The creation of multimedia electronic books for Thai youth on cultural uniqueness of ASEAN countries

การสร้างสรรค์หนังสืออิเล็กทรอนิกส์มัลติมีเดียสำหรับเยาวชนไทย เรื่อง เอกลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมของประเทศอาเซียน

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Abstract

This qualitative research was integrated from the thesis, namely: *The Innovative Development of an Electronic Book on Cultural Uniqueness of ASEAN Countries for Thai Youth*. The purposes of the research were: 1) To study the cultural uniqueness of each ASEAN country, and 2) To create multimedia electronic books for Thai youth. The areas of study were 12educational institutions in Bangkok and its vicinity area. The purposively selected samples were totally 114 informants: 30 experts, 24 practitioners, and 60 Thai youth. The instruments used in the research were surveys, observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and workshops. The research results were a series of 7 multimedia electronic books for Thai youth on the cultural uniqueness of ASEAN countries which were synthesized in accordance with the comments of the experts including the results of the learning needs of the youth. The 7 multimedia electronic books were rhyme named in Thai language: 1) Folkways 2) Food 3) Sheltering 4) Costumes 5) Tourist Places 6) Tradition, and 7) Plays and Performances. Thai youth and public can download them from internet and easily use any leisure facilities available and they are readable both online and offline with devices in every system and platform including computers, tablets, and smartphones.

Keywords: multimedia, electronic book, cultural uniqueness, ASEAN, youth

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้บูรณาการจากวิทยานิพนธ์เรื่อง: *การพัฒนานวัตกรรมหนังสืออิเล็กทรอนิกส์: เอกลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมของประเทศอาเซียนสำหรับเยาวชนไทย* วัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัยคือ 1) เพื่อศึกษาเอกลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมของแต่ละประเทศอาเซียนและ 2) เพื่อสร้างหนังสืออิเล็กทรอนิกส์สำหรับเยาวชนไทย พื้นที่การศึกษาคือสถาบันการศึกษาในเขตกรุงเทพฯและปริมณฑลรวม 12 แห่ง กลุ่มตัวอย่างเลือกแบบเฉพาะเจาะจง ได้แก่ ผู้เชี่ยวชาญ 30 คน ผู้ปฏิบัติงาน 24 คน และเยาวชน 60 คนรวม 114 คน เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยคือ แบบสำรวจ แบบสังเกต แบบสัมภาษณ์ แบบสนทนากลุ่ม และแบบประชุมเชิงปฏิบัติการ ผลการวิจัยคือ หนังสืออิเล็กทรอนิกส์มัลติมีเดียสำหรับเยาวชนไทยเป็นชุด 7 เล่มที่มีเนื้อหาเกี่ยวกับเอกลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมของประเทศอาเซียนซึ่งสังเคราะห์จากความเห็นของผู้เชี่ยวชาญและความต้องการเรียนรู้ของเยาวชน โดยผู้วิจัยได้ตั้งชื่อให้มีเสียงคล้องจองกัน ได้แก่ 1) วิถีประชา 2) อาหารการกิน 3) สถานถิ่นเคหา 4) เสื้อผ้าอาภรณ์ 5) สัญจรทัศนา 6) ล้ำค่าประเพณีและ 7) สุนทรีย์การแสดง หนังสืออิเล็กทรอนิกส์ชุดนี้เยาวชนไทยและประชาชนสามารถดาวน์โหลดจากอินเทอร์เน็ตได้ง่ายและใช้เครื่องมืออ่านอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ได้หลายชนิด สามารถอ่านได้ทั้งแบบออนไลน์และออฟไลน์ ไม่ว่าจะเป็นระบบและแพลตฟอร์มใด ๆ โดยเฉพาะเครื่องคอมพิวเตอร์ เครื่องแท็บเล็ต และโทรศัพท์มือถือแบบสมาร์ทโฟน

คำสำคัญ: มัลติมีเดีย, หนังสืออิเล็กทรอนิกส์, เอกลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรม, อาเซียน, เยาวชน

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1. Introduction

ASEAN Community curtains has officially opened in early 2016. By the time, each member country is trying to accelerate the full quality of the population to join with this regional community. Thailand has realized that education is one of the most important factors to prepare effective population whose potentiality can support the three main pillars of the ASEAN Community, namely the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). The qualified population is the most crucial aspect deemed necessary for the progress and evolution of ASEAN and its people [1]. It needs to make much progress in all aspects of education in order to strengthen the Community.

