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Udomluck Kulapichitr

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การประเมินหลักสูตรสร้างครูปฐมวัยในสาธารณรัฐประชาธิปไตยประชาชนลาว

Evaluation of an Early Childhood Teacher Education Curriculum in
Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR)

อุดมลักษณ์ กุลพิจิตร¹

Udomluck Kulapichitr

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ (1) ประเมินผลหลักสูตรสร้างครูปฐมวัยระดับปริญญาตรีของวิทยาลัยสร้างครูดงคำสร้าง สาธารณรัฐประชาธิปไตยประชาชนลาว (2) ศึกษาแนวทางการปรับปรุงหลักสูตรสร้างครูปฐมวัยระดับปริญญาตรีของวิทยาลัยสร้างครูดงคำสร้าง สาธารณรัฐประชาธิปไตยประชาชนลาว โดยใช้รูปแบบการประเมินแบบซิปป์ (CIPP) ของสตัฟเฟิลบีม ประเมินใน 5 ด้าน คือ ด้านบริบท ด้านปัจจัยนำเข้า ด้านกระบวนการ ด้านผลผลิต และด้านผลกระทบ รวบรวมข้อมูลจากประชากรและกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่คัดเลือกแบบเจาะจง 333 คน ได้แก่ ผู้บริหารวิทยาลัยสร้างครู อาจารย์ประจำหลักสูตร บัณฑิตนักศึกษาปัจจุบัน ชั้นปีที่ 2 ถึง 4 ในหลักสูตร กลุ่มตัวอย่างได้จากการคัดเลือกแบบเจาะจงได้แก่ อาจารย์นิเทศก์ ผู้ใช้บัณฑิต และผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิ เครื่องมือที่ใช้คือแบบสอบถาม แบบสัมภาษณ์ แบบประเมินหลักสูตร และแนวคำถามสำหรับการสนทนากลุ่ม ผ่านการตรวจสอบและปรับปรุงจากผู้เชี่ยวชาญ การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลใช้ค่าร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย ค่าส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า (1) ด้านบริบท: โครงสร้างหลักสูตร เนื้อหาวิชาเหมาะสม ตอบสนองวัตถุประสงค์และองค์ประกอบ จุดแข็งคืออาจารย์ประจำหลักสูตรและชื่อเสียงหลักสูตร จุดอ่อนคือสภาพแวดล้อม (2) ด้านปัจจัยนำเข้า: ครอบคลุมคุณสมบัติของผู้เรียนและอาจารย์ สื่อสารสนเทศด้านการเรียนการสอนต้องปรับปรุง งบประมาณการผลิตบัณฑิตมีความเหมาะสมพอใช้ (3) ด้านกระบวนการ: ครอบคลุมการบริหารจัดการหลักสูตรและการฝึกประสบการณ์วิชาชีพ (4) ด้านผลผลิต: หลักสูตรและการเรียนการสอนมีการออกแบบเหมาะสม ให้บัณฑิตสำเร็จการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรและวิชาชีพ และ (5) ด้านผลกระทบ: บัณฑิตและผู้ใช้บัณฑิตมีความพึงพอใจ

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¹ Lecturer in Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University Email: udomluck.k@chula.ac.th

ผลการประเมินหลักสูตรมีความเหมาะสมระดับมาก สิ่งหลักที่หลักสูตรควรปรับปรุงได้แก่ เนื้อหา รายวิชาซ้ำซ้อน เพิ่มรายวิชาสำหรับเตรียมตัวก่อนออกฝึกสอน การคัดเลือกผู้เรียน สภาพห้องเรียน การจัดระบบให้บริการคอมพิวเตอร์

คำสำคัญ: การประเมินหลักสูตร / หลักสูตรสร้างครูปฐมวัยระดับปริญญาตรี / สาธารณรัฐประชาธิปไตย ประชาชนลาว / วิทยาลัยสร้างครูดงคำสร้าง

