

ASEAN CROSS CULTURAL LEARNING OF CLMV STUDENTS STUDYING AT MAHACHULALONGKORNRAJAVIDYALAYA UNIVERSITY IN THAILAND

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Abstract - The purpose of this research article was to study ASEAN cross cultural learning of CLMV students studying at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in Thailand from good practice case studies (CLMV stands for Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam). The target group was selected from educators and scholars from CLMV countries using purposive sampling. Interview guideline, issues for focus group discussion and reflection form was used for gathering qualitative information. Data were analyzed using classified, content analysis and analytic induction. Results indicated that Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in Thailand is a Buddhist University that has more than 1,000 CLMV students who taking the registration each year. Good models of ASEAN cross cultural learning of CLMV students studying at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University composed of 3 aspects including: 1) pattern of conduct (custom) such as learning oneself and others with empathy, mutually maintaining kindness (Kanlayanamitta) and practicing the religious principles; 2) the principle of coexisting (Buddhist manners) such as learning languages for communication, following the rules and regulations of the university, practicing Buddha Dhamma or the teaching of Buddha and mutually respecting each other; and 3) following the Buddhist sect such as conserving custom, tradition and ways of practice, following the Buddhist disciplines (Dhammavinaya) and having learning center for knowledge sharing. Students also learned how to live together in the community by using social conduct and manners in order to understand each other even they came from different social backgrounds.

Index Terms - ASEAN, CLMV Students, Cross Cultural Learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Education in Thailand has originally started from the temple. For higher education, there are two Buddhist universities that still play important role of increasing level of people education both academic and morality. Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is one of higher education institutes, and it is a Buddhist university that opens for Thai people and foreigners who interested in studying both academic and moral practice. The university has been established as a government university since 1997 and has developed both hardware and software aspects in order to prepare learners to be ready for the development of being a center of Buddhism in national and international levels continually. The purpose of educational management relates to ASEAN Community (ASEAN refers to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) that is the education for encouraging each other by training and conducting research including Southeast Asia Studies. Students are encouraged to realize and understand each other by sharing knowledge between ASEAN countries that related to the third pillar of ASEAN cultures and societies.

ASEAN is the community that has been set with the target of cooperative working and build the unity within community by sharing and supporting each other as in [1], [2]. For this reason, lectures and instructors from educational institutes should be able to organize classroom activities to enhance student's

learning in several technique and should cover with five aspects consisted of 1) cognitive domain, 2) affective domain, 3) psychomotor domain, 4) skills and 5) integration. These are learning models for international learning as in [3].

In the university community, it is an educational institute of students who come from different countries and have the differences in races, languages and traditions living together in the campus. When people from two or more cultures interact with each other on the regular basis, it results in multiculturalism. They need to adjust their styles as well as their communication patterns to fit the styles of the host nation as in [4]. Considering in the university community, activities have been organized by students to enhance living together peacefully which is the main purpose of educational management that the faculty members wish to see them to encourage each other to cooperate and join in activities together creatively and also complement each other. According to their ethnicity or country, they are not divided into groups. On the other hand, when the understanding occurs, the coordination in the activities of the university can be easily carried out both in the classroom and outside the classroom in accordance with the goals of the university that focuses on training students to have both knowledge and morality. Then, they can apply into the society after graduation.

Students in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University are diverse and different in races,

languages, religions and traditions especially students who come from CLMV countries consisted of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. They need to live together on campus, but from this distinction resulting in the management of education or living and activities being separate both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, the university needs to find effective learning methods to encourage cross cultural learning for students who are the host to have a better understanding of students' cultures from ASEAN countries in order to study with effectiveness and adapt themselves to understand other cultures in ASEAN. This will be a good role of model for institutes of higher education in Thailand.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research article was to study ASEAN cross cultural learning of CLMV students studying at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in Thailand from good practice case studies.

III. SCOPE OF RESEARCH

This research article is designed by using qualitative research. The target group was educators and scholars

from CLMV countries. The content used in this study consists of 1) cultural concepts, 2) ASEAN culture in CLMV countries, 3) religious culture, and 4) cross cultural learning. Scopes of variables of the study are pattern of conduct (custom), the principle of coexisting (Buddhist manners), and following the Buddhist sect (difference of practices).

