

Repositioning the Field of Socio-Cultural Foundations under the Efficiency-Driven Reform in Teacher Education

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Article Info

Article History

Received:

01 Month Year

Accepted:

01 Month Year

Keywords

Socio-cultural foundations

Thai teacher education

Education reform

Teacher educator

Everyday life practices

Abstract

This article examines how qualification frameworks for Bachelor of Education and the Thai Teachers Council regulations on teaching professional standard affect the status of knowledge of socio-cultural foundations in teacher education institutions. The researcher used document analysis, in-depth interview and field observations with 7 teacher educators from 7 teacher education institutions. Findings indicate that socio-cultural foundations courses are still present in the teacher education program, and there is integration of the subject matters of philosophy and sociology of education. In addition, the everyday life discursive practices of teacher educators are the implementation of the teacher education curriculum reflecting negotiation, resistance, or articulation process between policy and practices. As a critical active agent in their own cultural politics, teacher educators are the most important actors influencing the status of knowledge of the field of socio-cultural foundations in teacher education institutions.

Introduction

A momentous shift in the process of producing teachers in Thailand occurred as a result of the phenomenon of curriculum standardization, state-mandated accountability, and the extension of the required study period according to the undergraduate teacher education curriculum. Recently, the Thai Education Ministry announced "Higher Education Qualifications Framework 2009" stipulating that the qualification standard for the fields of study were to be formulated for higher education institutions to develop or improve curriculum, instructional management and evaluation, and to ensure the quality of graduates in the field of study of similar qualification level. Hence, "Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, hereinafter called TQF: HEd, for the Bachelor of Education" has been defined and formulated.

It can be stated that all the Bachelor of Education programs tend to be developed in response to the changes of the nation and the changing ideology of educational administration, adjusted according to the socio-cultural, political and economic contexts, both at the national and international levels. This is because the promulgation of National Education Act A.D. 1999 had an impact upon the Bachelor of Education Program in that a qualification framework for graduates was set; they were required to develop the quality of teacher-ness and academics that ingrained morality and knowledge. Teachers were expected to manage teaching and learning in accordance with the

educational reform mandates. Thus, it can be seen that the desirable characteristics of graduate teachers covered both of teacher-ness and intellectual.

The promulgation of the National Education Act 1999 and the educational law relating to teacher preparation and development, and the ideology of education reform, which further impacts the preparation and development reform of teachers in Thailand, has drastically changed the dominant paradigm of the Thai teacher education. From the study of the teacher education reform documents prepared by the office of special projects for teacher education reform, it was found that the goal of the project was aimed at producing a new generation of qualified teachers, capable of empowering themselves, and of continuously improving their professional knowledge. It was the view of the project administrative leaders that the production of efficient and good teachers will bring about efficient and good learners as well. To simply put, ideal teachers must possess the quality of teacher-ness and academics. Similar notion can be observed from critical educators like Freire (1998), Giroux (1988) and Kincheloe, Slattery & Steinberg (2000), stating that the traits or qualities of teachers produced by teacher education institutions would be passed on to the teacher education students. If a teacher education institute produces knowledge-oriented teachers based on traditional teacher-centered pedagogy, those teachers will, likewise, guide their students to consume knowledge or impart information. Therefore, to be able to produce efficient and good teachers is the way to ensure the outcome of efficient and good students. The document for teacher education system reform has endorsed that this is one of the qualities of "teachers of the new generation."

However, the Thai teacher education reform project consists of certain different aspects, particularly in the area of educational research, expecting teacher education students themselves to obtain empirical knowledge in the fields such as classroom, school and community, and to build up a society of teacher educators and school teachers, in order to create a coalition both academically and politically when entering the teaching profession. These issues have become significant in the field of teacher education internationally, yet they were not highlighted in the project of the responsible authorities in Thailand mentioned previously. Although the ability to work in collaboration with people in different professions is touched upon, the priority seems to be the ability to create a coalition between teacher-students who have a common educational ideology, in order to provide support for each other before a coalition from diverse groups of people in society, where differences in race, class, culture, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status and political stances exist, can be sought for.

