

# **Perceptions and Attitudes of Thai Teachers toward the Impacts of Globalization and ASEAN Integration**

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## **Abstract**

This paper presents a survey conducted in August 2015. The aim was to investigate Thai teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards globalization and regionalization. The purposive sampling technique was used by having seventy-nine teachers answer the 20-item questionnaires. It was found that the high percentage of teacher respondents were unsure about the benefits of the globalization and regional bloc. Most teachers expressed their worries concerning the impacts of the regional integration and globalization. Most teachers agreed and strongly agreed that there were too many things to learn and master to live and work successfully in the 21st century.

It was also found that most teachers expressed their worries about Thailand losing its cultural and national identity amidst the influx of foreigners and expats living and working in Thailand. Most of them said that Thailand should have better laws to protect Thailand's interests and the Thai way of life. It was also found that 28 of them (35.40%) thought that ASEAN would bring Thailand more disadvantages than advantages.

## **1. Introduction**

The world is undergoing incredible economic, technological, social and cultural changes and becoming increasingly interconnected. Globalization and regional integration are two related forces affecting Thailand and other countries alike. As a result of these changes, learners today must increasingly adapt and be equipped with the skills and competencies beyond academics.

Thai teachers, too, are facing new challenges. The potential impacts of globalization and ASEAN on Thai society in general and Thai education in particular have been recognized by the Thai academics. Sinlarat (2011), for example, has recommended that Thai education embrace the creative-productive orientation. He reasons that Thai students need to be educated to move away from the consumer mindset to the creative and productive one. In order to cultivate such the attributes in Thai students, Thai teachers should be equipped with instructional skills and positive and constructive attitudes towards to new challenges.

In a similar vein, Vasi (2014) has called for Thailand to revamp its education. He points out that Thai education has not been able to respond well with the new challenges, and has called for the change of paradigms on education, from the isolated educational system to the more integrative one. He also suggests that Thailand decentralize its educational management and policies.

Even though much has talked and discussed about the new challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, very few surveys and research findings have been reported on the attitudes and perceptions of Thai teachers on the coming of the regional interaction and the globalization of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As mentioned above, little research has been done on Thai teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward the impacts of globalization and ASEAN integration. This study aimed to contribute to the literature on such the impacts. Hence, the aim of this study was to investigate Thai teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards globalization and regionalization.

## **2. Method**

In this study, the purposive sampling technique was used. Seventy-nine in-service teachers were asked to answer the questionnaires in August 2015. All of them were students taking the graduate diploma program in education at Dhurakij Pundit University Educational Science College.

The instrument was the questionnaire of 20 items. Items 1-16 were constructed by the researcher. Item 17 was the list of competencies suggested by ERI-NET research group under the UNESCO.

The data were analyzed using basic descriptive statistics.

### 3. Results

In terms of genders, it was found that the majority of the respondents were female. Only about one-fourth of them (26%) were male. It was found that 81 % of the respondents had between 2-5 years of teaching experience, which was not surprising as all of them were considered new teachers; they were taking courses leading to the teaching license.

Table 1: Thai teachers' perception of Thai society under the ASEAN community

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.3
Disagree	4	5.1
Undecided	32	40.5
Agree	39	49.4
Strongly Agree	3	3.8
Total	79	100.0

The table above shows the result of the teachers' response to the first item: "Thai society will be better under the ASEAN community." It was found that 39 teachers (49.4%) opined that Thai society would be better under ASEAN. Up to 32 of them (40.5%) were unsure about the prospect. Only 6.4 % (5) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 2: Thai teachers' perception of the impact of globalization and ASEAN on the nation's identity

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	2.5
Disagree	9	11.4
Undecided	26	32.9
Agree	33	41.8
Strongly Agree	8	10.1
Total	78	100.0

The data from the above table shows that as high as 51.9 % (41) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: "Thailand is losing its national identity because of globalization and ASEAN". 26 (32.9%) of them said they were undecided. Only 11 of them or 13.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 3: Thai teachers' perceptions of Thais' readiness for ASEAN

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	14	17.7
Undecided	24	30.4
Agree	36	45.6
Strongly Agree	2	2.5
Missing Data	3	3.8
Total	79	100.0

Item 3 asks the teachers to response the statement: "Most Thais are not ready for ASEAN." Table 3 shows the teachers' responses to the statement: "Most Thai are not ready for ASEAN". It was found that 38 (48.01%) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. 36 of them (45.6%) were undecided. However, there were 14 of the teachers (17.70%) who disagreed with the statement.

