

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The progress in various sciences in the age of globalization has greatly affected the change in social and economic conditions of every country in the world. Therefore, each country has attempted to use education as a tool to improve the quality of its people so as to be able to keep pace with the state-of-the-art sciences. Several countries have endeavored to become educational leaders as they realize that education contributes to their security and wealth. In Thailand, every government has also placed importance on education as reflected in the implementation of various National Educational Plans which set the objectives in accordance with the change in the globalization age. As a result, the quality of Thai people's education has improved, as shown in the UNESCO report indicating that the average time Thai people spent on tertiary education increased from 0.8 year in 1991 to 2.2 years in 2004 (www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/pdf/ged/2006/GED2006.pdf, 2006).

The education system in Thailand is a continuous lifelong process through 3 types of education: formal, non-formal, and informal. Credits accumulated by learners will be transferable within the same type or between different types of education, regardless of whether the credits have been accumulated from the same or different educational institutions, including learning from non-formal or informal education, vocational training, or from work experience.

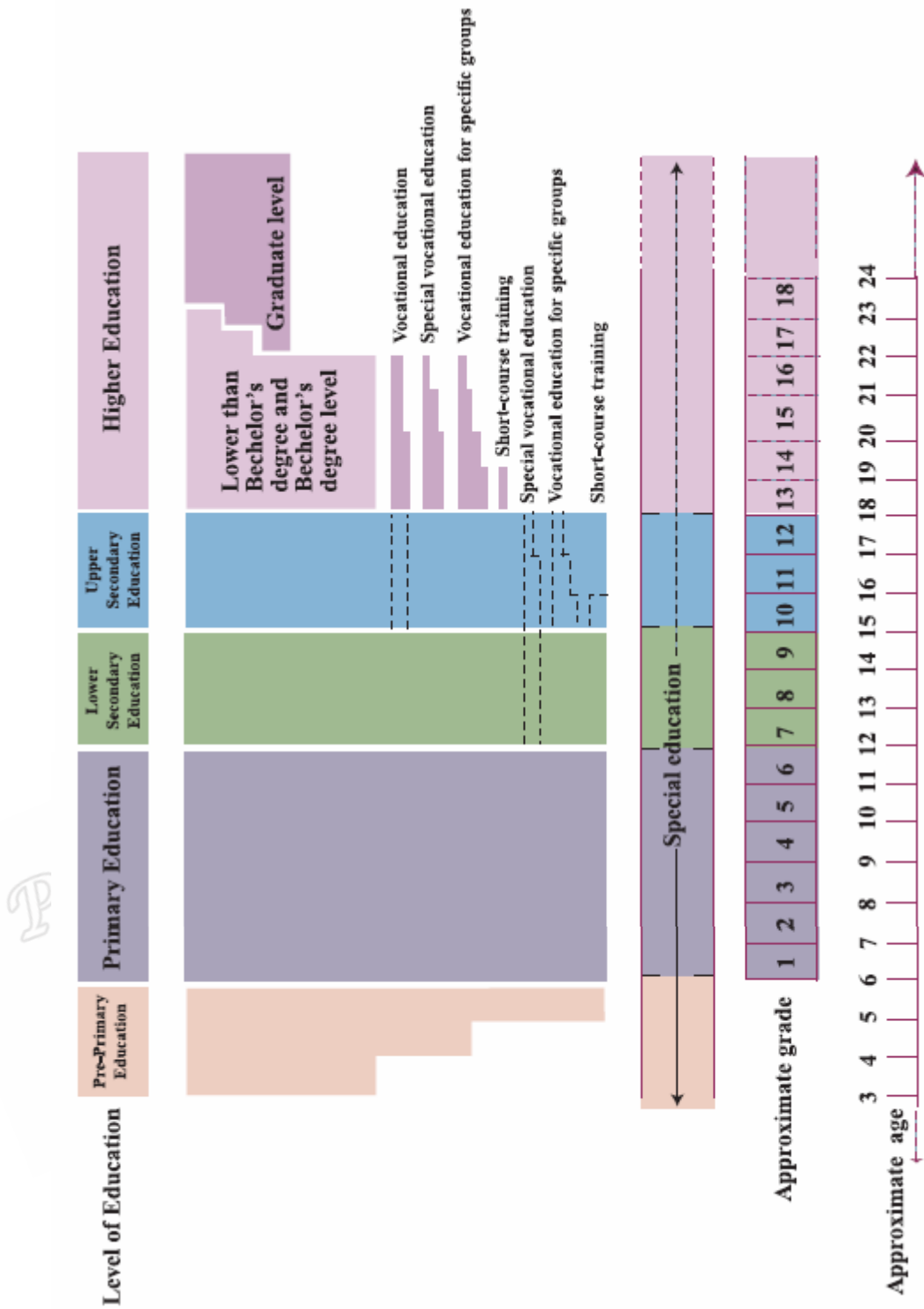


Figure 1.1: Organization of the present school system in Thailand

In Thailand, the educational provision before tertiary level has been considered as foundation education in the 6:3:3 system (primary school: lower secondary: upper secondary) since 1999

and as a 9-year compulsory education replacing the previous 6-year system

(www.secondary.kku.ac.th/curr-dev/variety/hist.htm, 2006). The main objectives of compulsory education are to enable learners to possess learning motivation, thinking and life skills, self-worth, discipline, and enough basic knowledge for higher education. However, implementing the new system of nine-year compulsory education and achieving its specified objectives is not easy, because Thailand is composed of several groups of people from diverse cultures, ways of life and beliefs. For example, as reported in the 2000 census survey, Pattani and Songkhla provinces, both in the South and next to each other, have different rates of secondary education completion. That is, among people from the age of 20, in Songkhla province, 36.6% of them had completed secondary school, whereas in Pattani province, there were only 24.6% (National Statistical Office, 2001). The difference in the number of graduates had different impacts on social and economic conditions in particular areas.

Thailand's earlier success in making primary education compulsory has not been replicated in the quality of secondary and higher levels of education. Although, the transition rate from primary to secondary level has improved from less than 50 percent in the 1980s to about 90 percent in 1996, the enrolment rate has remained very low at 34 percent of the population aged 15-17. Also, there has been little improvement of quality in secondary education, especially in science and mathematics (Asia Development Bank, 1999).