IV. METHODS

Qualitative research was used for research design and two phases were designed. The first phase used field study with in-depth interview for studying case studies that are being best practices of cross cultural learning in CLMV countries. Phase 2 used focus group discussion to develop and examine good models in ASEAN cross cultural learning of CLMV students. The target group was selected from educators and scholars from CLMV countries using purposive sampling. Interview guideline, issues for focus group discussion and reflection were used for gathering this qualitative information. Triangulation was also used for validation of qualitative data which considered from different sources of data collection. Qualitative data were classified and analyzed by using content analysis and analytic induction. A step of research design was shown in Fig. 1.

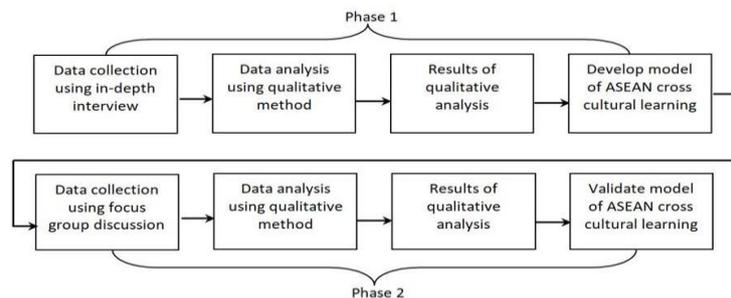


Fig. 1: A Step of Research Design

V. RESULTS

Good models of ASEAN cross cultural learning of CLMV students studying at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in Thailand composed of 3 aspects as below:

A. Pattern of Conduct (Custom)

Pattern of conduct is the way of daily life practicing for Buddhist monks or layman according to the Buddhist phrase called "Practicing is the representative of leader's teaching" as in [5]. The meaning of this principle of practice can be the key or mechanism to preserve the status of religious followers such as venerable, novices and Buddhists who come from Lao PDR, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thai. There are two parts of custom which are principles and practices. For the principle, students will live and follow pattern of conduct based on their

backgrounds such as Lao PDR, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thai follow the principle of Theravada Buddhism whereas Vietnam follows Mahayana Buddhism. For practices, students practice based on their teachers or religious masters who have taught them both from their countries and Buddhist University in Thailand. Summary for pattern of conduct is shown as in Fig. 2.

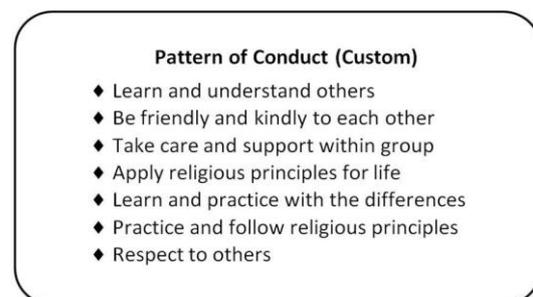


Fig. 2: Pattern of Conduct for CLMV Students

B. The Principle of Coexisting (Buddhist Manners)

Principle of living together is a form of practice that related to beliefs and traditional which has a pattern from tradition or a practice that has been done. It has continued from Buddhism traditional dress pattern, color of cloth, practice about eating, eating at different times. For example, Mahayana from Vietnam will eat a food without meat.

In addition, there are some different practices from different countries such as the use of different colored fabrics of monks in each country or each sect, some shaving the eyebrows whereas some are not shaving the eyebrows. These showed the similarities and differences in the case of tradition especially tradition due to religion. Even one implication is joint learning and one implication is conflict, they are still defining the attitude towards expression in those practices. Results from interviewing instructors and CLMV country students about the principles of coexistence can be shown in Fig. 3.

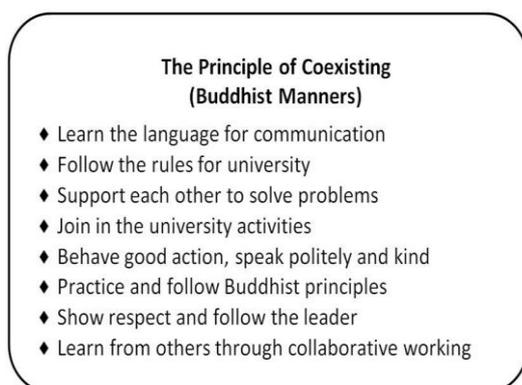


Fig. 3: The Principle of coexisting for CLMV students

C. Following the Buddhist Sect (Difference of Practices)

Respect for Buddhism is a practice related to religious sects and is different through forms such as instruction Related to the dress between Mahayana of Vietnam and Theravada in Thai, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia. The Theravada denominations will affect dressing, robes, mantras, prayers.

These practices are due to the religious sects associated with the expression and living together from the traditions and practices that occurred. In relation to sects ethnicity as in the case of Theravada in Vietnam, the majority of people are Cambodians. Mahayana is only a group of Vietnamese people.