Through education, Thailand needs to build up Thai people to the level which is aligned with the people quality development goal of ASEAN Community. This means Thailand want to see the people become active-minded, thoughtful, full of wisdom and creative, and people having good judgment. One much desired character is that they will love to learn new things continuously throughout their lives and get knowledge and ability in science and technology [1]. Therefore, Thailand needs to focus on building up Thai people to be wholesome, which means becoming thoughtful, responsible, considerate, wise, and creative. The important characteristics of this goal are continuous learning for life, mastery in science and technology, realization of the importance of learning procedures in solving the local problems and in establishing lasting economic systems and development [2]. Unfortunately, at present time, Thai people apparently do not have a good habit of reading. A survey reports that the average reading habit of Thai people is only 5 books per year by a person. This is a very low rate compared to those of other ASEAN countries. It also found that Thai people seldom read books about life quality development, job opportunities, making new careers and books written in English [3].

These facts are good reasons to develop a tool to help promote reading for learning and for self-adjustment to modernization. Tools such as electronic books or e-books are not only interesting but also convenient to read anywhere [4]. They can save much money and time. People can learn from them by using computers, tablets, or any kind of electronic devices such as smartphones. The electronic books are considered as an educational innovation, which are widely accepted by educators [5].

By using soft powers which are arts, culture and education, Thailand must give Thai people the knowledge and understanding about the cultural uniqueness of the ASEAN countries. To create electronic books as innovative tools to promote skillful and integral learning about ASEAN will help Thai youth to look into themselves and perceive themselves both as an individual and as a member of a community, country or as a region. Thai youth will understand the complicated connection of all the countries in ASEAN. With such understanding they will be able to appreciate the differences among the countries. They can also value the cultural uniqueness and diversities which affect each country the beliefs and culture. [6] This will help reduce the disadvantages of Thai youth and people caused by their ignorance - not knowing them, as well as not knowing us. But the ignorance will be changed into "knowing myself and knowing them" [7]. Using innovative electronic books will promote skills in reading for learning about themselves and their neighbors focusing on the background of the culture. Introducing informal education to the youth will equip them with lasting learning. This will also prepare Thai people to join ASEAN Community in an effective way.

This research work can be viewed as a way of fulfilling the gap in education management of Ministry of Education and all levels of educational institutions. The electronic book will become a tool for informal education about cultural uniqueness to equip people for the ASEAN Community.

2. Objectives

2.1 To study the cultural uniqueness of each ASEAN country.

2.2 To create multimedia electronic books for Thai youth on cultural uniqueness of ASEAN countries.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Population and samples

3.1.1 Population

The research population were 1) Thai youth aged between 18-25 years, 2) experts or scholars in cultural uniqueness of ASEAN countries, and 3) teachers responsible on ASEAN culture courses in secondary schools and universities.

3.1.2 Samples

The samples comprised of 3 categories as follows:

1) 30 key informants purposive selected from scholars or experts in culture from the ASEAN Department, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, scholars from ASEAN-Thailand Alliance, scholars on culture from the embassies of ASEAN countries in Bangkok, experts on culture in Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture.

2) 20 casual informants purposive selected from teachers and instructors from 5 secondary schools and 5 universities in Bangkok perimeter area.

3) 60 general informants purposive selected from students in 6 secondary schools, and 6 universities in Bangkok and its perimeter area.

3.2 Research tools

The research methods and tools used in collecting data, data analysis and data synthesis were: 1) survey, 2) structured interview, 3) unstructured interview, 4) observation, 5) focus group discussion, and 6) workshop

3.3 Conceptual and theoretical background

The research was conducted under the following conceptual and theoretical backgrounds.