The total population of Thailand increased from 55.8 million in 1990 to 62.3 million in 2000 and it was estimated to be 63.6 million in 2001. The number of females is slightly higher than that of males.



Figure 1.2 : Population Pyramid of Thailand:1990 and 2002 (Ministry of University Affairs, 2000).

In November 2000, 53.3 percent of the total population was in the labour force while about 24.8 percent were those over 13 years old but not in the labour force. The rest of the population or about 21.9 percent were still under 13 years old. Among those who were employed, only about 2.7 percent were employers while 40.3 percent were employees and 57 percent were workers.

According to the *Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI)*, the total number of unemployed population, in the third quarter of 2001, was 930,000 people. Among them, 381,000 (41 percent) were new graduates; 325,000 (35 percent) were in the informal sector, such as those who were self-employed and farm workers; and 223,000 (24 percent) were public officials and company employees. The unemployment rate is high during the third quarter since it is during the cultivation season (National Statistical Office, 2001).

The quality of the labor force is among the most important determinants of Thailand's long-term growth prospects. It will take a sustained commitment to rectify current weaknesses. For example, 80 percent of Thailand's labor force has only primary education or less, as compared with 60 and 50 percent in the case of Malaysia and the Republic of Korea, respectively. Although the Government has made considerable efforts to expand education opportunities, primary education completion rates have actually fallen in recent years (to 69 percent in 1996). About 5.5 million people in the 6-19 year-old age group are not in school or any forms of training. For rural people, participation in education or skill development programs is strikingly low. For those who do participate, the standards are poor. Low quality and low enrolment appear to be strongly correlated. With regard to training, only 1 percent of the labor force participates in formal, institution-based programs. In-house and on-the-job training schemes have been increasing, but skill shortages have been one of the main factors impeding Thailand's transition to higher value-added industry.

External efficiency of the educational system can be realized through the relevance of education to the socio-economic conditions of the country. The ability of graduates to enter the job market following the completion of education can be seen as an indicator of educational efficiency. The distribution of employed population by education level from 1996 to 2000 (Table 1.1) illustrates that the percentage of people with higher qualifications has been rising continuously which corresponds to higher educational attainment of the Thai people. The percentages of employed population with lower qualifications has tended to decrease.

