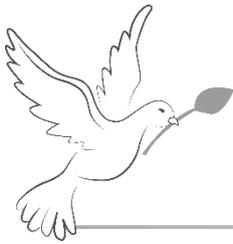


# Educational Cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR in the Post-ASEAN Time: A Case Study of Twin Schools under Mekong River Sub-Region's Cultural Context\*



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## Abstract

This qualitative research aims 1) to study relationship of context between Thai-Lao in Mekong River Sub-Region's cultural context, 2) to examine educational cooperation under ASEAN's education policy between Thailand and Lao, and 3) to study educational cooperation through Twin Schools between Thailand and Lao PDR according to the cross countries knowledge sharing process. It was conducted through documentary and field work. The 52 key informants included local administrators, schools' directors, teachers, students, parents and other relevant educational personnel were selected by Purposive Selection method with criteria based on expertise and experiences and snowball sampling technique. The data were collected by interview and observation and analyzed by inductive method.

The research findings were as follows.

1. Thai-Lao relational context of the cultural dimension in both sides of the Mekong River: the context showed close relations and ethnic ties. If 'being Laos' was viewed beyond being different in the nation-state, one could find that the residents of both sides of the Mekong River shared common beliefs and traditions. To put it another way, a majority of the residents were Buddhists and they still practiced long-held traditions or what was locally known as "Heet Sip Song, Kong Sip Si".

2. The Thai-Lao relationship could be categorized as the kinship or "blood relations" which have been passed on since the times of Lanxang and Ayuttaya Empires.

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During the colonial period, the diplomatic relations were established between the two neighboring countries. The two sides of the Mekong River had exchanged the mutual official visits. The relationship was developed through the centers and development projects.

3. The educational cooperation between Thailand and Laos under research began from personal relationship. The guidelines to strengthen the twin schools were as follows: Establishing The MOU , Conducting the mutual relationship activity, Organizing the Promotion of mutual understanding on language and cultural learning, Conducting of project of development of teachers and students, and Expanding the network relations.

**Keywords:** educational cooperation; Thailand and Laos; twin schools; Mekong River sub-region

## Introduction

Under world's social dynamic that is changed in terms of cultural society that leads to complexity and social network, proper tools that help people understand this dynamic are needed. Education is considered to be one of the tools that assist socialization process which leads to lifelong learning and sustainable development that conform to world's educational management as UNESCO principles that focus on integration of education and society for sustainable development stated that "Education allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future, this means 'including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption. Education for Sustainable Development consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way', it is a dynamic concept and term that incorporates a new vision of education that seeks to empower people of all ages to take personal responsibility for creating a sustainable future" (UNESCO, 2018). Thus, education is considered to be efficient tool to develop people and also is a universal tool in world's society. National and international states that are changing, such as economic, society, religion and culture, politics, population, public health, environment and technological science are all connected with education. These cause the understanding in social system and lead to peaceful coexistence and give priority to each other as living in the same world. As a consequence, these conditions have spread to world's regions and also ASEAN regions which bring about "ASEAN Community". Education in ASEAN Community is

managed under Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) that pushes forward development in education, science and regional culture such as, equity in education, culture, information technology, languages and poverty reduction (SEAMEO Secretariat, 2014). These issues are preceded according to ASEAN Declaration and ASEAN Charter which emphasizes on enhancing understanding among grassroots, learning of history and culture and acknowledging news (Wisalaporn et al, 2015).