Table 4: Thai teachers' attitudes toward the presence of many foreigners in Thailand

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	13	16.5
Disagree	35	44.3
Undecided	14	17.7
Agree	11	13.9
Strongly Agree	5	6.3
Missing Data	1	1.3
Total	79	100.0

Item 4 asks the teachers to response the statement: "Personally, I feel uneasy with the growing presence of foreigners and expats in Thailand." Table 4 shows that the majority of Thai teachers (60.80%) had positive attitudes towards the many foreigners and expats living and visiting Thailand. 14 of them (17.70%) were undecided. Still, there were 20.20% (16) of them who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: "Personally, I do not like that fact that there are a lot of expats and foreigners in Thailand."

Table 5: Thai teachers' attitudes toward other cultures

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.3
Disagree	4	5.1
Undecided	5	6.3
Agree	50	63.3
Strongly Agree	19	24.1
Total	79	100.0

The statement in item 5 is: "I like learning about other cultures." Table 5 shows the responses to the statement: "I like learning about other cultures." It was found that most (69) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. Only 5 (6.4%) were

disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 6: Thai teachers' reaction to the statement on the impact of foreigners and expats taking away Thai people's jobs

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	3.8
Disagree	13	16.5
Undecided	10	12.7
Agree	43	54.4
Strongly Agree	10	12.7
Total	79	100.0

Item 6 asks the teacher to respond to the statement: "I fear that foreigners/expats would take away Thais' jobs." Table 6 shows that 53 teachers (67.10%) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: "Personally, I fear that that foreigners/expats would take away Thais' jobs." 10 were undecided. 16 (20.22%) were strongly agreed and agreed with the statement.

Table 7: Thailand should have better laws to protect Thailand's interests and the Thai way of life.

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.3
Disagree	2	2.5
Undecided	5	6.3
Agree	34	43.0
Strongly Agree	36	45.6
Missing Data	1	1.3
Total	79	100.0

Table 7 shows that the majority of Thai teachers (70) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: "Thailand should have better laws to protect Thailand's interests and the Thai way of life." Only 3 of them (3.8%) disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Table 8: Thai teachers' preparedness to engage the regional integration

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	2	2.5
Undecided	26	32.9
Agree	39	49.4
Strongly Agree	12	15.2
Total	79	100.0

The majority of Thai teachers (51) agreed and strongly agreed that they were ready to successfully engage the coming regional integration. However, up to 26 of them (32.90%) were undecided.

Table 9: Thai teachers' confidence in their own abilities and skills to live and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.3
Disagree	4	5.1
Undecided	13	16.5
Agree	49	62.0
Strongly Agree	12	15.2
Total	79	100.0

Table 9 shows Thai teachers' confidence in their own abilities and skills to live and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The analysis shows that the majority of them (61) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: "I feel confidence in my abilities and skills to live and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

Table 10: There are too many things for Thai students to know and learn in order to live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	2.5
Disagree	9	11.4
Undecided	10	12.7
Agree	36	45.6
Strongly Agree	22	27.8
Total	79	100.0

Table 10 shows that the majority of Thai teachers (58) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: "There are too many things for Thai students to know and learn in order to live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century." Ten of them (12.70%) were undecided. Only 11 of them (13.90%) disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 11: Thai teachers' perception of their parent and grandparents' world and society

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	3.8
Disagree	8	10.1
Undecided	14	17.7
Agree	39	49.4
Strongly Agree	15	19.0
Total	79	100.0

Table 11 shows that the majority of Thai teachers (54) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: "I envy the past generations (my parent and grandparents) for not having to face the chaotic and competitive world." Fourteen of them (17.70%) were

undecided. Only 11 of them (13.90%) disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 12: Thai teachers' perception of their future work environment

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	3.8
Disagree	25	31.6
Undecided	27	34.2
Agree	20	25.3
Strongly Agree	4	5.1
Total	79	100.0

Table 12 shows that 27 Thai teachers (34.20%) were undecided with the statement: "I believe that my future depends a great deal on my ability to work well with co-workers from different nationalities." Twenty-four of them (30.40%) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. Twenty-eight of them (35.20%) disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 13: Compared with the past, today Thailand has more competitions and problems.

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	2.5
Disagree	8	10.1
Undecided	14	17.7
Agree	36	45.6
Strongly Agree	18	22.8
Missing Data	1	1.3
Total	79	100.0

Table 13 shows the majority of Thai teachers (54) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: "Compared with the past, today Thailand has more competitions and problems." Fourteen of them (17.70%) were undecided. Only 10 of them (12.60%) disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 14: Thai teachers' attitudes towards ASEAN and Globalization

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	2.5
Disagree	33	41.8
Undecided	17	21.5
Agree	23	29.1
Strongly Agree	4	5.1
Missing Data	79	100.0
Total	2	2.5

Table 14 shows that 35 teachers (44.30%) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: "Personally, I am not happy with globalization and ASEAN." Seventeen of them (21.50%) were undecided. Twenty-seven (34.20%) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement.