Level of Education Attainment	Attainment , (Round 1, February)				
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
None	4.4	4.3	3.8	4.1	3.5
Less than Grade 4	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.4
Lower Primary (Grade 4)	46.9	45.3	43.8	13.3	40.6
Upper Primary (Grade 7)	22.6	22.3	21.2	20.3	21.7
Lower Secondary	9.6	10.0	11.5	12.0	12.2
Upper Secondary	3.3	3.8	4.4	4.8	5.6
Vocational	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1
University	5.6	6.4	7.4	7.8	8.8
- Academics	3.6	4.2	4.9	5.2	5.8
- Technical Training	2.0	2.2	2.5	2.7	3.0
Teacher Training	2.1	2.0	2.3	2.2	2.0
Others	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 1.1: The distribution of employed persons by level of education from 1996 to 2000.

Source: Labour Force Survey: Round 1, February 2000, National Statistical Office.

Songkhla, Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun, the five southern border provinces and connected to the north of Malaysia, is a specific area which is different from other areas in Thailand. The population in this area has different language, religion, way of life, culture, and beliefs. The population census in 2000 revealed that Songkhla was the only province of the 5 southern border provinces where the majority of people were non-Muslim. 23% were Muslim in Songkhla, 80% in Pattani, 82% in Narathiwat, 80% in Yala, and 68% in Satun (National Statistical Office, 2006).

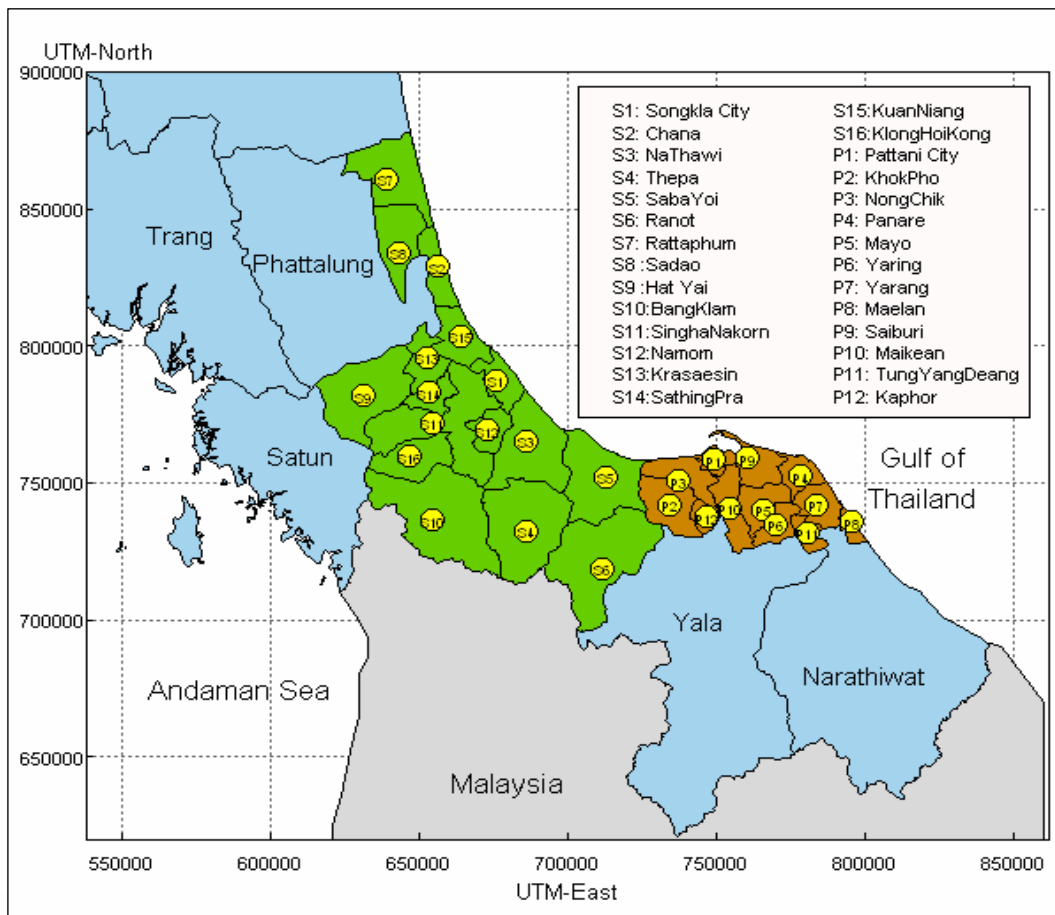


Figure 1.3 : Location of Pattani and Songkhla Provinces in Southern Thailand

Although the same curriculum was used in compulsory education in all schools in Thailand, differences in the quality of education were found in a 2005 evaluation based on student achievement test results in various subjects in grade 12 in 175 educational areas. Bangkok had the highest level of education quality and Songkhla the second highest. Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat had low levels of educational quality, especially Pattani, which was ranked 174 of 175 educational areas (<http://gpa.moe.go.th/Onet48/listAreaX.Asp>).