3.3.1 Concepts: 1) electronic book, and 2) learning psychology

3.3.2 Theories: 1) Constructivism theory, 2) Cultural diffusion theory, 3) Symbolic relation theory, and 4) Diffusion of innovation theory

3.4 Research procedures

The researcher used various forms of data collecting tools as mentioned above especially survey, structured interview, unstructured interview, observation, and focus group discussion with the purposive selected samples as well as every sources of information on the culture of ASEAN countries. The researcher then verified the data validity by means of triangulation verification methods. Later on the researcher analyzed the collected data and synthesized the needs to know of the Thai youth and the knowledge necessary for Thai youth about the culture of ASEAN countries. Then all data synthesized were presented to have widely discussed and commented by some representatives of the experts and the samples in a group discussion and a workshop. Finally the researcher totally revised and reorganized the body of knowledge on the cultural uniqueness of ASEAN countries for further proceeding on the procedures of the multimedia electronic books creation.

4. Research results

The results of the research on *"The creation of multimedia electronic books for Thai youth on cultural uniqueness of ASEAN countries"* were summarized below:

Part 1: The Cultural Uniqueness of each ASEAN Country.

The researcher studied what kinds of cultural uniqueness of each ASEAN country by means of collecting data from the three categories selected samples and various sources of data. The triangulation methods of verification were used to verify the content validity. The researcher then analyzed and synthesized the verified data and concluded the body of knowledge as cultural categories in accordance with the accounts from the findings on learning needs and prospects of the target youth together with the opinions of the

experts from interviews, focus group discussion, and workshops. Then the conclusive contents were divided into seven episodes, each one contained concerning knowledge of not too many details. The seven episodes were arranged in descending order of the importance, beginning with the first episode on the subject of a nation and its people which were the core areas of every human culture, along with three episodes on the key factors essential for the livelihood of the people, and the last three episodes on the traditional events and annual activities when the people gathered in the society. Each episode started from the contents of Thailand and then sorted the countries according to the cultural groups: the Mekong cultural group, the Islamic cultural group, and the multi-cultural group as the followings, 1) the Kingdom of Thailand, 2) the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 3) the Kingdom of Cambodia, 4) the Republic of Vietnam, 5) the Union of Myanmar, 6) Malaysia, 7) the Republic of Indonesia, 8) the Kingdom of Brunei Darussalam, 9) the Republic of Singapore, and 10) the Republic of the Philippines.

The seven episodes of the cultural uniqueness of the ASEAN countries were concluded as stated briefly below.

Episode 1: Nation and Folkways: Brief history of the nation and the country, ethnic groups, and lifestyles of the people.

Episode 2: Food: Cuisines including savory snacks which were interesting reputation and were widely consumed.

Episode 3: Sheltering: Uniquely architectural housing features and the functionality in the construction of dwellings.

Episode 4: Costumes: National and unique dresses used in everyday life, and in different occasions.

Episode 5: Tourist Attractions: Sights, cultural works of creativity, both past and present, reputable sources and attractions.

Episode 6: Tradition: Life traditions and festive tradition, and lifestyles of the people that

were unique and reflected in society stemmed from past to present.

Episode 7: Plays and performances: Indigenous games and sports, performing arts, music and drama, both local and national levels.

Part 2: The creation of multimedia electronic books for Thai youth.

The seven episodes of the cultural uniqueness of the ASEAN countries were used to create a series of seven multimedia electronic books for Thai youth. The researcher intentionally named the seven electronic books rhyme in Thai language. Each book described the cultural uniqueness of the ten countries starting from Thailand and sorting the other countries from the Mekong cultural group, the Islamic cultural group, and the multi-cultural group as already mentioned. An important step in the development of the electronic book was started from collecting pictures and videos of which the contents attributed to the books attractive and making easy to understand the cultural contents. Then the researcher proceeded to design artwork of the book for being most attraction, outstanding, and suitable to be taken for the creation of the electronic books.

The computer application package for the preparation of multimedia electronic book which the researcher chose to use was the "I Love Library Program". The program belongs to the OPENSERVE Co., Ltd. of which the e-book creation program is the first program and most users in Thailand [8]. The program used for electronic books creation was reviewed, discussed and approved by experts in interviews, group discussion, and workshops. At the present, the seven multimedia electronic books are ready to serve everyone on the website of the OPENSERVE Co., Ltd. (http://www.ilovelibrary.com/free-ebook).

