

The development of a handbook from heritable literature for desirable characteristics among Thai youths in schools in Bangkok

**Asia Pacific Journal of
Multidisciplinary Research**
Vol. 3 No. 4, 124-128
November 2015 Part IV
P-ISSN 2350-7756
E-ISSN 2350-8442
www.apjmr.com

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Date Received: September 28, 2015; Date Revised: October 29, 2015

Abstract –*This investigation was deigned to develop a teacher’s handbook for desirable characteristic creation from heritable literature for Thai youth in schools in Bangkok. The conceptual framework was developed by analyzing four pieces of heritable literature: Ramayana (King Rama I Issue), I-nao (King Rama II Issue), Khun Chang – Khun Phan (National Library Issue) and Phra Aphai Mani (Sunthorn Phu Issue). The research results found that there are nine current problems that need to be overcome in order to develop desirable characteristics for youths in schools. There are additionally eight desirable characteristics that need to be developed among youths, based on the statement of the Office of the Basic Education Commission. The investigation found that families, social media, community and religious leaders and schools all have an important role in promoting or creating desirable characteristics for youths. The content analysis found that all but one piece of heritable literature analysed contained content according to the eight desirable characteristics for youths. The handbook developed from the four pieces of heritable literature could be divided into four books for each piece of literature, which can be used as classroom teaching materials to create desirable characteristics for youths.*

Keywords –*Desirable characteristics, Thai youth, heritable literature, development, handbook*

INTRODUCTION

Youths can be defined as groups of teenagers that society expects to be the power of national progress and future development. On the contrary, their nature is likely to act in the opposite way and oppose social needs, resulting in social problems. These are seen in the news and media every day, especially in overpopulated areas of Bangkok. Nakornrap conducted a research on ‘Thai children in the cultural dimensions and presented the findings to the Ministry of Culture [1]. The study showed that young generations have lost the desirable aspects of cultural heritage, even if the Thai government and private organizations help pay close attention to prevent and solve the problems. The Ministry of Education has adjusted and set eight desirable characteristics in the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2008) for guidelines in all schools but the problems still exist and have not decreased. Khon Kaen University presented methods for developing pleasant model characters to minors by integrating activities in the curriculum in schools. The researchers considered that

four pieces of heritable literature, Ramayana (King Rama I Issue), I-nao (King Rama II Issue), Khun Chang – KhunPhan (National Library Issue) and PhraAphai Mani (SunthornPhu Issue), were appropriate in all aspects to practice shaping the morals of our social culture. In addition, this conforms to the eight desirable characteristics in the Basic Education Core Curriculum (2008) that the Ministry of Education has set out [2]. Thus, the guidelines should be applied in coaching or shaping the behaviors of our minors to encourage desirable characteristics of learners that converge to national needs.

That the eight desirable characteristics for learners (mostly referred to as students in schools) appeared in these four pieces of heritable literature could be seen as a good chance for arranging them to be taught in Thai language classes. Therefore, students could learn and apply the knowledge and thoughts to use in their everyday life. However, the teachers had to be guides and manage the shaping technique to suit the students so that they could adjust to the desirable behaviors as

the society and the Basic Education Core Curriculum required.

For the reasons mentioned above, the schools under the supervision of the Educational Service Area Office in Bangkok have not been equipped with a suitable handbook that could be used to teach and cover all details that would help promote the desirable characteristics and behaviors in the learners. Hence, the researchers were interested in studying these four pieces of heritable literature to critically analyze these eight desirable characteristics and develop a new teaching handbook to encourage the desirable characteristics among youths in school. This would be the tool and guidelines to help the teachers to discipline and improve the desirable behaviors and be a significant asset to cultural management and education. This research aimed to study all the theories that had been used in conducting research by studying the ideas involving the satisfaction of a teacher's handbook, and the development of a teacher's handbook. In that manner, to develop the Teacher's Handbook into a good practical handbook, the following qualities should be included: simple language, clear communication, visual sample pictures, content from easy to difficult in order responding to the needs in 3 dimensions: content, patterns and practical usage. In terms of satisfactory usage, teachers involved in making the handbook participated by submitting questionnaires. The satisfaction of users was also observed and the results of observation were used to improve the handbook. Lastly, a qualified expert approved and certified the quality of the handbook.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This investigation had three primary objectives: 1) To study the present problems and needs of youths to increase the desirable characteristics in minors; 2) To analyze the four pieces of heritable literature: Ramayana (King Rama I Issue), I-nao (King Rama II Issue), Khun Chang – KhunPhan (National Library Issue) and PhraAphai Mani (SunthornPhu Issue) to reinforce the worth of having characteristics in our youths in Bangkok schools; 3) To develop a Teacher's Handbook from Heritable Literature to strengthen the desirable characteristics in youths in schools in Bangkok.