Thailand prioritizes entering ASEAN Community by way of organizing academic seminar and workshop on “Education Declaration: ASEAN Community Foundation” hosted by Ministry of Education (Education: Building ASEAN Community 2015, n.d.). Moreover, in order to assist ASEAN Community, Thai Government has determined “Social Policy and Quality of Life” (The Secretariat of the Cabinet, 2011) with comprised 5 educational policy (Thailand’s Education under ASEAN Provision, 2015), namely, (1) News and knowledge dissemination and positive impression towards ASEAN in order to motivate realization and readiness of teachers, lecturers and educational personnel, students and people, (2) Development of students and people’s potential to have proper skills, (3) Development of educational standard to enhance rotation of students, teachers and lecturers in ASEAN to be accepted in mutual academic qualification and to elevate cooperation among educational institutes, (4) Preparation to launch independent education in ASEAN, and (5) Development of youth to be essential resource in ASEAN. For Thailand, local relationship with neighboring countries is considered to be a good way to create positive relation among countries in the region. Thailand and Lao PDR has a long relationship under cultural and language similarity. Thai-Laos relation conveys a profound attachment which included formal relationship in governments. These 2 countries reveal readiness in entering ASEAN Community with mutual agreement in enhancing relationship and communication between the 2 countries. For example, continuously organized ceremony of offering royal Buddhist robes to the monk at temples in Lao PDR and providing help to arrested Thai and Lao people. In addition, education, agriculture and public health in Lao PDR are also developed under joint commission agreement that is a memorandum of understanding concerning academic exchange and cooperation between Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs and Institute of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lao PDR (Committee of Thai-Laos Cooperation, 2015).

After entering ASEAN Community, Thai-Laos relation has mainly been focused on mutual agreement concerning trade, investment and tourism. Nonetheless, local relationship in border area is normally based on culture and kinship which lead to positive relationship

that help strengthen relation between the two countries and also ASEAN and world community. While educational agreement is established in ASEAN, such as charter and cooperation, there is a vague cooperation in the border area of neighboring countries. In case of Thai-Lao relation, local kinship only leads to educational relation in some case. Based on this kind of cultural relation, application of “Partnership School” can be effective in enhancing relation among neighboring countries which leads to ASEAN cooperation and world community.

For the above reasons, it is necessary to research about educational cooperation between Thailand and Lao People's Democratic Republic to find the guidelines to develop twin schools under the context of the Mekong River Basin, strengthen the cultural national and regional relationships in ASEAN and global community together. The strengthening education-based international relations as the basis of "Together-Developed School" will promote local relativeness and strengthen and is of great benefit to both parties in many dimensions.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To study relationship of context between Thai-Lao in Mekong River Sub-Region's cultural context
2. To examine educational cooperation under ASEAN's education policy between Thailand and Lao PDR
3. To study educational cooperation through Twin Schools between Thailand and Lao PDR according to the cross countries knowledge sharing process

### **Research Scope**

1. Location

Research location was educational organizations and schools located in Thai-Lao border local area and downtown along Mekong River. There were 3 studied areas in Lao PDR which were Huay Xai in Bokèo Province, Kaisorn Promwiharn in Savannakhet Province and Chaichettha in Vientiane Capital. In Thailand, studied areas were Chiang Khong District in Chiang Rai province, Si Chiang Mai District and Muang District in Nong Kai Province and Muang District in Mukdaharn Province.

Studied locations concerning the Twin Schools were secondary schools located near Mekong River which divided in to 3 areas: upper, middle and lower Mekong River areas. Thus, there were 3 pairs of Twin Schools according to the areas.

## 2. Content

2.1 Relation context of Thai-Lao in terms of cultural society on both sides of Mekong River

2.2 Relation characteristics of Thai-Lao

2.3 Educational cooperation between Thailand and Lao PRD under ASEAN policy

2.4 Educational cooperation in case of the Twin Schools

## Methodology

This qualitative study collected the data by documentary and field study. The key informants were 52 person consist of 4 local administrators, 6 schools' directors, 12 teachers, 24 students, 4 relevant educational personnel and 2 parents. They were selected by Purposive Selection method with criteria based on expertise and experiences related to research issues and use the principles of reference by individuals and experts using the Snowball Sampling Technique for complete data on research issues.