5. Discussion

The researcher has some comments on the results of study as follows:

5.1 As for the research results on the cultural uniqueness of each ASEAN country, the researcher is of the opinion that the culture of each country mainly depended on the backgrounds of the country, especially geographical and historical bases, including the most important aspects in religions, faiths, and beliefs, as well as the cultural influences of the superpower countries. It can be said the culture of the neighboring countries are mostly similar and influential each other.

In the case that the contents of the cultural uniqueness of each country were divided into seven episodes, each episode contained brief contents, not too much in details. On this point, the researcher realizes, as same as the comments of the experts and the limitation of e-book stated in the literature review, if the contents in deep details would be included in an electronic book completely. The books would be too large and urbanized as textbooks which would be not attractive enough to read. The books which are ideal for learning should be at the disposition of the juvenile brain, and not hard and not taking too long to read. The number of the contents in a series of seven multimedia electronic books are reasonable. The contents presented were selected thematic approach, relevant to the lives of people in their daily lives and in society. The contents of the book are interesting because they satisfy the curiosity of the general public, and they were carefully selected from dominant or famous culture of individual countries. In addition, the essences of each episode were selected as valuable to intelligence, attitude and vision necessary. For sorting the countries by beginning with Thailand in the first order, this is appropriate, because humans often have their own interests first [6], then the next country on the borders with Thailand. That is natural that people would care about things surrounding themselves, especially countries that are relevant to both geography, history and culture, as well as for the Islamic countries where located rather far, so being made the contents

available in the next sequence, and finally ending with the countries with multi-culturalism. This is in consistent with Cultural Diffusion Theory [9], especially the German School based on the concept of Franz Boas that people with a culture similar to those that have intimacy and relationship with each other before. The finding about the contents on the ASEAN Community is in consistent with the researches of many scholars that the education of Thailand is necessary to strengthen the quality of the curriculum, teachers and students as well as educational personnel as the findings of Phraepat Yodkaew [10], Kamonchanok Pharkpoom [11], that are consistent on issues today; there are indications of the need to prepare personnel in various fields, and together to produce qualified personnel. The key measure is to strengthen the capacity of education to serve the interests of the nation to participate in the ASEAN Community even more.

5.2 From the contents resulted from the research, the researcher prepared a series of seven books with still images, photos, and video into artwork designing. The photos and video components are very important because they make the book more interesting than general text books. The books were narrated both in Thai and in English languages. The moving pictures and audio from the video cause even more interesting, enjoyment, and understanding of cultural contents more clearly [12].

The electronic books were developed with the concept of multimedia generated by a computer program in the form of digital files. The electronic books will display the animation, graphics, text, and audio in forms of multimedia objects which provides a variety of computing technology in new ways to arouse the attention of the users and adding fun to learn more and more.

The electronic books were created in accordance with the Diffusion Theory of Innovation and they are in consistent widely with the theory which states that the essences of innovation depend on innovation itself. Moreover the innovation will be recognized sooner or later depending on

five factors: 1) relative advantage, 2) compatibility, 3) less complexity, 4) less time, and 5) observability [9]. The electronic books created under the research have developed within the mentioned factors of the innovation entirety, so that it would be recognized and accepted easily.

The development of electronic books is in consistent with the findings of several scholars, for examples, Saowaluck Yarnnasombut [13], Philip Baker [14], Dirk Delo [15], Todd Doman [16] which found that most of the students were interested and willing to learn with electronic books. They also agreed to support the contents of the lessons of each course to produce electronic books. The researchers found that students who learned from electronic books with higher student achievement were significantly, and the satisfaction of the electronic books were high level, the learning outcomes of students after classes are significantly higher than before, and satisfaction of students with the books were at the most.