Abstract

This study aimed to 1) evaluate the early childhood teacher education curriculum, Bachelor's Degree programme in Dongkhamxang teacher training college in Lao PDR, and 2) identify areas for improvement of the early childhood teacher education curriculum, Bachelor's Degree programme in Dongkhamxang teacher training college in Lao PDR. The evaluation methodology was a CIPP model consisting of 5 components: content, input, process, product and impact by Stufflebeam. The total number of population and samples from purposive sampling was 333. The population consisted of college administrators, lecturers, graduates, and 2nd year to 4th year current students. Samples from purposive sampling consisted of school supervisors, employers and early childhood experts. The instruments were a curriculum evaluation questionnaire, curriculum evaluation interview, curriculum evaluation form and a questioning approach for a focus group technique which were verified and revised by experts' recommendations. Data analysis used percentages, arithmetic mean, standard deviation and content analysis. The research results were (1) Context: Curriculum structures, courses and contents were appropriate to reach curriculum objectives and context. Strengths were lecturers and the awareness of the program. The weakness was the physical environment; (2) Input: The input covered qualifications of students and lecturers. Instructional media and learning/teaching materials needed improvement. Program budgeting was rated as fair; (3) Process: The process reached the requirements of curriculum management and student teaching practicum; (4) Product: Knowledge and teaching practicum were well designed and reached the requirement for professional practice and professional conduct; (5) Impact: It met the satisfaction of graduates and employers.

The overall evaluation was highly appropriate. Curriculum improvements should include depleting duplicate content, adding courses for student teaching

preparation, the student selection process, appropriate classroom settings, and adequate computer services.

KEYWORDS: CURRICULUM EVALUATION / EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM / BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMME / LAO PDR / DONGKHAMXANG TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES

Introduction

Background and significance of the problems

Lao P.D.R. (Laos) is a landlocked country in South East Asia, located centrally on the Indochina Peninsula, surrounded by China, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia. The population rate of young children under the age of 5 in Laos is quite high. It makes up about 13% of the population with several disparities of ethno-linguistic groups. It becomes a challenge for a country with a high child population to provide children with equal and quality education. Nevertheless, in 2015, Laos was recognized for being able to improve its fundamental structure of education, such as access to education, gender equality, (re)construction of schools, improvement of facilities, increased school subsidies and betterment of teachers' working conditions (EFA 2015 Review Group and Secretariat Group, Lao PDR, 2014). However, based on these factors, further improvement in education is needed, such as improvement in students' academic achievements and mobility, quality of teachers and the capacity building of those supporting education in communities.(Kajiyama, 2016; Phommachack & Phommasy, 2016). The Government of Laos is committed to providing quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) services, following the growing awareness of the importance of early childhood development (Kajiyama, 2016). Education Law states that, "Early Childhood Care and Education should ensure that children develop

holistically, know the foundation of speaking, writing, reading, listening, looking at, and drawing, love their parents, teachers, those surrounding them, country, nature and clearness, have talents, love to learn, and prepare themselves for primary education (Article 15)”. In addition, the country’s 5 year Education Development Plan (2016-2020) aims for a 55 % new admission rate in community-based playgroups, preschools and kindergarten, the gradual expansion of admission of 5 year olds into preschool to 80% by 2020, and increased enrolment in early childhood of 5 year old children from remote rural areas. To achieve the abovementioned aims, the following five strategies are specified to be implemented. Strategy 1: support expansion of education access to rural and remote areas and create favorable conditions for poor and disadvantaged children, girls, ethnic groups and disabled children to receive good care and to be well prepared for their schooling. Strategy 2: improve the quality of ECCE services to meet standards and to be sufficient. Strategy 3: promote health, hygiene and nutrition at ECCE locations. Strategy 4: develop ECCE standard and quality assurance. Strategy 5: enhance the capacity for ECCE administration and management at ECCE centres (Phommachack & Phommasy, 2016). One of the continuing challenges in improving quality ECCE is the severe shortage of preschool teachers in terms of quantity and quality. The quality of ECCE is constrained by the low number of qualified teachers (Phommachack & Phommasy, 2016).

According to the Revised Education Law of 2015, ECCE in Lao PDR is offered in crèches (for children from 3 months to less than 3 years old) and kindergartens (for children from 3 to less than 6 years old), with the latter covering community play-based learning groups on school readiness programmes and pre-primary classes attached in primary school (Vargas-Barón, 2015). Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), under the supervision of the

Department of Teacher Education (DTE), are responsible for preparing early childhood teachers.