The instruments used to collect the data were (1) the documentary study and the in-depth interview for collecting the data to study relation context between Thai-Lao PDR and (2) the FGD technique (focus group discussion) and observation for collecting the data to study educational cooperation through twin schools between Thailand and Lao PDR

The methods of analyzing the data by analytic induction were as follows:

1. The Data collected from the field note, interview and observation were considered.

2. The data were examined during the collection and also interpreted under the concepts concerning social network, cultural dissemination and international relation which were the temporary hypothesis.

3. The Data were interpreted and summarized according to field data phenomenon.

## Research Results

### Results

#### 1. The Relationship context of Thai-Lao in terms of cultural society on both sides of Mekong Rive

##### 1.1 Kinship of Thai-Lao Ethnic

There were many ethnic groups in Lao PDR. Lao-Tai language group (Tai-Kadai) was forced to move to the central part of Thailand due to the territory expansion of Siam. Isan region in Thailand used to be “Lao Province”, but was changed to “Isan” as it was defined by the people who governed the region according to the administrative reform in the Reign of King Rama V (BE 2435 or 1892 CE) that gathered administrative power in Isan Province directly. Moreover, this also differentiated between Lao on the left side and the right side of Mekong River. However, if nation state issue was overlooked and focused only on “Laoness”, Lao people from both sides of Makong River were still attached in terms of ethnic and kinship.

##### 1.2 Social and Cultural Environment

In terms of physical geography, nine provinces of Lao PDR are in border with 12 provinces of Thailand which are Chiang Rai, Pa Yao, Nan, Uttaradit, Phitsanulok, Leoi, Nong Kai, Bueng Kan, Nakorn Panom, Mukdaharn, Amnat Charoen and Ubon Ratchathani with 1,810 Kilometers border line (1,108 Km. for Mekong River and 702 Km. for ground area). In terms of social and cultural geography, Lao PDR is governed under “People's Democratic Republic” with 1 government party that was elected by Lao people from different regions while Thailand is governed under “democratic form of government with the King as Head of State” in which the government and administrators were elected from several parties (which often caused coup d'etat)

##### 1.3 Thai-Lao Culture and Traditions

About 75 percent of Lao people are Buddhist, 16-17 percent is Animism which is a traditional belief and others are Christian, Muslim and other. Even though Lao Government gives freedom in religion, Theravada Buddhism was used as a major issue in governing and Lao culture. Thus, Laos has many Buddhist traditions as in Thailand especially in Isan region. “Heet 12 Kong 14” tradition is the ancient traditional inherited from the ancestors which lead to peaceful society.

#### 2. Relation and cooperation between Thailand and Lao PRD under Mekong River Cultural Context.

##### 2.1 Thai-Lao Relation in Empire Era



“Kinship” of important person in this era was derived from the marriage of the Royal Family. For example, Thao Oun Huan, son of His Royal Highness Ngum of Lan Chang Empire married to King Ramathibodi I’s daughter. Moreover, they also exchanged message and tribute and also yielded their daughters to get married with their Royal Family members.

## 2.2 Thai-Lao Relation in Colonial Era

Colonization in Indo-China region was led by France that forced Thailand to give Laos as one of French colonial countries. During that period (BE 2436-2497), Laos and Thailand had established diplomatic relations by exchanging diplomatic representatives on December 19, 1950. Since then, Laos and Thailand has developed a good diplomatic relations.

## 2.3 Thai-Lao Relation in Present

In 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of diplomatic relation establishment between Thailand and Lao PDR on December 19, 2010, key leaders of Thailand and Lao PDR which included Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and President of Thailand and Lao PDR Friendship Association from both countries congratulated each other and tried to find the way to enhance cooperation through activities such as commemorative stamp and Thai-Lao Youth Train.

Official relation in terms of official visit of the countries’ leaders was also perceived. For example, in 1992, His Excellency Kaison Pomwiharn, Preseident of Lao PRD and his wife officially paid a visit as a royal guest of His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen. Then, in 1995, His Excellency Nuhuk Poomsawan, President of Lao PDR and his wife also paid a visit and in 2009, His Excellency Joommalee Saiyasorn, President of Lao PDR and his wife officially visited Thailand.