METHODS

This research was a cultural qualitative research. Data were collected from documents and field studies.

The research population for the present study was composed of experienced Thai teachers in teaching and developing teacher handbooks for Thai literature, including those who were involved in supporting the eight desirable characteristics programs in schools in Bangkok. The population could be divided into three groups: 1) Key Informants, 2) Casual Informants and 3) General Informants. The instruments in the research consisted of structured interview questions, unstructured interview questions, analytical forms for desirable characteristics (that were aligned with the contents of the heritable literature), note-taking forms for focus group discussion, note-taking forms for behavioral observation in the focus group discussions and satisfaction questionnaires.

For the present study, the data collection was implemented as follows.

Step 1: Studying the current problems and the needs of constructing the desirable characteristics of youth in schools nowadays especially Bangkok districts, which was divided into 2 sections: document and field studies (from 30 Sep 2012 to 4 Aug 2013)

Step 2: Analyzing the four pieces of heritable literature - Ramayana (King Rama I Issue), I-nao (King Rama II Issue), Khun Chang – KhunPhan (National Library Issue) and PhraAphai Mani (SunthornPhu Issue) - to create the desirable traits in Thai youths in Bangkok schools, which was divided into three elements, document analysis, field study and researcher experience (from 10 Aug-9 Dec 2013)

Step 3: Developing the new Handbook from the Heritable Literature for the desirable characteristics of youths in schools in Bangkok. This was separated into two parts: 1) Establishing the new Handbook from the Heritable Literature; 2) Developing the Handbook from the Heritable Literature.

Data analysis was conducted in two parts. The first part covered the current problems and the need to create the desirable traits among youths in the schools in Bangkok. The researchers analyzed the information by summarizing and classifying types of data. Then, the researchers analyzed suitable information according to the objectives of the study by using the experience of the researchers and by focusing on the educational principles. The second part was analysis of the four pieces of heritable literature. From the collected information in from the three research steps,

the researchers studied and analyzed the content of the Heritable Literature by using analysis structures that agreed with the desirable characteristics. For part three of the data analysis, the handbook was developed using the information collected from group interviews, operational meeting discussions and observation of the sample groups. The researchers analyzed and summarized the classified information types by following the purposes of the research [3].

RESULTS

The study showed that there are nine problems that have created the need for constructing desirable traits in our youths. These nine problems are: 1) sexual issues, 2) dressing issues (grooming), 3) materialistic and extravagance issues, 4) educational issues, 5) moral issues, 6) drug abuse, 7) unawareness of self-duty 8) pessimism and 9) lack of public devotion. To help improve the problems, cooperation between families, schools and the media is necessary. In each institution, family, school and the media, if we let minors face the problems alone, they will encounter difficulties and fall into undesirable behaviors. It starts with the family, who have the understanding and heart to fix the problems with compassion and understanding, taking steps with love and being a good role-model.

By analyzing eight desirable characteristics from the basic curriculum course outline, there are 18 indicators for desirable characteristics, which are: 1) Love of nation, religion, and king (showed 4 indicators); 2) Honesty (2 indicators); 3) Discipline (1 indicator); 4) Learning acquirement (2 indicators); 5) Self-sufficient living (2 indicators); 6) Working commitment (2 indicators); 7) Love of the Thai way of life (3 indicators); and 8) Public mind (2 indicators).