As stated above, Songkhla and Pattani are southern border provinces with quite different quality of education levels. The education completion rates of these two provinces are also very different. In the 2000 census, it was found that of the population in over 25 years of age,

27.6% in Pattani but only 14.6% in Songkhla had not completed elementary education. Apart from the difference between Songkhla and Pattani in measures of education quality, the rates of graduation from primary school are also very different. These affect the individual's stability of occupation, income, and the condition of being employed. The negative consequences of unemployment affect not only the individual, but also society at large. Joblessness is connected with negative impacts on the personal perspectives of life, political opposition and integration problems (Strasser, 1997).

In the 2000 census, the employment situation in Pattani and Songkhla Provinces for four categories of employment consisted of: unemployed, agriculture, elementary (= elementary occupation + plant + unclassified + service) and professional (= profession occupation + technician + legist + army + clerk + craft) and is show in Table 1.2.

Age group	Unemployed		Agriculture		Elementary		Professional	
	Pattani	Songkhla	Pattani	Songkhla	Pattani	Songkhla	Pattani	Songkhla
25-29	20.5	16.6	33.6	25.5	28.1	31.1	17.8	26.8
30-34	14.8	12.4	39.5	29.9	27.1	32.7	18.6	25.0
35-39	12.4	10.7	41.0	32.4	26.2	31.3	20.4	25.6
40-44	11.1	10.0	42.6	34.4	24.1	29.5	22.2	26.1
45-49	10.8	10.3	49.4	39.7	20.7	27.0	19.2	23.0
50-54	13.1	13.1	52.5	43.7	18.0	23.8	16.4	19.3
55-59	17.6	18.0	55.8	47.8	15.1	19.0	11.6	15.2
Total	14.6	12.8	42.7	34.0	24.2	29.1	18.6	24.1

Table 1.2: Employment rate by age and occupational group in Pattani and Songkhla Province

Unemployment is the state in which a person is without work but is currently seeking work.

The unemployment rate is used in economic studies and economic indexes such as the United States' Conference Board's Index of Leading Indicators. The rate is determined by dividing the number of unemployed workers by the total civilian labor force (<http://wapedia.mobi/en/Unemployment?>).

Unemployed individuals are unable to earn money to meet financial obligations. Failure to pay mortgage payments or to pay rent may lead to homelessness through foreclosure or eviction. Unemployment increases susceptibility to malnutrition, illness, mental stress and loss of self-esteem, leading to depression. According to a study published in Social Indicator Research, even those who tend to be optimistic find it difficult to look on the bright side of things when unemployed. Using interviews and data from German participants aged 16 to 94 - including individuals coping with the stresses of real life and not just a volunteering student population - the researchers determined that even optimists struggled with being unemployed.

Dr. M. Brenner conducted a study in 1979 on the "Influence of the Social Environment on Psychology." Brenner found that for every 10% increase in the number of unemployed there is a 1.2% increase in total mortality, a 1.7% increase in cardiovascular disease, 1.3% more cirrhosis cases, 1.7% more suicides, 0.4% more arrests, and 0.8% more assaults reported to the police (Richard Ashley, 2007).

