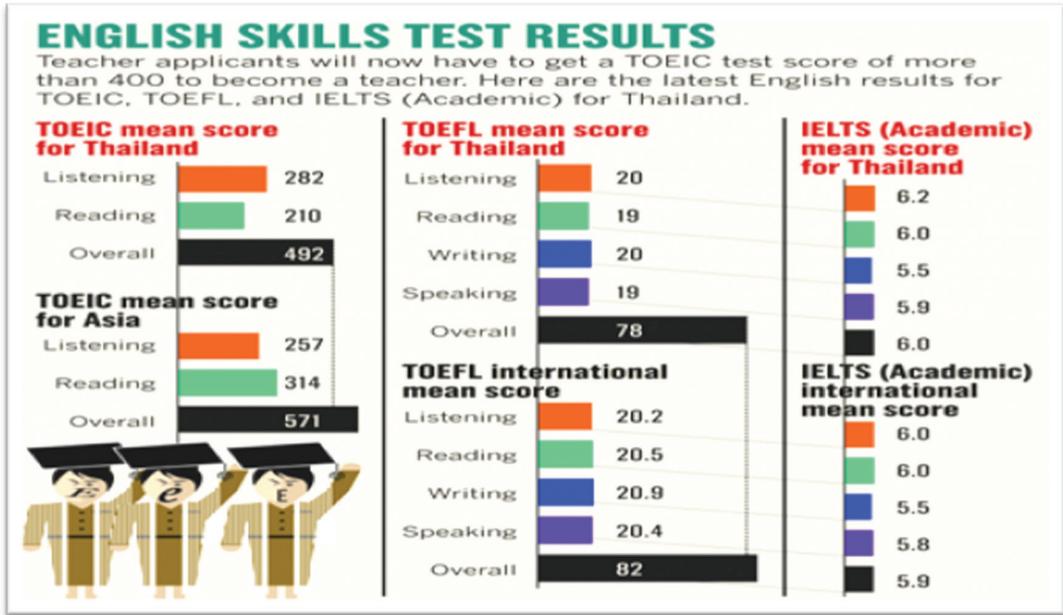


Figure 3 Standard Score for Teacher Application in Thailand
(source: www. nations.com, 2017)

At UBRU, a standard test for post-graduate student was developed and commercial English test organization has worked with International Education Institution (IEI) to ensure the quality of the test. At the same time, the Language Centre was established and takes responsibility on improving English language competency of students and staff. Currently, English programs and tests of English competency and proficiency have been continuously conducted such as TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) and TOEFL. Both programs primarily attempted to raise the recognition and awareness of students and staff in university for the coming challenge in language and communication in education.

Conclusion and Discussion

Currently the university youth mobility becomes a challenge for Ubon Ratchathani Rajabhat University (UBRU) and other institutions in Thailand thanks to the geographical advantage as the gateway to Indochina and the land link between countries in ASEAN. The information proposed indicates that the youth mobility in the global context is increasing in all regions for various reasons. This fact indicates that the university has opportunity to accommodate and promote international

university youth from other countries and the youth mobility from countries especially from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam and China. At UBRU, 3 key elements to increase and facilitate youth mobility at UBRU have been initiated at the beginning level. However, in the future a more actively move toward youth mobility should be emphasized and driven in all aspects. For the unified credit system, it is considered as a crucial task to implement the youth mobility in the university when students attend courses designed. To achieve those goals, the university system and staff with clear mission on the task are required to complete the task. For the scholarship and exchange program perspectives, a variety of programs and activities to encourage students input and output to target universities should be promoted as a requirement for some courses. UBRU has a variety of programs that can be developed to meet standard requirement for students. An advantage of an exchange program is mobilization of the youth to bring positive impact to both university and student's development in the future. In terms of language, it seems a constant problem for students and people in Thailand and other member countries. This is considered as a great challenge for universities to overcome in order to mobilize the youth on the campus. To implement this, language programs should be continually developed to upgrade students's competency through more effective learning techniques.

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