In January 2017, the UNESCO Bangkok Office launched a country-support project titled “Capacity Development for Education 2030 (CapED) in Lao PDR: Capacity Development Support for Teacher Education in Lao PDR”, a follow-up to the Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA) in Lao PDR programme, Phase II (2012-2016) (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2017). The project is aimed at strengthening individual and institutional capacities to enhance the quality of pre-service and in-service teacher education, with a view to improving the quality of the teaching force of early childhood to secondary education in Lao PDR. Before 2012, early childhood teacher education (ECTE) programmes in Lao PDR were offered at Diploma and Advanced Certificate levels. During Phase II of CapEFA programme, UNESCO supported the development of the first-ever ECTE curriculum for Bachelor’s Degree level or called the 12 + 4 system (12 years of basic education and four years of pre-service teacher education) (Phommachack & Phommasy, 2016). The 4-year ECTE programme was first launched at Dongkhamxang Teacher Training College (TTC) in Vientiane Capital in the academic year 2013/2014. In the following academic year 2014/2015, the same curriculum was launched at Luangnamtha TTC in the north and Salavan TTC in the south, with the first cohort of 35 and 32 student teachers, respectively. To date, over 500 student teachers have enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts programmes specialized in early childhood education in the three aforementioned TTCs (UNESCO, 2017).

Related literature, scope of the study and objectives of the study

Following an internal formative assessment of curriculum implementation

at Dongkhamxang TTC in 2015 (Chatturanon et al., 2016), the curriculum was revised, in cooperation with teacher educators from seven other TTCs (namely Bankeun, Khangkhai, Luangnamtha, Luangprabang, Pakse, Salavan, and Savannakhet TTCs) (UNESCO, 2017).

The internal formative assessment of the early childhood teacher education curriculum (ECTE) at Dongkhamxang TTC in 2015 was conducted using the CIPP model, evaluating the following four components: context, process, input and output (Chatturanon et al., 2016). Stufflebeam's curriculum evaluation model is called "Context-input-process-output approach (CIP)" which refers to the process of identifying, compiling, and presenting information (Stufflebeam, 2002). The details of this model consist of as follows; 1) Context evaluation: C is an evaluation of the current environment and situation to provide information for identifying the purpose and objective of the course; 2) Input evaluation: I is an evaluation of the factors that contribute to the effective use of the curriculum, such as personnel, budget, materials and technology; 3) Process evaluation: P is an evaluation of information regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum, such as curriculum management, organizing teaching and learning; 4) Product evaluation: P is an assessment that focuses on the quality of the learner as set out in the goals and objectives of the course. 5) Impact evaluation: I is one of the composition based on this CIPP model that mainly focusses on the satisfaction of the learners during the entire study (Kanjanavasee et al. 2012).

The CIPP model based on Stufflebeam's decision-making approach had been previously successfully applied on an evaluation of a Bachelor of Education Degree program in preschool education (Rueangpanit, 2010), and the curriculum evaluation on Bachelor's Degree of Education Program in Early

Childhood Education (Kanjanavasee et al., 2012). However, the evaluation of summative curriculum evaluation of the 4-year ECTE curriculum for pre-service teachers in Dongkhamxang TTC has yet to be elucidated in any research nor have the continuous results to evaluation of ECTE curriculum in Laos PDR been applied, both for a formative and summative evaluation. Hence, it's worthwhile to apply this model for the evaluation of the teaching curriculum to ensure the effectiveness of the summative curriculum. In this present study, a comprehensive external evaluation of the summative 4-year ECTE curriculum for pre-service teachers in Dongkhamxang TTC was conducted using the application of the CIPP model following the methodology of Stufflebeam.