The analysis found these indicators to be present in the four pieces of literature, as follows: Ramayana has the desirable characters in no.1-6 and No.8 but the desirable characteristics no.7 are only present for indicators 7.1 and 7.3; I-Nao has the desirable characters in no.1 (indicators 1.3,1.4), No.2, 3 and 6, no.4 (4.2), No.7 (7.1 and 7.3) and No.8 (8.1). There was no mention of no.5.;Khun Chang Khun Phan has all the desirable characteristics in all indicators from no.1 to 8. Phra Aphai Mani has the desirable characters in no.1 (1.1, 1.3, 1.4), No.2, 3, 4 in all indicators, no.5 (5.1), No.6 in all indicators, no.7 (7.1) and No.8(8.1).

The conclusions for development of a new teacher's handbook are that the content of the Thai literature handbook must come from analysis of the four pieces of Heritable Literature, Ramanayana, I-Nao, Khun Chang Khun Phan and PhraAphai Mani, following the desirable characteristics according to the statement of the Office of the Basic Education Commission. The new handbook consists of 1 book per piece of literature (totalling four parts) consisting of preface, table of contents, guidelines for the handbook, course outlines in contents that contain the eight desirable characteristics for youths, instructions for how to analyze the contents and characters in the literature to correspond to the desirable characteristics, indicators, suggestions on each indicator and assessments, sources and external links for further information and appendix, synopsis and the tables of character analysis and indicators.

The handbook has been used and experimented with three times and has been developed based on the suggestions of the sample group into a small, handy and beautiful handbook that contains concise lettering, pictures, suitable content that is harmonized with the desirable characters and useful explanations to engage in teaching classes.

DISCUSSION

The results of our research show that the problems in juveniles nowadays came from the broken homes, separation of the parents and unhappy families. Lyon discovered that groups of teenagers who gather as gangsters come from broken families, have low grades and have bad behavior [4]. An important reason is that their parents had no time to nurture or take care of the child. Parents did not try to be a role model for the children because of their occupation. Social media nowadays are irresponsible, with no morals and ethics in presenting news. They are inconsiderate and work for personal benefit. The society is full of temptations, gambling, bad manners and drugs that test youth limits of temptation. Schools are the last line of defense in producing a social-immune system for juveniles to defend themselves from vices. The parents, the guardians and society expect the teachers to solve the problems for the children but on the other hand schools need cooperation from the parents to change the undesirable behaviors in children. Society and the media are also responsible for looking out for unwanted behaviors in youths, inspiring them to imitate the desirable characteristics from good

examples or role models. Parents, guardians, teachers, media and the society together have to take part in solving the problems for the youths. If one institution pushes away the problems or refuses to take part in solving the problems, then this initiative will never be successful. We want our youths to know their role and have responsibility (be aware of self-duty), to have morality in their heart and love seeking knowledge. Panom Pongpaiboon has revealed the opinion that the basic role of school teachers is to act like real parents, be a second home for the children. Teachers must have the soul of the compassionate and teaching must be in their heart [5]. According to the theory of culture and personality (Culture and Personality Theory) by Margaret Mead, the personality of an individual is from the childhood experiences influencing the individual's personality as an adult. This also corresponds to Sigmund Freud's theory that the development of personality traits is from childhood experiences. If one has insufficient nurture or care in childhood, it affects the adult personality [6].

The desirable characteristics for youths in schools, were found in the four pieces of heritable literature. This content is consistent with the eight desirable characteristics required by the Office of the Basic Education Commission. Hence, from the experiences of the researchers, we found that one of the patterns of our ancestors' intelligence is laying in the fundamental literature. It is the best tool to recognize, encourage and foster our next generations to have decent morals. This concept corresponds to the theory of cultural diffusion that referred to the diffusion of culture from one society to another by human travel [7]. It may vary in some cultures or be similar at some points, such as the king's traditions, the leaders' roles, the son and daughters' responsibilities, brothers, sisters, husbands and wives, or chivalric soldiers as appeared in some literature, such as Ramayana. Ramayana is derived from Indian literature, which contains thoughts and patterns in good versus evil and high moral lessons. These four pieces of heritable literature are highly valuable and perfect for the development of our youths in schools.