It is plausible to state that the reform of the Thai teacher education system, developed and practiced in the period of two decades, after the National Education Act 1999 was promulgated, clearly shows a paradigm shift in Thai teacher education and education per se that used to focus on teacher preparation and educational professionals with an emphasis on technocratic and traditional teacher-based knowledge, disregarding the essential foundational knowledge of philosophical, socio-cultural and historical contexts as it should be, towards the production of teachers that focuses on critical reflexivity in curriculum and teaching. The emphasis of critical reflective teaching is the reflection between the experiences gleaned from teaching praxis and the application of the theoretical-based knowledge to improve the existing teaching practices (Calderhead, 1989). This process can be referred to as critical reflection or critical reflexivity (Zeichner & Liston, 1996).

This approach of teacher education reform significantly stemmed from the importance of socio-cultural foundations as a sub-discipline within education, where teaching profession was a subject that ensured the students to be equipped with the qualities of good and efficient teachers. This field of study involved topics related to socio-cultural forces, institutions and human relations that existed both in the formal and non-formal school system, which either supported or hindered education. The essence of teaching profession allowed the students to explore and analyze socio-cultural, political, economic and historical influences on education and teacher education. It focused on the foundations of philosophies, thoughts, perspectives, and historical backgrounds, which were the fundamental components, necessary if current educational issues were to be critically analyzed. Teaching profession knowledge was also useful for predicting future trends and expediting responses to those related to teacher education situations and issues.

From the study of the regulations of the Thai Teachers Council on professional standards and professional ethics, it was found that the regulation of the A.D. 2005 contained 9 knowledge standards, of which 2 were the standards for socio-cultural foundations, namely educational psychology and teacher-ness, whereas the regulations of the A.D. 2013 contained 11 knowledge standards, of which 3 were the knowledge standard on socio-cultural foundations, namely teacher-ness, philosophy of education and morality, ethics and the code of conducts. Therefore, it can be concluded that a teacher must have a foundational knowledge encompassing philosophy of education and educational psychology. In the meanwhile, the socio-cultural foundations including sociology, anthropology and history may appear less important that they were not evident in the knowledge standards established by the state.

However, the Ministry of Education had the resolution that teacher education institutions were to adjust the Bachelor of Education Program by reversing the 5-year program to the 4-year program once again, and that was to be in effect from the end of the year 2018 onward. From my own observations regarding the current status of the socio-cultural foundations as a declining state of knowledge, it led to the initial hypothesis of this study: - TQF: HEd for Bachelor of Education (four-year program) 2019, and the Thai Teachers Council regulations on teaching professional standard (fourth edition) 2019, have cause critical impacts on the socio-cultural foundations in teacher education institutions. The effects may be long-term, the consequences of which may be either desirable or unintended. Moreover, the impacts can be categorized by either positive or negative direction. It can be said that when the state has set a TQF, and the Thai Teachers Council regulations 2019 was announced – both were for teacher education institutions to comply with - the teacher education, as a directly related field, and also the socio-cultural foundations, as part of teacher education would have to bear the impacts. More importantly, such resolution also affected teacher educators, academics and teacher education students.

With this problematic situation and challenges, it is necessary to study and analyze the status of knowledge of socio-cultural foundations as a field under the efficiency-driven teacher education reform in Thailand which has been an impact of TQF: HEd for Bachelor of Education and the Thai Teachers Council regulations on teaching professional standard 2019. It is worthwhile to conduct a study on the real phenomenon in teacher education institutions, and to find out in what ways that everyday life discursive practices of teacher educators have a negotiation, resistance, or articulation process to meet these challenges (Sutton & Levinson, 2001).

Research Objective

To study and analyze the status of knowledge of the field of socio-cultural foundations which has been an impact of TQF: HEd for Bachelor of Education and the Thai Teachers Council regulations on teaching professional standard 2019.

Scope of Research

1) Scope of area: The researcher selected teacher education institutions, using the area selection method that took into accounts the differences in the teacher education program developed in each institution. The differences encompassed several aspects, whether it be the period of establishment (traditional teachers training college - universities that managed the faculty of education), university location (central-regional), and academic focuses. As such, the total of 7 teacher education institutions were selected, all of which provided Bachelor of Education programs, and offered foundational courses in teaching profession. The curriculum was designed and certified by the Thai Teachers Council. The selected institutions have already organized both teaching profession courses for Bachelor of Education, with a 5-year program and a 4-year program during the same period of time.