Official relation in terms of center or project establishment was apparent, such as Huay Son-Huay Suao Agricultural Development and Service Center (Main 22), Orphan Cultural School (Main School 67) by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn had offered budget to build dormitory and established Lunch and Food Nutrition for Kids project and Integrated Farming Demonstration project under academic cooperation between Chaipattana Foundation and Jampasak University.

Official relation in terms of cooperation in constructing places for relationship; for example, Nong Kai-Tha Nalang trains station that Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn and His Excellency Boonyoung Worajit, Vice President of Lao PDR was chairperson in the first train. Moreover, there were a construction of “Lao-Thai Road” at Vientiane and Luang Pra Bang and Indoor Sport Complex for 25<sup>th</sup> SEA Games in 2009. In addition, planting

the tree in several places was also conducted, such as golden shower tree, gooseberry tree, pagoda tree and queen's flower tree.

#### 2.4 Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge

Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge is connected the two countries of both sides of Mekong River. There are 4 bridges: Nong Kai-Vientiane, Mukdaharn-Sawannakhet, Nakorn Panom-Kammuan and Chiang Khong-Huay Sai. At present, Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge at Bueng Kan-Bolikamsai and Na Tarn-Lakorn Peng are under consideration.

#### 2.5 Spatial Relation: Border Crossing Point

There are 15 permanent border crossing point of Thailand and Laos. Lao's permanent border crossing point is called "international checkpoint" and Lao's border trade area is called "local checkpoint" which is not open daily and there are some restrictions in crossing. There is one more checkpoint of Lao PDR which is called "tradition checkpoint". This checkpoint is only for people who live in border area. There are several permanent border crossing points in Thailand which included 2 points in Chiang Rai, 1 point in Nan, 3 points in Leoi, 4 points in Nong Kai, 1 point in Nakorn Panom, 2 points in Mukdaharn and 2 points in Ubon Ratchathani.

#### 2.6 Border Relation: Radio Broadcasting

Radio broadcasting in border area of Thailand can be listened by both sides of Mekong River. There is also a specific program in supporting relationship between Thailand and Lao PDR with music and news. This radio broadcasting program reflects localness of Thai and Lao people.

#### 2.7 Educational Relation: Fundamental Education System

When comparing 12 years education system between Thailand and Lao PDR, it can be seen that students have to spend 3 years in kindergarten level which is the same between both countries. However, in primary level, students in Thailand have to study for 6 years (Prathomsuksa 1-6) while students in Lao PDR study for only 5 years (Prathomsuksa 1-5). In secondary level, students in Thailand have to study for 3 years (Matthayomsuksa 1-3), but Lao students have to spend 4 year (Matthayomsuksa 1-4). In high school level, 3 years are required for both countries (Matthayomsuksa 4-6 for Thailand and Matthayomsuksa 5-7 for Lao PDR).

### 3. Educational Cooperation through Thai-Lao Twin Schools

#### 3.1 Educational Cooperation under ASEAN context



Educational cooperation in ASEAN was performed through activities that emphasized on enhancing positive understanding between juvenile of both countries, such as ASEAN Youth Development Project, ASEAN University Sport Competition, Youth Voluntary Project, Computer Games and ASEAN Academic Olympiads, ASEAN Youth Foundation and Exchanging Network and Good Practice concerning Method and Strategies in Developing Children and Juvenile.

Academic cooperation agreement was made by a visit of educational leader of Thailand to Lao PDR as a president of Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Council (SEAMEC). The focused issue was on development of English teacher by conducting Boot Camp Project under cooperation between Ministry of Education and British Council that established centers all over Thailand and also offered English training fund for Lao teacher who could be able to attend the project, such as who lived in Khonkaen, Ubon Ratchathani, Nakorn Ratchasima and Sakon Nakorn.

