A Synthesis Elements of Professional Vocational Education Teachers in Thailand
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Abstract

This research aimed to synthesize the attributes of professional vocational education teachers in order to explain the elements of this particular group of teachers in Thailand. The methods used were documentary research and content analysis. Study in 38 handbooks and articles for vocational education profession between A.D. 1949-2014. Content validity was conducted by using concepts and theories in vocational education, as well as related research and documents. According to the results, there are 3 elements that make up professional vocational education teachers in Thailand: work competency, behavior, and student quality of learners.

Keywords: Professional Teacher, Vocational Education Teacher

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยในครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสังเคราะห์ลักษณะครูมืออาชีพทางอาชีวศึกษา มุ่งอธิบายองค์ประกอบของครูมืออาชีพ ทางอาชีวศึกษาในประเทศ โดยศึกษาจากหนังสือและบทความเกี่ยวกับครูมืออาชีพทางอาชีวศึกษา จำนวน 38 ชิ้น ระหว่างปี พ.ศ. 2492 ถึง 2557 พร้อมตรวจสอบความถูกต้องเชิงเนื้อหาด้วยทฤษฎีและแนวคิดทางอาชีวศึกษา ตลอดจนเอกสารและงานวิจัย ที่เกี่ยวข้อง ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ครูมืออาชีพทางอาชีวศึกษาในประเทศไทย ประกอบด้วย 3 องค์ประกอบ ได้แก่ สมรรถนะในการปฏิบัติงาน การปฏิบัติตน และการพัฒนาคุณภาพของผู้เรียน

คำสำคัญ : ครูมืออาชีพ ครูอาชีวศึกษา

Introduction

In the recent years, Thailand faced every kind of crises: economic, political, social, and environmental. They were caused by both internal and external factors. Therefore, civil society and academic section agree that we need a new educational reformation. Education is an important tool to develop human, helping them to be complete in their body, mind, intelligence, knowledge and morality. This is stated in National Education Act BE 2545 and the amended version (2nd edition), which focuses on student-centered teaching activities, helping students to fully develop their capabilities, and coordinating with parents, communities and other related persons, in order to develop the students to their full potential.

"Vocational education is the one that has the most serious problem. It is the spine of the industrial sector, which needs a large amount of manpower, mostly vocational education or middle-level people in the field of commerce, agriculture and industry," said Surapongrakcharoen (2004). This statement shows that vocational education is essential to the economics of a fast-growing society. It is necessary to have educational management that drives the economics of the country and produces personnel as demanded by labor market, at skill level, technical level, and technology level (Office of the National Education Commission, 2009). Currently, one of the problems is that the personnel produced from vocational education institutes do not match the needs of the market. It seems that that most educational institutes focus on the quantity of graduates, not the quality. It is expected that in the future Thailand will continue to face shortage of labor, especially in some particular fields that the problem has already occurred (chareonwongsak, 2011). If vocational education is unable to produce quality manpower, it will affect the growth of many parts in the industrial sector. There are many factors that are required for the success of vocational education management. One important factor is the teachers.

Teachers are the heart of education management. They are ones who teach, discipline and give advices to students (Kaewurai, et.al., 2004). Thus, teachers need to improve and develop teaching activities to produce quality students. Today, most talented people do not choose to study education. Most teachers lack motivation in their career. Students are usually left to practice everything all by themselves and that often leads to accidents. The content of teaching frequently does not match the objectives of the course. There are a lack of good lesson planning and a lack of understanding about teaching techniques (Chiangkul, 1998; Apha-adul,

Phunkrachang and Siriphan, 2011). Because of these problems, teacher development is necessary if we want to make teaching a highly valued profession. We need to increase teacher's capabilities, support and develop teacher's potential and upgrade their academic standing as professional teachers. All of these will lead to the production of high-quality manpower for the country (Office of the Vocational Education Commission, n.d.:23-27; Phichaichannarong, 2011; Kitpreedaborisut, 2014:5). "Although there are problems, student problems, the one who needs to improve in order to solve such problems are teachers." (Office of the Education Council, 2011) According to the above statement, it is necessary to develop Thai vocational education teachers to become more professional in their career. Thus Researcher will study and synthesize the elements of professional vocational education teachers.

