

## SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING CHARACTERISTICS OF THAI CHILDREN IN THE ASEAN COMMUNITY

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**Abstract:** The objectives of this research were 1) to study the current and desirable states of school management for developing characteristics of Thai children in the ASEAN community. 2) to analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of school management for developing characteristics of Thai children in the ASEAN community and 3) to develop school management strategies for developing characteristics of Thai children in the ASEAN community. The study was mixed-method research. The samples were 183 state-maintained kindergartens. The informants include 131 school administrators and 167 teachers responsible for the ASEAN projects, 298 people in total. The instruments used in this study were a questionnaire and an evaluation form to determine the feasibility and suitability of strategies. The data were analyzed by frequency, percentage, average, standard deviation,  $PNI_{Modified}$  and content analysis. The research results showed the following: 1) The current state of the management for developing characteristics of Thai children in the ASEAN community was overall at a high level ( $\bar{X}$ = 3.695). When considering each aspect, the social aspect was at the highest average ( $x$ = 3.843). The desirable state of management for developing characteristics of Thai children in the ASEAN community was overall at a high level ( $\bar{X}$ = 4.677). When considering each aspect, the social aspect was at the highest average ( $x$ = 4.754). 2) The strength of management for developing characteristics of Thai children in the ASEAN community was the social aspect. The weaknesses were skills, environment and knowledge respectively. The government policies and technology were considered as the opportunities of management for developing characteristics of Thai children in the ASEAN community. The economy and

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society were considered as the threats of management for developing characteristics of Thai children in the ASEAN community. 3) Four management strategies were developed including (i) To reform school management for promoting Thai children's skills of the ASEAN community; (ii) To reform school management for promoting Thai children's environment of the ASEAN community; (iii) To reform school management for promoting Thai children's knowledge of the ASEAN community; and (iv) To reform school management for promoting Thai children's society of the ASEAN community.

**Keywords:** Characteristics of Thai Children in The ASEAN Community, School Management Strategies, ASEAN Community

### Introduction

Entering the ASEAN community in 2015 is to become an association of 10 member countries of the Southeast Asian region in order to gain more strengths and capacities to compete. The association of 10 countries in Southeast Asia is the cooperation and collaboration to build the strong foundation of economic, social and political aspects which are ongoing developed. The noticeable development towards the ASEAN community is economy and trades. The free trade areas established for business gains among countries have become world-wide current trends. The ASEAN Free Trade Area Agreement (AFTA) has been developed by countries within the ASEAN region. It has been difficult for Thailand to avoid such trends (*Sirichai Kanjanawasee, 2005*). The opening of free trade would possibly have an impact on the education system of Thailand which is about to become a member of ASEAN community in 2015. Thailand should have an awareness and be prepared for the impact of ASEAN Free Trade Area Agreement. Many types of businesses in Thailand and overseas demand for skilled workers who are capable to perform multitask. For instance, they should be able to communicate effectively in multiple languages, possess specific skills and expertise, be able to think critically and find ways to solve problems, to create work and to produce the quality and effective work. Therefore, the present Thai educational system should be prepared to produce capable children and teens who would become the drive force towards the ASEAN community. The public sector should emphasize the quality educational management in order to develop the people's capacities so that they could be ready for the development of the country that strengthens the economy, politics and society in the future.

The Ministry of Education has established a policy to prepare the readiness of the Thai education as stipulated by the ASEAN Declaration on the Thai education. In order to comply with the agreement under the ASEAN outline as appeared in a Blueprint for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community which states that by 2015, the people of the ASEAN community will thoroughly receive the quality education, they will become knowledgeable and possess necessary skills needed for being ASEAN citizens. (Department of ASEAN Affairs, 2009) The Office of Basic Education Commission must implement teaching and learning projects on the ASEAN community such as a development project towards the ASEAN community and many other ASEAN projects in order to raise the awareness of students in all