Results of the evaluation would be used to determine the areas that need to be changed or improved so that the curriculum can accomplish its goals and objectives. As the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) is planning to expand this ECTE programme, the results will also help the other TTCs to implement the revised ECTE curriculum effectively and answer the questions identified by UNESCO, which are comprised of the following:

- 1) Does the curriculum meet its goals and objectives?
- 2) Does the curriculum cover sufficient subject matters and pedagogy?
- 3) Is the ECTE curriculum aligned with the national ECE curriculum implemented in preschools?
- 4) Is the curriculum responsive to student teachers of all ethnic backgrounds?
- 5) Are their instructional materials suitable for use in the courses available?
- and 6) How effective is the teaching practicum in preschools?
- 7) To what extent do the student teachers appreciate or find the courses in the curriculum useful?
- 8) To what extent do the learning outcomes of the student teachers meet the expectations of the curriculum?

Objectives

1. To evaluate the early childhood teacher education curriculum, Bachelor's Degree programme in Dongkhamxang teacher training college in Lao PDR.

2. To identify areas for improvement in the early childhood teacher education curriculum, Bachelor's Degree programme in Dongkhamxang teacher training college in Lao PDR.

Research methodology and procedures

Research Design and Participants

The study employed an evaluation research design based on the CIPP evaluation model of Stufflebeam (Stufflebeam, 2002) as shown on the evaluation framework

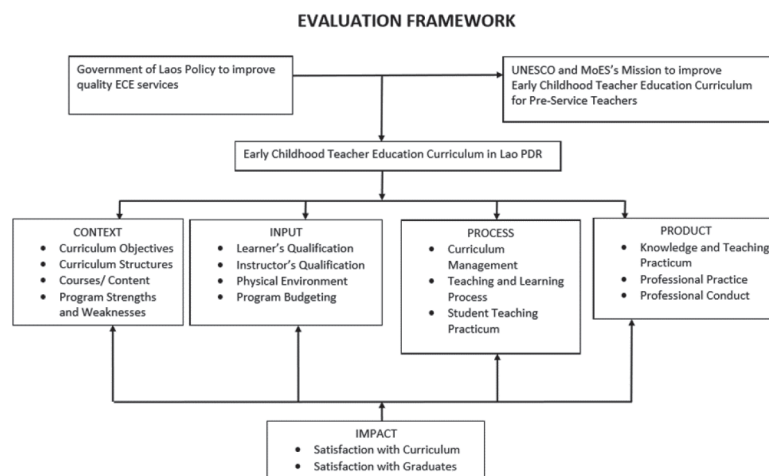


Figure 1 The study's evaluation framework based on CIPP model

Population and sample

Population

Population in this study consisted of 3 groups:

1) There was a total of 7 College administrators, which included the director, deputy director of evaluation, head of kindergarten-primary office, head of teacher development office from Dongkhamxang TTC; Deputy director general, deputy head of pre-service teacher education division and deputy director of pre-service teacher education division from MoES.

2) There were 26 lecturers of the ECTE Program at Dongkhamxang TTC.

3) There were 80 student graduates from the ECTE Program, Dongkhamxang TTC and 198 undergraduates of the ECTE Programme – 2nd, 3rd, 4th year students at Dongkhamxang TTC.

Sample

Purposive sampling was implemented by the UNESCO representative in Laos PDR for this study. The samples were 6 school supervisors, 12 employers and 4 early childhood experts. The total number of the population and samples from purposive sampling were 333.

Instruments

1) Curriculum evaluation questionnaires were developed for lecturers, graduates, undergraduates and administrators based on components of the CIPP model on context, input, process, product and impact.

2) Curriculum evaluation interviews were developed for lecturers, graduates, undergraduates, administrators and ECE experts based on components of the CIPP model on context, input, process, product and impact.

- 3) The curriculum evaluation form was developed for ECE experts.
- 4) The questioning approach for the focus group technique consisted of open-ended structure questions based on components of the CIPP model on context, input, process, product and impact.

The instruments were verified and revised according to experts' recommendations.

Data Collection

From the arrangement of the UNESCO Bangkok Office, data collection was conducted at Dongkhamxang TTC, kindergartens in Vientiane, and the office of the Ministry of Education and the Sports and Research Institute of Educational Science in Lao PDR from November 6-10, 2017. Due to the difficulties of sending out surveys through postal service in Lao PDR, the collection of surveys from graduates was conducted by dropping off the surveys and picking them up the next day on a three day trip.