Educational cooperation meeting between Ministry of Education of Kingdom of Thailand and Lao PDR in 2004 raised several issues, such as personnel, students, teachers and researchers exchange, teaching of science and mathematics, development of books and curriculum and providing scholarship and research fund. Moreover, in 2008, there was a discussion between former Deputy Minister of Education of Thailand and Deputy Minister of Education of Lao PDR. Several issues were focused which included development of personnel, providing scholarship through university, exchanging of educational administrators, developing library in vocational institutes and academic and attitude exchange of teachers.

### 3.2 Thai-Lao Educational Cooperation: Twin Schools

Paired-Development Schools of Mekong River were in Mukdaharn and Sawannakhet. The schools were provincial boarding school and were recommended to be an observational study schools. Matthayom Somboon Ponsawan School in Sawannakhet and Mukdaharn School in Mukdaharn had a close relationship. Since 2000, they provided assistance to each other both officially and unofficially. Mukdaharn School was a gate that connected Thai organizations to Matthayom Somboon Ponsawan School, such as sport equipment assistance, computer for education, teaching activities and academic and cultural exchange.

As Mukdaharn and Kaisonpomwiharn were considered to be “Twin Cities” of Mekong River, Matthayom Somboon Ponsawan School and Mukdaharn School were recognized as “Thai-Lao Twin Schools Model” which led to establishment of new Twin Schools at Chiang Khong-Huay Sai and Saisettha-Muang Nong Kai by cooperating between

Ministry of Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of both countries. The discussion led to 3 more pairs of twin schools as follows:

Pair 1: (Upper Part) Chaing Kong Wittayakhom, Chiang Kong District, Chiang Rai province and Mattayomsuksa Somboon Santipharb, Muang Huay Sai, Bo Kaew province

Pair 2: (Middle Part) Nong Kai Wittayakarn School, Muang, Nong Kai province and Mattayomsuksa Somboonponthan, Muang Chaichetha, Vientiane.

Pair 3: (Lower Part) Mukdaharn, Muang, Mukdaharn province and Mattayomsuksa Ponsawan, Muang Kaisornpomwiharn, Sawannakhet province

### 3.3 Cooperation Guideline of Thai-Lao Twin Schools

3.3.1 Promoting cooperation for Twin Schools by conducting Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) through original affiliates of both countries and action plan according to the MOU

3.3.2 Academic exchange (or lesson exchange) by assisting in curriculum, teaching and learning, camping and academic skills competition

3.3.3 Languages and cultural study to enhance understanding of Thai and Lao language and culture between teachers and students

3.3.4 Teacher development and mutual learning by way of teaching assistance between teachers in both schools or attending training together or exchanging teachers

3.3.5 Relationship building which started from helping each other in terms of educational materials, sport equipment, sport competition and other educational activities

3.3.6 Expansion of Twin Schools' network through educational cooperation between Mukdaharn School and Mattayomsuksa Ponsawan School that had been expanded to schools in other area that willingly choose their own twin schools and continued managing idea and activities for the next generation

3.3.7 Limitations of cooperation between Twin Schools were founded. There was a delay in some processes of conducting activities and cooperation; however, it was essential in following official process, so plan was needed and method had to be adjusted according to the context.