Ethnic differences in Myanmar with respect to Theravada Buddhism, such as the large Thai Mon ethnic groups, Burma Karen, or those who are Buddhists who are native living in Rakhine State, which has a significant effect on the practice

denomination as shown in Fig. 4.



Fig. 4: Following the Buddhist Sect of CLMV students

Good models in ASEAN cross cultural learning in CLMV countries composed of 3 aspects including: 1) Pattern of conduct (custom) such as learning oneself and others with empathy, mutually maintaining kindness (Kanlayanamitta) and practicing the religious principles; 2) The principle of coexisting (Buddhist manners) such as learning languages for communication, following the rules and regulations of the university, practicing Buddha Dhamma or the Teaching of Buddha and mutually respecting each other; and 3) Following the Buddhist sect such as conserving custom, tradition and ways of practice, following the Dhamma discipline (Dhammavinaya) and having learning center for exchanging ideas. Summary of Good models in ASEAN cross cultural learning of CLMV students can be shown as in Fig. 5.

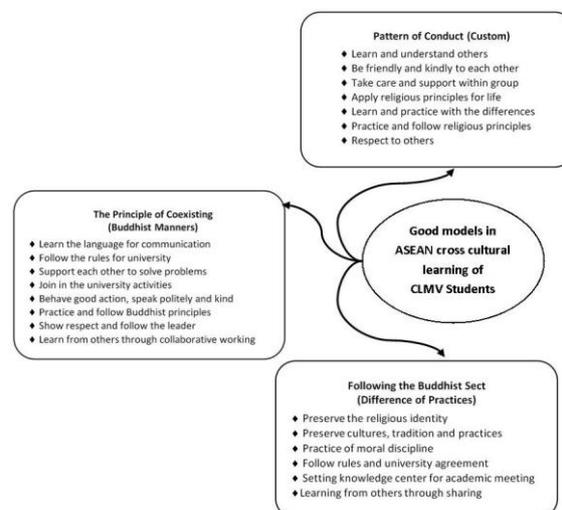


Fig. 5: Good models in ASEAN cross cultural learning of CLMV Students

From the phrase of “differences is not the conflict” in the meaning of CLMV context, it is the co-cultures that are the same phenomena of Buddhism, learning, adaptation, and culture of living. Therefore, it is very important to initiate the understanding and adaptation in order to live together. Buddhist University in Thailand is the educational institute that provides the opportunity for students from different cultures and other aspects to learn and to live together. Students have adjusted themselves under the different

conditions. The target of living is to have creative life within the community under learning environment in order to approach to cross cultural learning in multicultural context. The development of ASEAN cross cultural learning model consisted of six aspects of ASEAN cross cultural learning which are the content of peace, cultural integration, research-based learning, creating innovation, authentic assessment, and applying instructional media. Lesson plan will be included with content, process and learning activities in order to enhance the level of coexistence with happiness for students who live in the university community. ASEAN cross cultural learning model can be shown in Fig. 6.

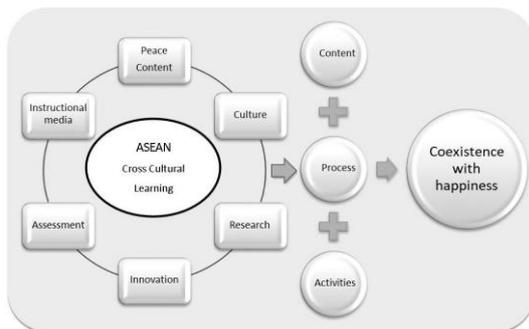


Fig. 6: ASEAN Cross Cultural Learning Model

VI. DISCUSSIONS

The first aspect of discussion is to focus on a studying of best practice case study that is a good example of cross cultural learning in ASEAN countries, it was found that learners and instructors who come from CLMV countries most of them are Buddhists and adopt religious practices as a way of life. In three countries, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar, Theravada Buddhism is respected whereas in Vietnam respects Mahayana Buddhism. However, when the population of these countries have the opportunity to live together in the same society and doing the same activity together, there will be differences in the ways of practice of each race, even if respecting the same religion. Therefore, the process of learning in each other's culture is necessary and is an opportunity to reduce the cultural gap by making each person turn to learn each other including opening up to accept other cultures from friends who come from many different cultures from ASEAN countries as shown in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, the Buddhist University of Thailand. There are students from ASEAN countries especially in the CLMV countries who come to study in religious and various academic sciences. When they are coming to study in the same community, it would make an opportunity to interact with each other both activities in the classroom and outside the classroom. Therefore, resulting in learning is shown in the pattern of self-practice such as learn to know each other, pay