Data Analysis

Percentages, arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used with the questionnaire. The qualitative data from the interview and focus group was analysed using content analysis.

Research results and discussion

The results of the evaluation of an early childhood teacher education curriculum in Laos PDR were answered based on the questions identified by UNESCO in accordance with the CIPP model. 1) Context: The results showed that the context was appropriate to reach curriculum objectives, curriculum structures, courses and contents. Strengths were the lecturers and the

awareness of the program, whereas the weakness was the physical environment. 2) Input: The input achieved qualifications of students and lecturers, whereas, instructional media and learning/teaching materials needed improvement. Program budgeting was only rated as fair. 3) Process: The process reached the requirements of curriculum management, teaching and learning, and student teaching practicum. 4) Product: Knowledge and teaching practicum were well designed and reached the requirement for professional practice and professional conduct. 5) Impact: The curriculum met the satisfaction of the graduates and employers.

Discussion

Does the curriculum meet its goals and objectives?

The current students and the lecturers had opinions on the appropriateness of its objectives as good ones, whereas the graduates saw them as excellent for its goal achievement, meeting the social requirements, and being in accordance with the teacher training standards. There was an attempt to develop the 12+4 system in accordance with the Lao education laws and child protection principles, the regulations based on the standards of DTE, and also the needs assessment on social requirements. In addition, the objectives of the curriculum were provided by the committee of curriculum development, which consisted of administrators from DTE, MoES, experts from Department of Early Childhood Education (DECE), National University of Laos, and lecturers of early childhood curriculum from TTCs. It became clear that the committees involved educational personnel from administrators to practitioners. Thus, it enabled the objectives to cover all of the social requirements. In this way, it seemed to apply the Tyler's model of curriculum development, i.e., in the step of curriculum objectives determination which

needed to be based on the study of society, learners and academic persons' points of view (Tyler, 1986). All of these need to be scrutinised for both important and practical objectives (Wongyai, 1994), which is consistent with Thumthong (2010) for his statement on the need to involve experts with high skills in curriculum development and in cooperation with stakeholders at all levels.

Does the curriculum cover sufficient subject matters and pedagogy?

To examine the subject matters, courses and content were investigated. Four of the subject area divisions were evaluated: General Education, Foundation, Specific Requirement and Elective Subject Areas.

General Education Subject Area: Eight courses from the General Education Subject Area were rated as good.

Foundation Subject Area: Sixteen courses from the Foundation Subject Area were rated as good. The course 018405 Play Experiences for Young Children was rated as excellent.

Specific Requirement Subject Area: Thirty courses belonging to the specific requirement were good. The following five courses were rated as excellent: 0108703 Provision of Creative Arts, Traditional Music and Dance, Storytelling and Drama, and Aerobics of Learning Experiences for Young Children, 0108704 Provision of Outdoor Learning Activity Experiences for Young Children, 0108701 Provision of Movement and Rhythm Learning Experiences for Young Children, 0108702 Provision of Circle Time Learning Experiences for Young Children and 0108211 Media and Technology for Young Children.

Elective Subject Area: Three courses belonging to the Elective Subject Area were rated as good, whereas the rest of elective courses were rated as

fair. Some parts of content were suggested for additional content, such as the Relationship between Families, Schools and Communities, Care of Children Under 3 Years Old, Child Nutrition, First Aid, and Fundamental Psychology. It was suggested that the content of the Classroom Research course should be revised.

To examine the pedagogy employed in this curriculum, the teaching and learning process were investigated. In terms of the appropriateness of lecturers' teaching/learning management behaviour, the overall picture on this topic was rated as good. The agreements were that the lecturers had good personalities, demonstrated a good intention and determination, as well as research inquiry to improve their knowledge. However, there were some remarks reported about the unclear teaching orders of the lecturers and this issue was also agreed with the lecturers. In terms of the appropriateness of students' learning behaviour, the overall picture of this topic was rated as good. The preferences were on learning by group participation, self-study and doing assignments. Some also wanted to add up learning by regular class attendance. There were comments reported that some students would attend classes regularly, but they rarely participated in group work. For teaching/learning management process, the overall picture of this topic was rated as good. Students considered activities that promoted their morals and ethics, focussed on teaching application, and were learner-centred to be good. Although lecturers considered organising a variety of learning experiences that suited the content, some rarely used technology while some only focussed on either theory or practice proficiency. One class was referred to adapt the concept of Understand by Design (UBD) that enabled students to have ideas in producing instructional media. The current students, graduates, and lecturers had overall agreeable opinions on the appropriateness of the structure and content as

