

MAJOR: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS. XIAOXIA WEI: AN ACTION AGENDA FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN RESPONSE TO MARKETING ORIENTATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THAILAND. DISSERTATION.

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The objectives of this research are: 1) to identify the major challenges in higher education (HE); 2) to explore the application of marketing-oriented activities in HE; 3) to ascertain the perception and attitudes of educational leaders towards marketing orientation (MO) in higher education institutions (HEIs), Thailand; and 4) to propose an action agenda regarding MO for educational leaders of HEIs, Thailand.

Qualitative research methods, namely, the content analysis and semi-structured interview were employed. One hundred and eighty books related to HE were chosen for content analysis. U1, U2, U3 and U4 were selected as the sample universities representing limited admission, open, autonomous, and private universities respectively. Four presidents and/or vice presidents from the above universities were interviewed by employing semi-structured interviews.

The major findings are 1) the influences of MO and external drives have changed the context in which HEIs exist and therefore it calls for a strong and visionary leadership which can apply strategic long-term planning based a business platform. 2) The practice of MO in HE showed a) HEIs were committed to create a good image in order to attract perspective students; b) HEIs focused on increasing the satisfaction of their niche markets; c) in order to design excellent programs, reforms in curriculum were conducted to satisfy the practical demand-driven context; d) self-accountable entrepreneurial and academic activities were employed to enlist financial support. 3) The leaders of HEIs, Thailand were aware of the importance of applying marketing techniques and strategies in HE; nevertheless, such techniques and strategies were only applied at a superficial level and certain areas, rather than at a strategic and holistic level. 4) Therefore, the action agenda proposed calls for a strategic perspective towards the application of MO by employing a holistic approach in HEIs, Thailand, which covers the levels of 1) Government 2) the Public 3) the Industry 4) the University and 5) Leadership. The significance of the study is the action agenda can be referred by all the stakeholders of HE in order to effectively respond to MO.