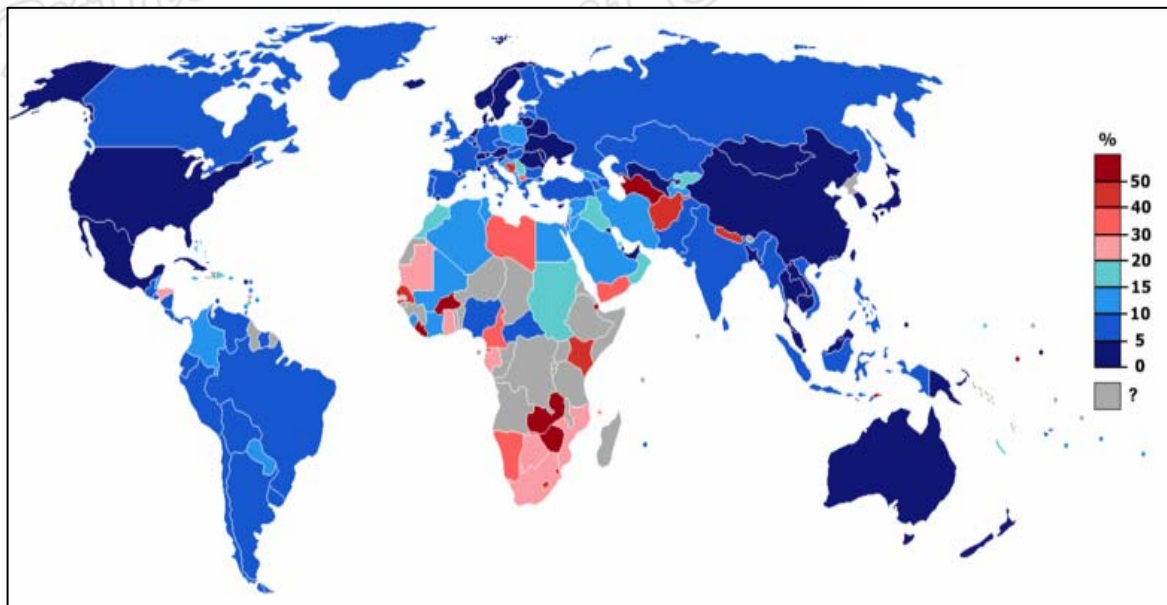


Figure 1.4: Figure for world unemployment rates, 2006

Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Unemployment_rate_world_from_CIA_figures.PNG.

1.2 Rationale

The educational system was depicted as a key factor for economic growth as well as a central mechanism for decreasing traditional social inequalities (Kerr, 1963).

The completion of education of people in each society depends on many factors, especially demographic factors. Pattani and Songkhla provinces are both border provinces in Southern Thailand but their social structures are different. Thus there is a need to investigate their differences in factors affecting education completion and employment.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 To investigate the demographic factors affecting education completion and employment in Pattani and Songkhla Provinces

1.3.2 To compare the demographic factors associated with education completion and employment, between Pattani and Songkhla Provinces.

1.3.3 To use the results for deciding policy and action in education, for better employment and social integration outcomes.

1.4 Definition of terms

1.4.1 Demographic factors: Variables of a population, such as age, sex, education level, income level, marital status, occupation, religion, birth rate, death rate, average size of a family, average age at marriage, or other socio-economic factors, and their distribution within that population, presented as statistical descriptions of incidence or proportion. A census is a collection of data related to these demographic factors, based on information about every individual member of a population.

Specific variables studied:

In this study, the following 6 variables were investigated:

1.4.1.1 Age group : 12 age group categories were used, 1 = 0-14 years of age, 2 = 15-19, 3 = 20-24, 4 = 25-29, 5 = 30-34, 6 = 35-39, 7 = 40-44, 8 = 45-49, 9 = 50-54, 10 = 55-59, 11 = 60-64 and 12 = 64+ years old.

1.4.1.2 Religion : Islam and Others (Non-Muslim)

1.4.1.3 Sex : Male and female

1.4.1.4 District : 12 districts for Pattani and 16 districts for Songkhla

1.4.1.5 Education completion : 4 education completed categories were used

1.4.1.5.1 No education completed (applies to the category of people who either never attended, or did not complete, elementary education)

1.4.1.5.2 Elementary education completion is a category that includes people who completed grade 4 in the 4:3:3:2 system or grade 6 in the 6:3:3 system

1.4.1.5.3 Secondary education completion category includes people who completed either lower secondary or upper secondary.

1.4.1.5.4 High education completion, is a category that includes people who completed a course in a vocational college or a university.

1.4.1.6 Occupation : is defined as the activity that serves as one's regular source of livelihood.

In this study were divided in 4 occupation categories:

1.4.1.6.1 : No occupation

1.4.1.6.2 : Agriculture

1.4.1.6.3 : Elementary occupation (consists of people defined by the Census as plant, service, or unclassified in occupation)

1.4.1.6.4: Professional occupation (consists of those in categories defined by the Census as technician, legist, army, clerk or craft)

1.4.2 Employment status : refers to employment status in 4 categories as follow:

1.4.2.1 Unemployed : which means those with 'no occupation' in 2000.

1.4.2.2 Employed : which means the people who had jobs in agriculture, elementary or a professional occupation, in 2000.

1.4.3 Rate : This mean the ratio of subjects of interest per total subjects.

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