Table 15: Thai teachers' attitudes toward the work condition under ASEAN

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	3.8
Disagree	33	41.8
Undecided	23	29.1
Agree	18	22.8
Strongly Agree	2	2.5
Total	79	100.0

The statement is: "Personally, I am worried and under pressure living and working in the ASEAN community". Table 15 shows that the majority of the respondents (36 or 45.40%) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. 23 (29.10%) were undecided. 20 (25.30%) agreed and strongly agree with the statement.

Table 16: Thai teachers' belief about the pros and cons of ASEAN

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	2.5
Disagree	16	20.3
Undecided	33	41.8
Agree	22	27.8
Strongly Agree	6	7.6
Total	79	100.0

The statement for this item is "For Thailand, ASEAN brings more disadvantages than advantages to Thais". Table 16 shows that the majority of the teachers were



undecided about the statement. It was found that 28 of them (35.40%) thought that ASEAN would bring Thailand disadvantages than advantages.

Table 17: Essential Skills for ASEAN and Globalization

No.	<b>Critical and Innovative thinking Domain</b>	Yes	No	Total
1	Creativity	64 (81.0%)	15 (19%)	79
2	Entrepreneurship*	23 (29.1%)	56 (70.9%)	79
3	Resourcefulness	57 (72.2%)	22 (27.8%)	79
4	Application skills	54 (68.4%)	25 (31.6%)	79
5	Reflective thinking	43 (54.4%)	36 (45.6%)	79
6	Reasoned decision-making	47 (59.5)	32 (40.5%)	79
No.	<b>Interpersonal Skills Domain</b>	Yes	No	Total
1	Communication skills	65 (82.3%)	14 (17.7%)	79
2	Organizational skills*	39 (49.4%)	40 (50.6%)	79
3	Teamwork	58 (73.4%)	21 (26.6%)	79
4	Collaboration	56 (70.9%)	23 (29.1%)	
5	Sociability	51 (64.6%)	28 (35.4%)	79
6	Collegiality	51 (64.6%)	28 (35.4%)	79
7	Empathy	46 (58.2%)	33 (41.8%)	79
8	Compassion	47 (59.5%)	32 (40.5%)	
No.	<b>Media and Information Literacy Domain</b>	Yes	No	Total
1	Ability to obtain and analyse information through ICT	69 (87.3%)	10 (12.7%)	79
2	Ability to critically evaluate information and media content	55 (69.6%)	24 (30.4%)	79
3	Ethical use of ICT	55 (69.6%)	24 (30.4%)	79

Of the 17 competencies listed, all but two (organizational skills and entrepreneurship) received more 'YES' ticks than the 'No' ones. This phenomenon is significant, as it may point to the perceptions of Thai teachers in general on what constitutes the education domain and the business domain.

Table 18: Perceived Magnitudes of the impacts of Globalization and ASEAN on Teachers' Role

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Do not know	0	0
Very Little	0	0
Little	6	7.6
To some extent	45	57.0
Very much	27	34.2
Missing Data	1	1.3
Total	79	100.0

The table shows that the majority of the teachers (72) said that globalization/ASEAN to some extent and very much affect their roles as teachers. Only 6 of them (7.60%) said there was little effect.

Table 19: Effects of globalization and ASEAN on school instruction and learning activities

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Do not know	0	0
Very Little	0	0
Little	5	6.3
To some extent	40	50.6
Very much	33	41.8
Missing Data	1	1.3
Total	79	100.0

The majority of the respondents said

Table 20: Preparedness to teach students to live and work well in ASEAN

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Do not know	0	0
Very Little	0	0
Little	5	6.3
To some extent	51	64.6
Very much	22	27.8
Missing Data	1	1.3
Total	79	100.0

Only 5 of the respondents (6.30%) said they had the little level of preparedness to teach their students for ASEAN. The majority of them said to some extent they were ready to help their students to engage ASEAN successfully. Twenty-two teachers were very confident about their abilities and skills to accomplish the tasks.

#### 4. Discussions

This study found that the majority of Thai teachers were positive about the future prospects of Thailand under ASEAN and the globalization. However, a significant number of them were unsure about such the prospect. The finding also shows that as high as 51.9 % (41) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement "Thailand is losing its national identity because of globalization and ASEAN". 26 (32.9%) of them said they were undecided. Only 11 of them or 13.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. This shows that the majority of Thai teachers feared that the globalization might impact Thai culture and national identity.

Most teachers opined that most Thais were not ready for the challenges of the regional integration. It was found that 38 (48.01%) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. 36 of them (45.6%) were undecided. However, there were 14 of the teachers (17.70%) who disagreed with the statement.

It was found that most teachers (69) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement: "I like learning about other cultures." It was also found that the majority of them had positive attitudes toward the foreigners / expats.