In terms of the quality of the handbooks, it was found that the handbook itself was beautiful with a compact size and a clear font design. The content was consistent with the desirable characteristics. The illustrations were clear and appropriate. Overall, it was found convenient to use as a teaching material. That was because the researchers had analyzed the

content from the four pieces of heritable literature based on the framework of the desirable characteristics, consulted with experts and had the first draft of the handbooks piloted before the experiment. These were revised and edited accordingly. After having completed the second draft of the handbooks, the researchers conducted a workshop and had participants evaluate the quality in terms of their satisfaction. Next, the third draft of the handbooks was produced, which had been revised according to the feedback from the participants in the workshop. This was submitted to the experts to check the content validity and the appropriateness. The final draft of the handbooks was revised accordingly before publication. The research findings are consistent with those of Rungsawang [8]. She suggested that a good handbook should be a suitable size, be written in an easy-to-read font, have appropriate illustrations, contain understandable activity instructions, be full of content aligned with the handbook objectives and needs, contain understandable teacher instructions and include activities aligned with the content. Also, it is consistent with Jongwutiwes and Nillapun's study, which suggested that, to construct a handbook, it is needed to consider how necessary the handbook is [9]. Experts are needed for providing suggestions for improvement. It can be seen that the handbooks for promoting the desirable characteristics for youths in schools will be a convenient teaching material for teachers of Thai language.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The research results found that there are nine current problems that need to be overcome in order to develop desirable characteristics for youths in schools. These are :1) sexual issues, 2) dressing issues, 3) materialistic and extravagance issues, 4) educational issues, 5) moral issues, 6) drug abuse, 7) unawareness of self-duty, 8) pessimism and 9) lack of public devotion. There are additionally eight desirable characteristics that need to be developed among youths, based on the statement of the Office of the Basic Education Commission. These are: 1) love of nation, religion, and king, 2) honesty, 3) discipline, 4) learning acquirement, 5) self-sufficient living, 6) working commitment, 7) love of the Thai way of life and 8) public mind. The investigation found that cooperation had to start from families taking care of their children, social media reporting positive news, community and religious leaders acting as positive

role models and schools organizing positive activities to promote or create desirable characteristics for youths. The schools have to cooperate with the families to organise activities that encourage youths to express themselves in a positive character. The temples and the religious spiritual leaders should cooperate and be good role models for the young generation. Mass media should present positive news to inspire and lead the positive roles. The content analysis from the four pieces of heritable literature found that each piece contained content according to the eight desirable characteristics for youths, except I-*nao*, which made no mention of self-sufficient lifestyle.

The handbook developed from the four pieces of heritable literature could be divided into four books for each piece of literature. These handbooks were considered appropriate because they were evaluated by Thai teachers at the highest level and they could be conveniently used as materials for teaching in the classrooms to create desirable characteristics for youths.

The researchers wish to make a number of practical recommendations for the implementation of the research results: 1) The teacher's handbooks for promoting desirable characteristics from heritable literature for youths in schools in Bangkok should be considered suitable for teachers of Thai language at secondary level and should be used for promoting desirable characteristics for youths throughout Thailand; 2) Public or private sector organizations related to educational provisions can disseminate copies of the handbook to teachers of Thai language to promote the desirable characteristics for youths at the secondary level throughout Thailand; 3) The handbooks developed from four pieces of heritable literature should be further developed into the form of electronic books (E-Book) for publication; 4) The handbooks developed from the four pieces of heritable literatures can be considered a good practice for teachers for developing handbooks for promoting desirable characteristics at other educational levels; 5) Other learning areas can apply the process of developing the handbooks into their own context using their own content.

The researchers also wish to make some recommendations for further research: 1) Other literature, such as the story of Vessantara Jataka and Madanabadha, should also be studied and developed into teacher's handbooks; 2) ASEAN literature should

also be studied and developed into teacher's handbooks for the convenience of the teachers, as well as for preparing learners for the ASEAN Community in advance; 3) Researchers should conduct a comparative study on culture, traditions and values, including desirable characteristics found in ASEAN literature in order to strengthen international relations; 4) Researchers should develop outside reading books for youths based on the analyzed data of each piece of literature; 5) Retention of youth behaviour, based on the use of the handbooks, should also be studied with a follow-up of the permanent change of behaviour.

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