good ones. However, some lecturers and Deputy Director-General had opinions that there were too many courses and these should be reduced to eliminate content overlapping and there should be an increase in courses that are more practical. These were consistent with Kijratporn (2011) on the statement that the ECTE curriculum must be knowledge based content and the qualifications of early childhood teacher must be emphasized on learning processes, activities design, and being a good person who is moral and virtuous.

Is the ECTE curriculum aligned with the national ECE curriculum implemented in preschools?

The ECTE Curriculum (12 + 4 system) of Dongkhamxang Teacher Training College in Lao PDR is consistent with the National Early Childhood Education implemented in most preschools. The result was in accordance with the ECCE teacher competency framework for Southeast Asia, which suggested that ECCE teachers are able to demonstrate competencies across four domains: (1) content knowledge, pedagogic practice, and assessment; (2) the learning environment; (3) engagement and collaboration; and (4) professional development. (UNESCO & SEAMEO, 2018). The graduates of this program who worked as preschool teachers gave their opinions on the objectives of the curriculum as excellent, whereas the structure and the contents as good. According to them, the instruction was child-centred, emphasized on actual usability by learners. When they were on field experience, the supervision process by school supervisors was the most appropriate. The parents and employers were satisfied by the graduates for their practical knowledge, skilfulness in teaching following the curriculum content, ability in collaborative working, being a good leader and follower, having a good personality, and their morality. The competencies of the graduates were in agreement with the ECCE

teacher competency framework for Southeast Asia which were in line with the teacher's role specified in the national ECE curriculum that teachers have to be concerned with the total development of young children and implementing child centre activities (Ministry of Education and Sports of Lao PDR, 2012).

Is the curriculum responsive to student teachers of all ethnic backgrounds?

The curriculum was acceptable to student teachers of all ethnic backgrounds. From the evaluation of input on the students' qualifications, all of the current students, graduates, and lecturers agreed that the admitted students were selected with appropriate qualifications. However, all prospective students should have equal opportunities to be selected for admission in the ECTE (12+4 system) Program. There were 2 methods of selection: 1) Special Quota: each district sends the name list to the government, then the name list is passed to the colleges. The selection criteria require a total score of over 50, and height/weight must be at least 155 cm/45 kg. However, there is an exception for students who do not meet the criteria but possess high academic achievement and are qualified for this special quota group; 2) Take an exam. Both methods of selection provided fairness and equal opportunity to any persons of all genders, ethnics, religions, social and economic status who are interested in college enrolment.

Those methods were in accordance with the fundamental principle that everyone has a right to access education, leading to the full development of one's potential, resulting in understanding, tolerance and friendship among genders, races and religious groups (Cole, 2012). This policy also supports the focus on the implementation of human rights education, ethnic languages, gender equality, curricula, teaching materials, and lesson plans in the TTCs of Lao PDR (Ministry of Education and Sports of Lao PDR, 2011).

Are there suitable instructional materials available for use in the courses?

Instructional materials were suitable for use in available courses. From the context evaluation, it was found that the current students, graduates, and lecturers had an overall good opinion of the appropriateness of environment, materials, and facilities, whereas the computer room and self-learning centre was rated as fair. The adequacy of learning materials and equipment, such as computers, the internet and audio aids was rated as fair. However, some problems existed based on the interviews of 3 sample groups. These were the inadequacy of books, textbooks, teaching materials, and references in the library. The references for some courses were unavailable to be searched. Despite a lack of English books, some students wanted more Laos documents. In cases of online information searching, there was no high-speed internet connection and online access, and other facilities were not adequate for being used in the classroom, meeting room or library. For example, there were only 2 computer rooms with 30 seats per each room. There were not enough class rooms and the classrooms were too small with an inadequate number of tables and chairs, thus, it was difficult to teach and to do classroom activities, which resulted in inappropriate and less than optimal learning activities. Furthermore, the meeting room was too small. Any meeting had to be divided into small groups and separate rooms. This was due to a lack of readiness or an insufficient budget for these resources to provide opportunities for students to self-study and to access academic resources effectively.

