

Institutional **R**esearch in Thailand: From Past to Present

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Development of Institutional Research at the University Level (1)

- First introduction to Thailand for the operation and improvement of universities around 1970-1975
- Triggered by TWO important movements
 - The desire to bring autonomy and academic freedom to bureaucratic universities
 - The need for the University Development Plan, a part of the National Economical and Social Development Plan

Development of Institutional Research at the University Level (2)

- Institutional research was a tool the universities used to respond to those movements.
- Two issues that they expected to take place:
 - Management Information System (MIS)
 - Internal Efficiency



Development of Institutional Research at the University Level (3)

- For MIS, institutional research
 - Is used to yield a set of regular information
 - Has to be conducted routinely
 - Is critical for the universities' decision making
 - Makes use of information obtained both from inside the university and from external sources.

Development of Institutional Research at the University Level (4)

- For Internal Efficiency, the input, process, and output are taken into consideration.
- ‘Operational Research’ or ‘Action Research’ is conducted to investigate the institution, thus called ‘Institutional Research’



Development of Institutional Research at the University Level (5)

- Common issues that require institutional research
 - Regular matters of the university
 - Specific and ad hoc matters the university needs answers to
- At the early period of institutional research in Thailand, it was used for the improvement of Thailand's higher education.

Development of Institutional Research at the National Level (1)

- In 1975, the '*National Network of Institutional Research*' was established and coordinated by the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA).
- Two important Institution research tasks were delegated to the 11 universities in Thailand, i.e.
 - To create a shared pool of higher education information for the MIS
 - To create both regular and ad hoc institutional research for the Ministry and for the members of the network

Development of Institutional Research at the National Level (2)

- From 1985-1990, MUA was formulating the 15-year Higher Education Development Plan in response to the changes and emerging needs of the country and the world community.
- The formulation demanded the information that offers an accurate projection of the higher education-related scenarios in the coming 15 years.
- Institutional research in the form of *'future study'* or *'trend study'* was conducted, using the *'Environmental Scanning'* method.

Development of Institutional Research at the National Level (3)

- A series of institutional research then yielded information to substantiate the plan formulation such as the country's population structure, manpower demand, economic development, as well as social, political, and environmental changes.
- The impactful result was Thailand's first long-range higher education development plan entitled '*The Thai Higher Education Towards the Challenging Future*' covering the period of 1990-2004.

Development of Institutional Research at the National Level (4)

- In 1990, the establishment of the first public autonomous university in Thailand, Suranaree University of Technology (SUT), was endorsed by the government.
- Relevant information from institutional research was used for this establishment and later for the transformation of bureaucratic universities to become public autonomous.

Development of Institutional Research at the National Level (5)

- From 1997-1999, institutional research became prominent again for the significant National Education Reform.
- Findings from institutional research enabled the reform to progress smoothly with *'evidence-based'* information.
- Thailand's *National Education Act 1999* is the country's education reform blueprint.

The Present and the Future of Institutional Research (1)

- The National Education Reform Act 1999 requires educational institutions of all kinds at all level to implement educational quality assurance.
- Internal QA is conducted annually while external QA once every five years by ONESQA.
- Institutional research is a tool to create database of information for the QA.

The Present and the Future of Institutional Research (2)

- Institutional research is more and more significant in the educational management and administration, both at the institutional level and the national level beyond the scope of the institutional context.
- However, improvement of institutional research for its maximum benefits is still very much needed.
- Support for the improvement asks for empowerment of institutional research personnel and development of indispensable resources especially the digital technology

The Present and the Future of Institutional Research (3)

- Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education (CWIE) is a focus of attention from the government as it enhances the graduate production.
- For the success and sustainability of CWIE, a CWIE database containing information from both the institutions and the work places is vital.

In conclusion

- After more than 50 years of benefiting Thailand, institutional research is definitely here to stay.