2) Scope of content: The study was divided into 2 parts:

2.1) Study at the texts level: This process examined the Bachelor of Education course syllabus and all types of relevant texts and the Thai government policy documents on pre-service teacher preparation as well as academic discourse in Thai teacher education.

2.2) Study at the discursive practices level: This part explored the discursive practices under the TQF for Bachelor of Education and the regulations of the Thai Teachers Council on teaching professional standard, which concerned mainly the teacher educators in the faculty of education, as the real actors of the discursive practices.

3) Scope of time

The researcher has examined the impact of TQF: HEd for Bachelor of Education and the regulations of the Thai Teachers Council on teaching professional standard, upon the status of knowledge of the field of socio-cultural foundations in teacher education institutions, during such period of time the Thai government had the resolution that teacher education institutions must adjust the Bachelor of Education curriculum from a 5-year program to a 4-year program.

4) Scope of population

The researcher has selected key informants through the purposeful sampling method, obtaining 7 teacher educators in 7 teacher education institutions.

Research Method

The qualitative research was employed, coupled with the interpretive framework. The researcher divided the data collection methods into two parts. The first part was the collection of information from the documents whereas the second part was the collection of field data. The details were as follows:

1) Use of documented information: The researcher used the documented data to provide understanding of the socio-cultural and historical contexts of the undergraduate teacher preparation of teacher education institutions, as detailed in the scope of content.

2) The collection of field data: The researcher collected the data by using the in-depth interview method, designed as semi-structured interview, which allowed the flexibility in word changing to suit the individual research participant and each interview situation. Before each interview was conducted, the researcher introduced himself, informing the details about the background and purpose of this research and the research objective. The researcher requested permission from the interviewees to take notes and record audio during the conversation.

Key informants

The researcher selects key informants using the purposeful sampling method, which involved no complications in structures. Informants were selected from those who can provide in-depth information for the study, either in terms of support, challenges and possibilities as well as further recommendations. The key informants selected were 7 teacher educators in teacher education institutions, all of whom were considered the social actors in their discursive space as they were responsible for teaching, conducting research, providing academic services and engaging in social-community collaboration. The key informants' educational backgrounds, scholarly interests, and affiliations were associated with curriculum and instruction, educational administration and socio-cultural foundations.

Data collection and analysis

In order to obtain detailed and complete information consistent with the research objective, the researcher used two main methods of collecting data: document study and in-depth interviews. The information obtained from field interviews was recorded by the researcher, which was used in conjunction with the data obtained from the document study.

While studying the information of the studied area, the researcher processed the data in parallel with the study by listening to the audio tape of each interview. The details were compiled to summarize the information obtained from interviews, and the data were promptly categorized into groups. The study of data was completed when the data was thoroughly collected according to the research objective. All of the categorized data were then interpreted and given explanations (Scott, 1990). The information was, then, linked to the theoretical concept by means of interpretation, and was put into the critical analysis through the practice of everyday life (de Certeau, 1984).

Findings

This section presents the status of knowledge of the field of socio-cultural foundations which has been an impact of TQF: HEd for Bachelor of Education and the Thai Teachers Council regulations on teaching professional standard 2019. The researcher will use fictitious names replacing the identities of the faculties of education and universities that are key informant sources. The research findings can be divided into 2 aspects detailed as follows:

1) At the texts level: The researcher analyzed the content, issues, and essential substances that constituted to the texts of TQF: HEd for Bachelor of Education and the regulations of the Thai Teachers Council, which reflected

the underpinning ideals and nature of the relationship between the aforementioned texts and the Bachelor of Education's curriculum documents including course manuals, scholarly publications, academic documents, community services, and academic service of the departments and professors, and the Thai government policy documents on pre-service teacher preparation as well as academic discourse in Thai teacher education, affecting the field of socio-cultural foundations. The details were explained as follows:

1.1) Texts on teacher education curriculum: From the study of the program specification or TQF: HEd for the Bachelor of Education, it was found that:

1) Krisana University offered courses of the 5-year curriculum, namely, 1) conscience and ethics of teaching profession and 2) paradigms on educational studies. For the 4-year curriculum, the courses were 1) morality and ethics of teaching profession; 2) mission relationships between schools and communities; and 3) philosophy of education and development of teaching profession.