Objective

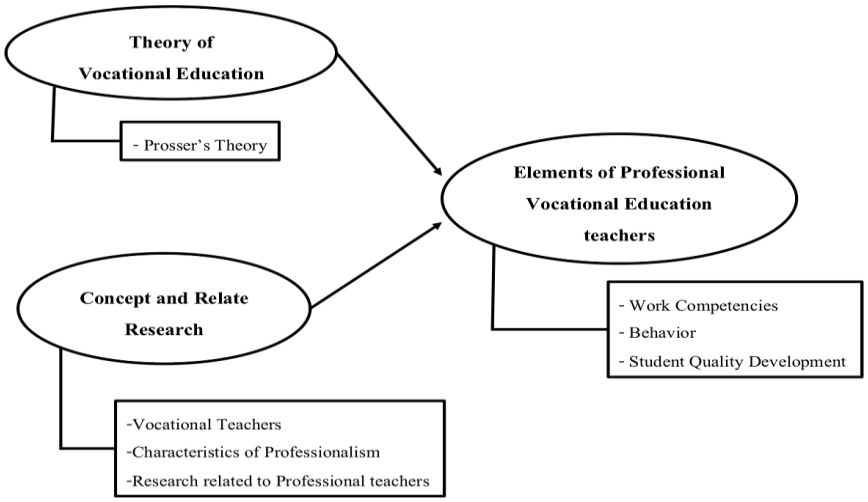
In this research, the established objectives are to study and synthesize the elements of professional vocational education teachers in Thailand

Scope

This research studies in 38 handbooks and articles for vocational education profession between A.D. 1949 - 2014. The criteria used in consideration and selections of elements of professionalism of vocational education teacher's career are the percentage of corresponding concepts or research papers conducted by academic persons.

Conceptual Framework

Therefore, the resulted framework from synthesizing the literature is as follows:



Picture 1: Framework of the Research Concept

Literature Review

Vocational education is a process that is blended with the development of economics and society. It is the preparation of manpower that is suitable for jobs, a way to combine economic and social development together. People will be happy with their job and have responsibility in their own role and for the society in general. Vocational education is not just a transfer of knowledge and skill for future occupations, it is also a way to develop human to their full potential while considering their environment, and empower them so that they can have sustainable success (Watthananarong, 2011; Narkwiboonwong, 2009: 4). According to the vocational education theory of Prosser and Quigley (1949), vocational education teacher must have knowledge, skills, and professional experience. If teacher lacks experience, they will not be able to provide the right way of learning for students. Teachers with working experience are better in transferring what they know to students and are able to produce graduates who match the needs of employers and labor market.

Vocational education management in other countries gives importance to teachers. They have quality in recruitment and a continuing standard system of teacher production and development. There are trainings and education for teachers during their active service, as well as quality control system. Vocational education management in Thailand aims to provide education to produce manpower that fulfills the needs of the labor market and to raise the bar of teaching profession (Office of the National Education Commission, 2000). The role and responsibilities of Thai vocational education teachers are to provide learning activities, support student's learning and research, develop students to become good people for society, do academic work, build a system for student assistance, coordinate with parents, communities, and businesses, preserve art, culture and local intelligence, and other tasks as assigned (the Office of Vocational Education Commission, 2009: 26). Since Thai vocational education management focuses on practical learning, attributes of the teachers need to include having knowledge, skills, expertise, and experience in the profession that they are teaching, as well as spirit of teacher, morality, codes of conduct and understanding of students. Importantly, they need to do research to develop their own teaching activities and improve the curriculum to be up to date and match the needs of students (Pilanthananon, 1990: 42, Orn-iam, 2003).

According to Weiss (1989: 2), there are four characteristics of a professional person. The first one is knowledge. A professional person must have this as the basic quality because he/she

should have the expertise and be able to explain the complexity of the bodies of knowledge in that particular field and able to put the knowledge into practice. Such knowledge and expertise should come from the process of learning and practicing. The second is regulation and control. A professional person must have standard of skills and guidelines for working in his/her career. Several groups of commission are established to maintain, develop and raise the standard of professionalism. The third one is ideology. A professional person should have values that are reflected in their ethics and morality at work. The final one is association. People in the same career form a group that shows their knowledge and expertise in that particular field of work (Torres, 1991). Knowledge comes from a long period of practicing the skills and higher education. Control and decision-making are based on the foundation of knowledge and standards. Ideology is based on practice guideline and collaboration. There are supervision, standards, and quality of practice that are stipulated by the Vocational Commission and Regulation of Teachers and Educational Personnel Act B.E. 2547, which state the two aspects that will lead teacher development toward professionalism: how a person behaves and how a person works (Chutiboot, n.d.)