In case the use of "I Love Library program" for the creation of the electronic books, the researcher is sure that the program is effective application program. The owner company is the first software company in Thailand which provides the opportunity to use the company's program on creative works without copyright issues. The program can be used for development of multimedia electronic books completely. In addition, the company has also opened a website (www.ilovelibrary.com) with the aim of providing free books in the library. A large number of electronic books come from the support of both public and private sections. Another important one is that the company will bring the work of the electronic books uploaded onto the website of the company [8]. The researcher understands that this website will help the electronic books being widely available. The most significant reason for using this application program is that the researcher was reviewed and approved the use of the package by experts in interviews and in a

workshop with a same consideration that the youth, the public and every institutions may download the electronic books from internet, use any leisure facilities available, and being readable both online and offline by using reading devices with all common systems and platforms, computers, tablets and smartphones. The uses of this electronic books are consistent with the Diffusion Theory of Innovation [9]. From various reasons of those scholars, the researcher is of the opinions that the development of the electronic books can be used as a medium to improve the quality of youth effectively.

6. Suggestions

6.1 Suggestions for further utilization and application

The knowledge about cultural uniqueness of the ASEAN countries and the electronic books which are the results from the thesis can be utilized extensively as follows:

6.1.1 Thai youth in high schools and universities around the country, including the general public can download the series of seven electronic books from internet. The books can be used on any leisure facilities available and readable both online and offline. Any types of reading devices in all systems and platforms including PCs, tablets, and smartphones can be used. The students can use this series of electronic books as their personal learning media to develop their own level of potential citizenship to carry out any activities related to "nation, people and culture" of ASEAN countries efficiently.

6.1.2 Both secondary and tertiary teachers can use the electronic books as a result of this research in teaching and learning in the classroom. The electronic books can be used as informal learning equipment and can cultivate good reading habits of Thai youth and people in general, and also an effective media for preparing Thai people to be ASEAN citizens with high potentiality. Moreover teachers may assign students to read

electronic books outside of school hours overnight leisurely in order to enhance their knowledge and experiences which can strengthen their quality extensively.

6.1.3 Educational institutions at all levels and concerning departments can use the contents of cultural uniqueness as a result of this research including knowledge about the learning needs of young people about the culture to guide the development of curriculum and learning process with what the youth need to learn. These enrich the youth who lack of interest and awareness of what need to be learned in order to fulfill their knowledges on their own country and other countries.

6.1.4 Teachers and those related to academic performances and the educational materials can use the electronic books as examples in the development of electronic books and the preparation of the learning activities in subjects related to high efficiency even further.

6.1.5 Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture can use the results of this research as a tool to develop applications and missions based on the culture. The electronic books can use as learning materials for students and general people in libraries of institutions at all levels.

6.2 Suggestions for further study

Students, teachers and scholars who are interested in doing researches on culture, ASEAN Community, and electronic books may consider doing on the following issues.

6.2.1 Depth study on any cultural sides of the ASEAN countries, such as tourism, arts and world cultural heritage, etc. The study may be presented in the form of electronic books.

6.2.2 Study on cultural identity, a common characteristic of ASEAN countries, such as Buddhist tradition, social value, life tradition, language and literature, and performing arts, and so on.

6.2.3 Comparative study on culture of ASEAN countries, especially those countries on historical and cultural roots, the influence of environment on cultural evolution and values for its own country and the ASEAN Community in the present.

6.2.4 Study on ASEAN Community about issues related to ideological matter - "One Vision, One Identity, One Community" which may focus on its characteristics, ideology development, and the application of ASEAN ideology to the community administration.

6.2.5 Study on electronic book development for teaching culture, and important languages in ASEAN Community with focusing on contents related to the countries and culture of ASEAN countries.

7. Conclusion

The results of the research are a series of 7 multimedia electronic books on the cultural uniqueness of each country in ASEAN. The multimedia electronic books have been created with text, audio both in Thai and in English, four-color illustrations, photos, and videos. Thai youth and general public who are interested in electronic books and cultural uniqueness of ASEAN countries can download them into computers, tablets, and smartphones with any systems. The electronic books are readable both online and offline. The contents of each electronic book are appropriate for self-study and not so difficult like textbooks. The multimedia electronic books can be used as the media to help strengthen the reading habit among the youth as well. That is very important to improve the understanding of Thai people on ASEAN Community and able to be citizens of good quality in managing various activities for potential benefit of Thailand whatsoever concerning with the ASEAN Community.

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