2) Champi University offered the courses of the 5-year curriculum, namely, 1) philosophy of education and educational theories and 2) teacher-ness and ethics of teaching profession. The 4-year curriculum provided 1) teacher's role model in the modern classroom, 2) globalization and education for being smart citizenship; and 3) multicultural education and community-based educational management.

3) Sonklin University offered the courses of the 5-year curriculum, namely, 1) philosophy of education and 2) teacher-ness and morality, ethics, and the code of conducts. The 4-year curriculum provided 1) teacher-ness, and 2) relationship between school, parents and community.

4) Kalong University's 5-year curriculum included 1) teacher-ness, 2) philosophy of education and educational administration, and 3) morality, ethics, and code of conducts for teachers. The 4-year curriculum offered 1) teacher-ness and 2) principles and philosophy of education.

5) Saraphi University's 5-year curriculum included 1) foundations of education, 2) teacher as professional practices in Thai society, and 3) morality and professional ethics of teachers. The 4-year curriculum offered morality, ethics, and the code of conducts for teachers.

6) Champa University managed the 5-year curriculum, which included the courses of 1) philosophy of education and educational theories, 2) teacher professional development, and 3) morality, ethics and the code of conducts for teachers. The 4-year curriculum offered courses such as 1) teacher professional development and 2) school and community relations.

7) Puangchompu University's 5-year curriculum offered courses, namely, 1) foundations of education and 2) teacher-ness whereas the 4-year curriculum offered courses such as 1) relationship with parents and community and 2) teaching profession and teacher-ness.

TQF: HEd for Bachelor of Education and the regulations of the Thai Teachers Council on teaching professional standard 2019 has caused significant changes to the socio-cultural foundation courses of 7 teacher education institutions, which can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The number of socio-cultural foundation courses has increased or remained intact, but there is integration between the content of the philosophy of education and the sociology of education. This shift appeared in 4 teacher education institutions, namely, Krisana University, Champi University, Sonklin University, and Puangchompu University.
- 2) The number of socio-cultural foundation courses has decreased, but there is integration between the content of the philosophy of education and the sociology of education. This change appeared in 2 teacher education institutions, namely, Kalong University and Champa University.
- 3) The number of socio-cultural foundation courses has decreased and there was no integration between the content of the philosophy of education and the sociology of education, as evidenced in 1 teacher education institute, namely, Saraphi University.

1.2) Texts of other documents related to teacher education and the field of socio-cultural foundations of education. From the analysis of all relevant texts and documents in 7 teacher education institutions, the common themes were found as follows.

Teaching profession career was regarded as highly professionalism, which required as follows:

- 1) A standard of knowledge and high competence at the national or international level. Teachers must be equipped with knowledge of students, curriculum, and contents to be taught, and must be adept at teaching methods that stimulated the students' learning process.
- 2) Teachers should be perceptive about delivering suitable knowledge with situations and the readiness of students.
- 3) Teachers were expected to take responsibility for the outcome from their decision-making process, practices, and be able to manage and solve problems, in coordination with others to achieve the goal of the task.
- 4) Teachers were expected to keep themselves updated, be innovative, creative, and make use of modern media and equipment in their work.
- 5) They must adhere to teaching professional practices and ethics, considering mainly the benefits of the service recipients.
- 6) They should be compensated according to the level of their competence and expertise, based on a high level of professionalism.

It is vital to create genuine aspiration for teacher educators, so they can be dedicated for building active teacher education students. This is to ensure that the teacher education students can develop their inquiry skills, which are necessary for the teacher professionalism and the pedagogical content knowledge of the subjects, allowing them to integrate both components together. Besides, the teacher education students are required to study the foundation subjects and subjects related to the local community where the school is located.