According to the study of Greenwald and his colleagues on school resources and student achievement, it was found that positive coefficients indicated that greater resource inputs were related to higher achievement (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996). Therefore, if there is a lack of readiness

or an insufficient budget for these resources to provide opportunities for students to self-study and to access academic resources effectively, this will have an effect on the quality of the ECTE curriculum. Hence, this is an important issue that needs to be of concern to administrators, in order to support good practice for pre-service teacher education (Ministry of Education and Sports of Lao PDR, 2011).

How effective is the teaching practicum in preschools?

The evaluation of the process on professional training showed that the current students, graduates, and lecturers had overall good opinions on the appropriateness of professional practicum. They had agreeable opinions on the first 4 issues; the supervision process by the school supervisor, the school provided for professional practicum, the duration of the professional practicum, and the professional practicum assessment. Based on the interview, it was found that some lecturers rated opinions on the appropriateness of the supervision process by the school supervisor as fair. The simultaneous genuine assessment by school teachers and lecturers was applied to this professional practicum. Still, some graduates saw this supervision as inappropriate. The supervision processes of college supervisors and school supervisors were dependent on each graduate's experiences. In addition, both college supervisors and school supervisors had different styles of supervising student teaching. The college supervisors were of the opinion that fewer responsibilities were given to the students and they did not have to teach daily. However, the given 12 weeks of teaching practicum together with the detailed evaluation manual was seen as enough. In the real teaching practicum, the fourth year students were able to design and implement activities. They were able to make lesson plans, had a good attitude to their

career and developed a good personality as a teacher. What might be added before the practicum is classroom management and child-caring.

Practice teaching is regarded as a key component of teacher education and is often highly valued by student teachers, even if the aims of field experiences vary from context to context. The main objective of the practicum is to provide student teachers with authentic hands-on experience in teaching. They have to practice themselves because practical knowledge and wisdom are held by the individual and cannot easily be transmitted from person to person. Student teachers need to know how and by connecting the skills of teaching to understand through reflection, they will gradually start developing practical knowledge. However, to reach beyond their current personal level, it is useful to be guided by someone who is more experienced (Ulvik & Smith, 2011). The ECTE curriculum has included the supervision role for the teaching practicum, however, both college supervisors and school supervisors need to agree on the different styles of supervising student teaching in order to provide the best support for student teachers.

To what extent do the student teachers appreciate or find the courses in the curriculum useful?

The current students were satisfied with the courses in terms of their usefulness and conformity among general education, foundation courses, and elective ones. The graduates were most satisfied with the learning management of specific requirement courses. Since the graduates had acquired real working experiences in preschools, they most appreciated the importance of knowledge and learning management of the specific requirement courses. These courses were very useful and were actually able to be implemented in early childhood learning and teaching. The current

students, graduates, and lecturers were highly satisfied with the courses in this category. There were 5 courses that the graduates had evaluated as being most useful and appropriate: 1) Provision of Creative Arts, Traditional Music and Dance, Storytelling and Drama and Aerobics of Learning Experiences for Young Children; 2) Provision of Outdoor Learning Activities Experiences for Young Children; 3) Provision of Movement and Rhythm in the Learning Experiences of Young Children; 4) Provision of Circle Time Learning Experiences for Young Children; and 5) Media and Technology for Young Children. The above courses could be used in providing experiences for young children through the six main daily activities, stated in the national ECE curriculum and consist of movement and rhythm, art and creativity, circle activities, educational games, corner play, and outdoor play (Ministry of Education and Sport of Laos PDR, 2012). This is because young children need well balanced learning activities to enhance their total development (SEAMEO & UNESCO, 2016).

To what extent do the learning outcomes of the student teachers meet the expectations of the curriculum?