attention other ideas, maintain good friendships, take care and help each other within a group or denomination. As the result, religion has influence on well-being, learn about the differences of self-practice, and practice according to the principles of religion. For the concept of cross cultural learning process, there are five steps, including 1) open to accept new culture, 2) prepare the mind to learn different things, 3) prepare mind to the situations, 4) understand the behavior of other students, and 5) adjust the paradigm of culture. This step is learning, understanding, adjusting and leading to understand the cultural adaptation process that is consistent with the six dimensions that shown in [6]. Researcher suggested that to be a knowledgeable and understanding person in other cultures that are differently intelligent, they must consist of a six-dimensional cognitive paradigm consisting of the 1st dimension is to understand what the culture intended to show (declaration), the 2nd dimension is to understand the procedural process of the culture, the 3rd dimension is to understand the consistency (analogical), the 4th dimension is to know the pattern recognition, the 5th dimension is to know how to do external scanning, and the 6th dimension is to be consciousness (self-awareness). One who can adjust themselves to fulfill these six dimensions, he or she can be a culture conscious person at all times. This is starting from learning, understanding and putting in a participatory manner through adaptation in order to learn and be able to live in different cultures. In addition, there is a common to the majority of Buddhist cultures of Northern ASEAN nations including Thailand, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Cambodia, all have a similarly elegant from physical greeting made by placing both hands together palm with finger pointing upwards. The greeter holds hands higher and bows deeper as the age, seniority, or status of the greeted rises. Researcher has proposed the guidelines to avoid cross cultural problems, these are some guiding practices consisted of 1) try to understand other cultures, 2) respect each other, 3) keep an open mind and think positively, 4) adapt and improve yourself and avoid having a negative mindset, and 5) understand the beliefs, values, and rules of cultures as mentioned in [7].

The second aspect of discussion related to the model of learning management across ASEAN from theory into practice. The process of developing a model for this research started with a qualitative study to develop a conceptual framework for research in a manner that shows the relationship between variables in order to obtain guidelines for developing field area variables from in-depth interviews and observations. According to variables and issues of interest to study, the findings obtained from in-depth interviews led to the addition of variables in the research framework to be clearer and important, consistent with the social and cultural context. For the model and practices of people from

different cultural backgrounds under the similarities of Buddhism, the variables are clear and begin to develop cross cultural learning activity and management process. Develop a learning set about the religious culture of CLMV countries creates a learning management plan and to be used as a guideline for organizing workshop activities, and then to conduct an examination of the appropriateness and feasibility of conduct from education experts and ASEAN education. This is also being an essential skill for learners in the 21st century as in [8] that study “The relationship between skills in the 21st century with digital technology skills”, by presenting the results of the study that are the necessary skills in the 21st century obtained from the synthesis of 25 articles in total of 7 main areas consisting of academic skills, information management, communication, collaborative learning, creative thinking, critical thinking and problem solving. Related context skills have been included for this study such as ethical awareness, cultural awareness, flexibility, self-directed learning, and lifelong learning. From the mentioned reasons, it shows that model of ASEAN cross cultural learning management can be developed from theory into practice and can be useful for teaching and learning management that is consistent with the development of learner skills in the 21st century. The variables found from synthesis are work skills, thinking skills, academic achievement nature of researchers, basic research and problem solving skills, critical thinking including seeking knowledge and attitudes. It can be seen that learning management is a teaching technique that helps to develop a variety of skills. Therefore, this research is to develop cross cultural learning management and choose to use for learning management as a base to develop ASEAN cross cultural learning for CLMV students.

CONCLUSIONS

Good models of ASEAN cross cultural learning of CLMV students studying at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University focuses on three aspects consisted of 1) pattern of conduct, 2) the principle of coexisting, and 3) following the Buddhist sect. ASEAN cross cultural learning will enhance the level of happy life requires the components of ASEAN cross cultural learning content such as patterns of self-practice, principles of living together, and respect for Buddhism which is used as an important part in the design of the learning process management for students to learn across ASEAN culture in accordance with the 5-step process: 1) open mind to receive a new culture, 2) ready to learn with the difference, 3) prepare mind to the situations, 4) understand the behavior of other students, and 5)

adjust paradigm shift of culture. Recommendation for further research is the design quantitative research in order to validate the developed model of ASEAN cross cultural learning that appropriate for learning management of Thai higher education in Buddhist context.

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