Therefore, it is important that teacher education students acquire knowledge from various fields of study available in the university, school classroom, workplace, media centers, so they can draw lessons arising from their learning process to formulate problematic issues and create projects based on social, spatial and community phenomena. Alternatively, the teacher education students can conduct research based on real-world issues, using various

methods in pedagogical sciences, such as 'teach less, learn more,' project-based learning, cooperative learning, coaching and mentoring, and professional learning community (PLC) for teachers. There should be time and space provided for the teacher education students to participate in the critical reflection in which they can draw their own thoughts and understanding.

From the study at the texts on teacher education curriculum and texts of other documents related to teacher education and the field of socio-cultural foundations, a conclusion can be drawn. That is, the socio-cultural foundation courses are still present in the teacher education programs of teacher education institutions, and there is integration of the subject matters of philosophy and sociology of education. In the meanwhile, there is no clear integration between content of history and anthropology of education and the teacher education curriculum. In addition, the concepts and important principles in the socio-cultural foundations are not evident in other related texts. Yet, what appeared, instead, are the concepts and important principles of the teaching profession, teacher-ness, the method of educational inquiry and practices, phenomena, spatial and community-based social issues, a coalition and partnership building in the teaching profession, and critical reflection processes. These are the conceptual ideals of socio-cultural foundations, which are the basis for the formation of the qualified teachers embodying desirable attributes of teaching professionalism and intellectual.

2) At the discursive practices level: The researcher studied the discursive practices of the text formulation under the TQF: HEd for Bachelor of Education and the regulations of the Thai Teachers Council, embodying elements, i.e., teacher educators in the faculty of education, as the real actors of the discursive practices. It was found that:

2.1) Discursive practices in the teacher education curriculum

Although the higher education qualifications framework and the regulations of the Thai Teachers Council, significantly affected the status of knowledge of the field of socio-cultural foundations, the research results indicated that the discursive practices at the teacher education curriculum level and at an everyday life practice level had a greater articulated effect on the field of socio-cultural foundations than regulatory or governmental-mandated policies, as illustrated in the following evidences:

"To the question if Thai qualification frameworks and the regulations of the Teachers Council have the effects on socio-cultural foundations or not, my answer would be yes. The effects are clearly perceived, especially at the curriculum practices level, as both TQF: HEd and the regulations have decreased the number of credits of teaching profession courses. Of course, socio-cultural foundation courses have not attracted the attention of teacher educators as it should be. When the teacher education curriculum was adjusted to for 4 years, courses like philosophy of education or social ideologies of education that were a 3-credit course in the 5-year teacher education curriculum may be removed, or, in a brighter scenario, integrated into the teacher-ness and teaching profession course, or courses related to the ethics and professional standard of teachers."

(Teacher educator A, May 2021)

"When we were designing the curriculum, our view was that the socio-cultural foundations were very important in preparing teachers who had the core spirit of teachers and were the intellectuals at the same time. There were

debates whether educational philosophy should remain or be removed, and should this subject be an individual course or be integrated. We arrived at the conclusion, after studying TQF: HEd and regulations, that educational philosophy is still necessary for teacher education students. For that to happen, the credits can be reduced and the title can be adjusted in accordance with the TQF: HEd. Contemporary educational issues should be integrated rather than in-depth educational foundation contents, so it can respond to the contexts of the 4.0 era better."

(Teacher educator C, June 2021)

"When designing the new 4-year curriculum, we, the lecturers who were teaching the subjects of socio-cultural foundations, were negotiating with the executive administrators and the academic department of the faculty. We explained to them that to become a teacher who has the teaching spirit and an awareness of social problems, community and the contemporary world, the teacher education student must study philosophy of education, or foundational knowledge in social science and humanities education. There were several serious discussions and, eventually, a conclusion can be reached. It seemed that some academic majors did not see how important socio-cultural foundations were."

(Teacher educator D, April 2021)

"We finally had a successful negotiation. The faculty curriculum committees decided to maintain the courses, but the titles and contents were to be adjusted to meet the standard and criteria of the Teachers Council. The curriculum was eventually approved by both the Office of the Higher Education Commission and the Teachers Council. There were no problematic issues about that. This lesson teaches us that institutional politics tremendously affects the social foundations."