The graduates' employers were of the opinion that the graduates' competencies on working were at a good level. They were good at learning management based on the curriculum and possessed skills to work collaboratively with others. They were both good leaders and followers, responsible for their jobs, and devoted themselves to their institutes. These indicated that the graduates attained academic achievement matching the objectives of the teacher training curriculum (2013), which stated as follows: 1) to acquire skills for classroom management; 2) skills for provision on teaching and learning according to characteristics specified in the educational constitution and in accordance with the national ECE curriculum of the Ministry of Education

and Sports; 3) skills for the effective provision of playing, learning, and teaching in child care centres, preschool, and pre-primary classes; 4) skills for setting a non-bias environment to facilitate playing and learning for young children 5) knowledge acquisition through research systems; 6) ethics of a teaching career and being proud to be an early childhood professional; and 7) ability to collaboratively work with others, knowing how to preserve the culture and traditions of Laos. However, there were some weaknesses in: 1) ability to analyse and plan work systems; 2) enthusiasm for new technologies; 3) knowledge of innovations in early childhood education; 4) use of information technology such as computers, on-line access, tablets, etc.; 5) know how applications are used to solve problems with students, parents, or colleagues.

These skills are becoming essential in the 21st Century and are needed to be able to acquire up-to-date information and knowledge for self-development and upgrading learning management. This is in accordance with the fact that Southeast Asian countries are encouraged to ensure that the efforts to improve the quality of early childhood teachers, from the initial recruitment through to pre-service training, are based on a clear set of professional standards or minimum qualification competencies. All of these require various skills, such as subject (curricular content), knowledge competencies, pedagogical competencies, assessment and evaluation competencies, language and cultural competencies, competencies in using information and communication technologies, an ability to deal with emergencies, and social competencies, including inter-personal and communication skills (SEAMEO & UNESCO, 2016). The above result was in accordance with Rose and Gallup's statement that disruptive behaviour in schools has been a source of concern for school systems for many years. The single most common request for assistance from

teachers was related to behaviour and classroom management (Rose & Gallup, 2005). Moreover, another study found that whole-classroom, multi-component programs for classroom management had a significant, positive effect on decreasing behavioural problems in the classroom. Teachers who used universal classroom management approaches could expect to experience improvements in student behaviour (Oliver, Wehby, & Reschly, 2011).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study revealed that all groups were satisfied with the ECTE curriculum. Both current undergraduate and graduate students were satisfied with the overall curriculum. Although there are areas that the ECTE curriculum needs to be improved, most employers of the new graduates were satisfied with the graduates' performance.

The findings of the study answered the main questions from the UNESCO concerns and the objectives of the study, which were evaluated based on the 5 components of the CIPP model. Most of the research literature clearly shows that the teacher matters. It is clear that the Ministry of Education and Sports is committed to providing quality early childhood education services that meet the Revised Education Law of 2015 through the support of the ECTE curriculum for Bachelor Degree level at Dongkamxang TTC.

Plans are underway to expand the ECTE curriculum to other TTCs with the support of MOEs. Therefore, findings from this study also correspond with result of the earlier formative ECTE evaluation in 2015 and will help support the improvement of the future ECTE curriculum.

Recommendations for the utilisation of curricular evaluation:

1. Improve individual courses: This could be done by increasing content on the relationships among home, school, and community; child-caring for children under 3 years old; nutrition; basic first-aid; songs, music, folktales based on Laos' context; personality improvement; classroom management; quality assurance; IT skills; seminar and classroom research conduct.

2. Set up an appropriate learning environment, provide adequate equipment and facilities that meet the students' requirements (for example, computers, high speed internet for fast information searching, documents, textbooks, references both in Laos and English, meeting rooms).

3. Conduct seminars by inviting stakeholders such as lecturers from teacher training colleges (TTCs), school supervisors, preschool teachers, school administrators, graduates, and practicum students to provide feedback and suggestions and plan to collaboratively work on the supervision process that would be of benefit to all.

Recommendations for the Future Research:

1. Research should be conducted to follow up the utilisation of the revised curriculum.

2. Research should be conducted to follow up the achievement of the graduates from this curriculum.

3. Comparative research should investigate the achievement of the graduates from the ECTE curriculum (12+4 system) with graduates from other systems.

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