All of the above correspond to the research "Form of Causal Relationship of Professional Teachers in Basic Education Institution" (Chantrarachai, et.al., 2008). She said that professionalism of teachers in basic education institution can be measured in 3 aspects: (1) **Competency,** or abilities, aptitude, interest and skills of teachers that are needed in teaching and doing their responsibilities (Weiss 1989:2; Kim, 2009; Trede, Macklin and Bridges, 2012; Lewis, 2013; Srisa-arn, 2007; Chantrarachai, et.al., 2008; Ruangkhaolom, 2008; Office of Vocational Education Commission, 2010; *Office* for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization), 2010; Kasipha, 2013). In vocational education management, competencies for teachers are categorized into three groups: core competencies, teaching expertise competencies, professional specific competencies (Cotrell, 1972; Center on ETE, 1978; Kim, 2009; Chutiboot, n.d.; Secretariat Office of the Teachers Council of Thailand, 2006, 2012). (2) **Behavior**, or how a teacher behaves in terms of morality, ethics, and professional codes of conduct, including discipline, kindness toward others and collaboration with others in the same profession (Royal Thai government gazette, 2013: 73-74), and (3) **Student quality development**, or characteristics desired in students after they learn, according to the Standard of Vocational Education, B.E. 2555 (Bureau of Vocational Education Standards and Qualification, 2012:19), which are also

separated into 4 categories: desired characteristics, core competencies, general competencies, and professional competencies. This also covers higher education (*Office* for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization), 2010:29; Ngamsa-ard, 2012).

Research Method

This research is a qualitative research, using the method of documentary analysis by studying 38 handbooks and articles for vocational education profession. The criteria used in consideration and selections of elements of professionalism of vocational education teacher's career are the percentage of corresponding concepts or research papers conducted by academic persons. Those that have the percentage of 50% or higher are selected to synthesize the characteristics of professional vocational education teachers. As for the collection of data, the researcher collected and categorized the data in steps. First was the preparation and designing of concept. Then was coding or recording the data which would lead to synthesizing of the selected content, putting the data into category, and reporting the results. The information found was tested by theories, concepts and studies related to.

Research Results

According to the synthesis of documents, it was found that professional vocational education teachers are those who have knowledge, skills, abilities, and professional expertise in the field of work that they teach. They should also be able to work in their role and responsibilities according to the standard established by their professional organizations. As well, they must be able to produce academic work and develop students according to the criteria of the curriculum. Their behavior should be a model for their students and colleagues. The main 3 elements are:

1. **Work Competencies** - These are knowledge, abilities and skills required for a vocational education teacher to arrange teaching activities and do their assigned role and responsibilities.

Teachers should have knowledge and ability to conduct teaching activities and do other responsibilities of teachers, as well as expertise in their field of work. As for behavior, professional vocational education teachers should conform to the rules and regulations, follow the codes of conduct, and have morality. They should participate and cooperate with others in the same profession, as well as communities and society. Finally, the quality of students will reflect the quality of the teacher's work.

There are three types of competencies. The first one is **Core Competencies**, which teachers are required to have. They are communication skills, analytical skills, problem-solving skills, technology skills, coordinating skills and continual self-development. The second one is **Professional Competencies**, which teachers should have. They are the ability to analyze, produce, evaluate and develop curriculum and learning activities, the ability to understand and give advices to students, the ability to do educational research, creating innovation and educational technology. The last one is **Functional Competencies.** It is the expertise in his or her field of profession, which is different from general teachers. Vocational education teachers focus on developing competency-based curriculum, developing media and learning materials, and creating innovation. The most important ones are the management of training room and laboratory, maintenance of places and equipment for effective future use, supervising student's internship, and evaluating professional standards, other than education quality assurance.

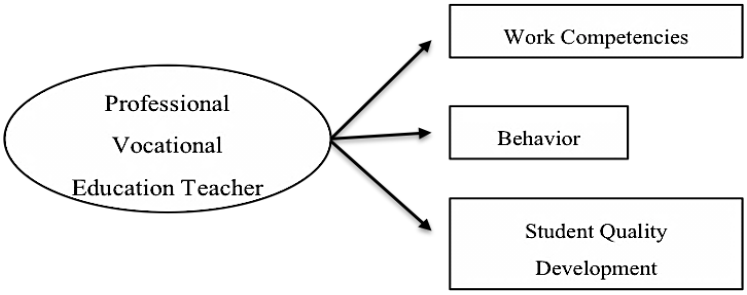
2. **Behavior –** It means how teacher behaves himself or herself as a good model for others according to ethics and morality for teachers and code of professional conduct for teachers. To be such a model, teachers must have some guidelines for their behavior. Vocational education is a part of educational profession, so following a code of conduct is a requirement. There are 5 sets of conduct; each one related to specific group of people: code of conduct for oneself as a teacher, code of conduct for one's profession, code of conduct for behavior toward students, code of conduct for behavior toward colleagues or those who are in the same profession, and code of conduct for society. These guidelines are behaviors for teachers. It can be a little continuous action toward oneself or a big and significant action that affects the whole society and nation. Vocational education teacher is a profession that is very important for the development of the country. Therefore, it is necessary for them to behave according to the code of professional conduct for teachers and base their action on morality.