(Teacher educator F, August 2021)

2.2) Discursive practices in everyday life

The discursive practices at the level of everyday life of the teacher educators are the implementation of the teacher education curriculum. In fact, it involves the curriculum design, teaching and learning management, and testing and evaluation. The research results indicated that the teacher educators were the most important social actors that had influences on the status of knowledge of the field of socio-cultural foundations in teacher education institutions. The attributes of the teacher educators included educational and professional training background, teaching experience, academic position, the ability to design courses and teaching and learning processes, dedication to academia and ideological as well as political stances.

These are the essential foundations of teacher educators as the social actors. As a critical active agent in their own cultural politics in everyday life practices, teacher educators had more influences on the socio-cultural foundations than the regulatory or governmental-mandated policies. The illustration can be provided as follows:

"If we review TQF: HEd 2 for the 4-year curriculum, we will clearly see that there are at least 2 courses of social foundations such as philosophy of education and community-based education. The administrative leaders and curriculum development unit regard these courses as important for creating quality teachers, but our big problem is that we do not have teacher educators with expertise, or with serious interest in social theories and philosophy

in educational foundations. To put it simply, these courses will be taught by the instructors from the field of curriculum and instruction, educational administration and educational research, evaluation and measurement. We believe they are capable enough because the contents may be well-linked and integrated. "

(Teacher educator B, May 2021)

"The courses such as philosophy of education or educational ideologies are, in fact, the subjects useful to the teacher education students. But the limitation is the inability of instructors to connect these ideologies and the standpoints with the actual conditions of teachers' works."

(Teacher educator C, June 2021)

"Responding to the new curriculum, the social foundation courses in our university have included other foundational courses, which are the basis of education. That is, the foundations of educational philosophy, history, and sociology are combined into one subject. The scope of the contents of the social foundations, which are compulsory for the teaching profession, becomes the problem for the instructors because it is too vast. Teacher education students cannot understand or distinguish from which course this content is based on. As such, there is no profoundness. For content in each chapter, many instructors are not the experts. They are tasked to deliver the teaching, making it impossible to clearly categorize the knowledge base. The course contents are, therefore, seemingly overlapping and confusing. "

(Teacher educator E, July 2021)

"The socio-cultural foundations are too broad a group of subjects that instructors find it challenging to teach all the contents required by the courses, or with the desirable quality. Sometimes, the instructors cannot make a decision as to how much detail must be dealt with. Most importantly, the contents are quite abstract and intangible. Instructors with insufficient knowledge and understanding are not able to find teaching methods suitable for the contents. Efficient teaching requires the in-depth understanding of the content to be taught."

(Teacher educator G, August 2021)

Discussion

Frameworks for efficiency-based teacher education reform in terms of policies and regulations, as determined by the state, continue to be in effect. The discourses associated with this reform include competition, individual choice, accountability and standards of achievement (Jaramillo & McLaren, 2009). Thus, certain implications that emerge from the research findings are that the field of teacher education is a mediator between the practices of power through state-based regulatory policies and diverse members of the teacher education and teaching profession community. Educational policy, however, is only a pattern of technology of power and practices that can be flexible for negotiation, contestation and articulation in discursive practices under different socio-cultural, political and historical contexts. This is reflected in the research results showing that the discursive practices at the levels of teacher education curriculum and everyday life of teacher educators as social actors – were discerned.

Instead of concluding that TQF: HEd for Bachelor of Education and the regulations of the Thai Teachers Council, was a government policy sanctioned tool that directly impacted the field of socio-cultural foundations, this

research proposed that a culturally appropriate educational policy and practice often takes place in the context of practice. The emphasis of policy as practice framework is on the importance of “agency,” which embodies ideologies, perspectives, as well as social and political stances, that constitute to everyday life practices (Sutton & Levinson, 2001). These discursive practices consist of the active agents, players and actors concerned, and are evident through different levels of negotiation, contestation and articulation.