The knowledge and skills considered to be necessary for living and working in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are: creativity, entrepreneurship, resourcefulness, application skills, reflective thinking, reasoned decision-making, communication skills, organizational skills, teamwork, collaboration, sociability, collegiality, empathy, compassion. There are also competencies under the media and information literacy domain, namely, the ability to obtain and analyse information through ICT, the ability to critically evaluate information and media content, and the ethical use of ICT.

The fact that 'entrepreneurial and organizational skills' was not perceived as being those necessary for globalization and regional integration is significant. The teachers might have considered 'entrepreneurial and organizational skills' to be in the realm of 'business', rather than in the 'education' domain. This perception needs to be explored further.

The teachers recognized the impact of ASEAN and globalization on Thai society and education. Most teachers they were moderately ready to teach the students to face the challenge of globalization/regionalization. This calls into consideration the professional development opportunities and the system put in place to develop Thai teachers' capacity to handle the new challenges.

Realizing the impact of globalization and ASEAN, Thai teachers should seek opportunities to develop their instructional skills. Among other things, they should develop themselves so as to be able to teach their students the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper aimed to investigate Thai teachers' perceptions of the impacts of globalization and regionalization (ASEAN) on Thai education. It also investigated their attitudes toward those challenges.

Seventy-nine basic education teachers were asked to answer the questionnaire. They were asked to express their reactions to the items on the impacts of globalization and ASEAN integration on Thai school education. They were also asked to identify the list of skills deemed necessary for successful living and working in ASEAN and the world.

It was found that the high percentage of teacher respondents were unsure about the benefits of the regional bloc. It was also found that most teachers agreed that there are too many things to learn and master to live and work successfully in the 21st century (72.2% agreed and strongly agreed).

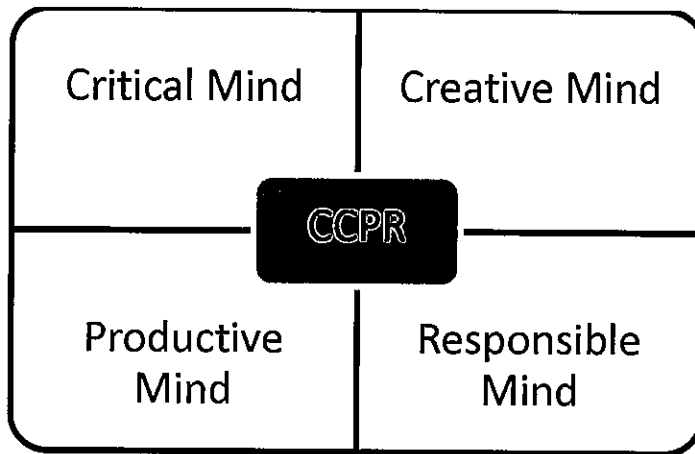
The results show that most respondents said that globalization has a high impact on the school activities, including teaching and the learning behavior of the students. They identified most of the TVC competencies as being necessary for preparing Thai students for the new challenges. Many teachers stated that their preparedness was at the moderate level.

The finding on the preparedness of Thai teachers to prepare Thai students for the new challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century points to one of the weaknesses in Thai educational system: quality education. If the teachers themselves were not ready, how could they prepare their students for the new challenges? To provide quality education, Thai teachers need adequate training and development.

The impact of globalization on Thai education is real and evidenced in this study. It was also found that a significant number of Thai teachers felt that Thailand is losing its national/cultural identity (Thainess) as the result of globalization and the regional integration. This shows their anxiety and apprehension, resulting partly from inadequate pre-service and in-service training.

The training courses should incorporate the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and knowledge and they should be followed up by practicum. The teachers should be encouraged to embrace the practice of student-centered approach to teaching, especially the practice of facilitating skills. In addition, they should be trained on how to incorporate 'soft skills' into their instruction.

There are four key attributes necessary for Thai students to face the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Based on the CCPR Model proposed by Sinlarat (2011), Thai students should possess at least 4 attributes.



Source: Sinlarat, P. 2011. "Towards Education Creative and Productivity" in Sinlarat, P. and Associates, CCPR: New Education Framework. Chulalongkorn University.

In sum, most teachers seemed to worry about the impact of globalization and regional integration (ASEAN) on Thai society in general and Thai education in particular. They felt that they were moderately prepared to face those challenges. Of the listed competencies considered necessary to live and work well in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, only two of them (entrepreneurship and organization) were lowly rated by the respondents. This may signify that the concept of 'business' and 'education' are from two different domains.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, Thai policy makers should provide systematic training programs for Thai teachers, especially training programs on ways to teach or cultivate the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Systematic and consistent training opportunities should be made available to in-service teachers. Thai teachers should also be given opportunities to develop themselves through various modes and channels.

School administrators and teachers need to develop their school curricula, making them suitable for the local context. Moreover, parents and community members should be approached by the schools to seek ways to better develop their children.

## References

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