3. **Student quality development**-It refers to the capacity of the teachers in promoting and developing the learners to have desired attributes by the vocational education standard and have the knowledge, abilities, and skills necessary to living and career practice.

The quality of the learners reflects the teaching of the teachers and is identified in 3 aspects. The first is **desired characteristics**, which are morals and ethics, code of professional conduct, personality traits and intellectual skills, democracy, discipline, responsibility, diligence,

honesty, endurance, altruism, public-mindedness and frugality. The second is **primary and general capacities**, which refer to communicative knowledge and skills and capacities for information technology usage, learning and development, performance, teamwork, number application, scientific process utilization and work management and development. The third is **professional capacities**, which is the capacity to apply professional knowledge, skills, and abilities to real life situations. What is important is that the learners are being employed or have decent careers, their work meets the expectations of the workplaces, or they pursue higher education.

Therefore, three elements of professional vocational education teacher are as follows: 1. Work Competencies 2. Behavior, and 3. Student quality development, as shown in Picture 2:



Picture 2: Elements of professional vocational education teacher

Discussion

This research was aimed at studying the 3 elements of professional vocational education teacher of Thailand, namely, Work competencies, behavior, and student quality development.

1. Work competencies

Competency refers to the vocational education teachers' abilities and skills for performance in arranging education and performing their duties. In these matters, the teachers must adhere to the educational standard in order to meet the determined standard. This is in agreement with what Ruangkhaolom (2008) said, teachers are like facilitators in arranging a suitable environment, involving families and the community in the learners' learning, and teachers also promote the conservation of good local assets. Besides, the teachers need to develop the curricula in such a way that the learners can receive direct experience with emphasis on the learners' ability to apply the acquired knowledge in everyday life and on encouraging the learners to learn learning methods and have passion for learning for continual, lifelong learning. The idea also corresponds with the idea of Tangchitsomkhit (2011), who identifies the

10 dimensions of the performance of vocational education teachers. In summary, they must have licenses for career practice, develop curricula, arrange education and classes, assess and evaluate learning outcomes, research, have knowledge of educational psychology and be able to select innovations and modern technologies to use and form a relationship with the community.

2. Behavior

Behavior is the expression of the teachers in conducting themselves as good examples. In whatever professions or occupations, it is necessary to have good conduct, adhering to moral and ethical principles and code of professional conduct. This is part of professionalism according to the statement by His Majesty the King (OTEPC, 2001: 5). It emphasizes that those who will perform the duties of teachers must adhere to moral principles, pass on knowledge to the learners to the best of their ability and behave in the manner suitable to the role of teacher so as to be respected by the learners and relied on by the parents. This concept also corresponds with what Weiss (1989: 2) said regarding the ideology that is characteristic of the value of professionals, that is, the morality and ethics in the conduct of career practitioners by which they are to follow.

3. Student quality development

Student quality refers to quality in 3 aspects, that is, desired attributes, primary and general capacities, and professional capacity. This concept corresponds with that of Tangkitvanit et al. (2013) regarding the aims of 21st century learning, which deals with learning in 3 aspects. These aspects are **skills** in respect of learning and culture, life and work, and information from technological media, **content** with emphasis on reading, writing, calculating, and integral knowledge of the business world, economy, entrepreneurship, civil rights, health and environment, and lastly, **character** in respect of work, learning and morality.

Recommendations

To use

1. To be a suggestion of guidelines in planning the development, support and encouragement of vocational education teachers to become professional teachers. This will enable the teachers and educational institutions to be accepted in terms of quality educational arrangement and efficiently produce students, who are the important force of the nation.

2. To be a framework for determining guidelines for developing the standard of vocational education teacher, elevating it in order to equip them for competition at the ASEAN and international levels and make the nation's population quality population due to receiving educational training and implantation.

To Further Study

To be a guideline in Structural Equation Model analysis, finding cause and effect for professional vocational education teacher

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