In this research, teacher educators engaged in a negotiated, contested and articulated process to meet the challenges prescribed by the state. Education policy is, therefore, the power of public intellectuals exercising their power in everyday life practices. It is these groups that have the authentic power to convert educational policy texts into discursive practices (Levinson, Sutton & Winstead, 2009). The status of knowledge of socio-cultural foundations in Thai teacher education institutions, therefore, largely relies on teacher educators, as the most important critical social actors in teacher education institutions.

Conclusion

Drawing on literature and my findings, the results of this research can be summarized and divided into 2 aspects, detailed as follows:

1) At the texts level. Policies and regulations of the Thai state appeared in the TQF: HEd for Bachelor of Education and the regulations of the Thai Teachers Council, affected the status of knowledge of the field of socio-cultural foundations in teacher education institutions, as evidenced in this paper.

However, it is generally accepted that the dominant body of knowledge in the field of education is derived from positivism paradigm, as the foundation of instrumental and technical knowledge on teaching techniques and effective educational management. In reality, to achieve the desired characteristics of refined teachers, such body of knowledge must be based on the socio-cultural foundations. Studying teaching techniques, methods of educational management, and teaching and learning theories alone is insufficient. It further requires in-depth knowledge and critical understanding of the socio-cultural, historical, political and economic contexts. Therefore, what needs to happen is the realization of how important it is to apply the socio-cultural foundations’ contents to teacher education curriculum both in curricular texts and discursive pedagogical practices. This process has to be seriously taken by teacher educators. Under this approach, teacher education students, together with close collaboration with teacher educators, will acquire the ability to analyze, conduct research, and create well-informed knowledge in the teaching profession.

When considering the current situation of the field of education and teacher education, the socio-cultural foundation courses was significantly subsided, instead of being strengthened. That is, most teacher education institutions have reduced the number of courses and credits in socio-cultural foundations. Sajjawatit (2003) had an explanation toward a reason why teacher education institutions have reduced the number of courses and teaching hours of these subjects. This is because most teacher educators, educators and teacher education students paid little attention to these subjects, which indicated that individuals in educational academia did not find profound theoretical subjects interesting, and were not interested in a content that required critical reflexive modes

of thoughts and deliberations. Most importantly, they failed to realize that the teaching techniques and educational management were inseparably tied with the knowledge of socio-cultural foundations, as the learning process was a socio-cultural and dialectical humanized process.

2) At the discursive practices level. Although the TQF: HEd for Bachelor of Education and the regulations of the Thai Teachers Council, affected status of knowledge of the field of socio-cultural foundations, the research results showed that the discursive practices taking place at the teacher education curriculum and everyday life had a greater significant effect on the socio-cultural foundations than the regulatory or governmental-mandated policies. That is, teacher educators were social actors embodying the critical active agency in their own cultural politics in everyday life practices. Therefore, it is vital for the development of the field of socio-cultural foundations to be supported by teacher educators - educational scholars who are dedicated and capable of creating a body of knowledge on the socio-cultural foundations. To achieve that end, it requires that the contents of foundational science, be it sociology, anthropology, history and philosophy, or interdisciplinary humanities and social science, are to be incorporated with the field of education. The concepts and methodologies of these foundational sciences can be applied to facilitate study, analysis, and research in the field of education, generally, and teacher education, particularly. This also will greatly strengthen both the teacher education and socio-cultural foundations.

The building of a body of knowledge in the field of education requires knowledge, attributes and dispositions from various aspects of curriculum, methods, instruction, assessment, socio-cultural foundations, and the technical aspects of educational administration. These bodies of knowledge are the core knowledge in the field of education. By so doing, teacher education students may acquire these bodies of knowledge through analyzing, researching, and creating an educational method of inquiry, with the application of knowledge on the socio-cultural foundations. Then, this knowledge can be put into discursive practices in real situations, in order to be an essential lens through which the ultimate value contributed by educational institutions can be magnified and appreciated.

Results from the study and the analysis of the impact of the TQF: HEd for Bachelor of Education and the regulations of the Thai Teachers Council, on the field of socio-cultural foundations in teacher education institutions may serve as a framework for further study on the status of knowledge of the socio-cultural foundations as to how it affects the teacher preparation system as a whole, under the educational reform policies that emphasizes state-mandated accountability and competency-based education of the Thai government at present.


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