## Discussion

According to the study about educational cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR in the Post-ASEAN time: A case study of the Twin Schools under Mekong River Sub-

Region's cultural context, there were some issues to be discussed as follows:

### **1. Thai-Lao Kinship and Ethnic**

From the study, it was founded that Thai-Lao relation in terms of “kinship” and “blood relation” has been established since Lan Chang Kingdom and Ayuttaya Kingdom and continued until present. “Laoness” was embedded in both sides of Mekong River even though it was an inter-relation between states. Kinship relation or blood relation were still existed among local people in the Modern State Era which meant that there was a connection between Thailand and Lao PDR in every level and every era in terms of social network between people in the society. It can be said that it was a mutual connection in society between individuals (Emirbayey & Goodwin, 1994) which was a channel that gathered overall relation and private relation. This was a virtual area in cultural society; for example, relatives may have different career and social position and also develop friendship with acquaintances in which “private relation could create network” (Suwan, 2006). Relation between Thailand and Lao PDR is a social and cultural relation that is connected in terms of nationality and culture since a thousand years ago. This was due to (1) Influence of “Tai-Lao language”, (2) Cultural exchange in local level, (3) Cultural exchange in State level, such as Southeast Asia Music and Dramatic Arts Festival and (4) Thai and Lao's religious relation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1998).

In addition, this unique Tai-Lao ethnic was founded in the study entitled “Process in Self-Creation of Lao Immigrants in Thai-Lao Border Area by Parichart Harnchaichana” (Harnchaichana. 2006). It mentioned that in the era of the Nation State construction that was obstructed by border line, State power had been focused on oppression and deprivation of Lao people that led to assimilation which transformed Lao people to be Isan people in Thailand. This Isan people was considered to be a new ethnic group, so they called themselves “Thai-Isan people” that possessed similar culture of Lao people who lived in Lao PDR. Thus, Thai-Isan ethnic group reacted to the oppression and deprivation through folk songs and Isan's literature. However, Lao people in Lao PDR were combined under Socialism that provoked realization in patriotism and sacrifice for the nation. There were 3 types of Lao people who immigrated to Thailand which were (1) Political refugee, (2) Marriage to Thai people and (3) Labor.

### **2. Geography Relation: Border Crossing Point and Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge**

From the study about Thai-Lao border area, there were 15 permanent border crossing checkpoints, 4 Thai-Lao Friendship Bridges and 2 ongoing constructions of Friendship

Bridges. This reflected 3 types of the border relations which included Social Border, Cultural Border and Nation-State Border (Santasombat et al, 2008). According to Santasombat et al. (2008), Social Border is the border that people used as a way to trade and visit each other. For Cultural Border, it refers to the same ethnic group of people who have different culture and Nation-State Border refers to a territory of each state. Normally, these 3 borders are overlapped which could cause both benefit and conflict. However, Nation-State Border is emphasized by majority of people and believed to be existed, thus it resulted in incongruous between people. Hence, "Border" is just an image that reflects multi-cultural society which is full of conflict, harmony, generosity and many kinds of relations.

### **3. Guideline in cooperation between Thai-Lao Twin Schools: Teachers Development and Mutual Learning, Friendship Building from Supporting One Another**

According to the study, the cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR is in the form of supporting each other which suggested the same goal. This is conformed to the study of Holsti (1995) about cooperation which stated 3 types of cooperation: (1) Cooperation to achieve the same goal, (2) Cooperation to support each other and (3) Cooperation to accept the act of each other. Moreover, the cooperation gives a chance in friendship building between neighbors and communities in order to make them realized and accepted benefits of expanding scope of resource consumption (Somprach et al, 2005). In addition, it also follows the 5 principles: (1) Reveal the common benefit that make the involved people to be on the same page, (2) Building friendship that make people support each other, (3) Give advice to each other, (4) Have a good communication under mutual experience or similar situation and (5) Being close to each other to build trust (Holsti, 1995). Besides, it is also in the form of (1) cross -border society of relatives which derived from relationship among relatives in the family, (2) cross -border society of exchange, such as exchange of goods and (3) transnational community in which village community is mostly founded (Faist,.... as cited in Senakam, 2004). For Thai-Lao cooperation, international relation, economic partnership and cultural and technological exchange (International Relation, 2015) are supportive relation that enhance and expand to other area of relations including education.

Guideline for enhancing cooperation between Thai-Lao Twin Schools is to sign Memorandum of Understanding through original affiliations of both countries.

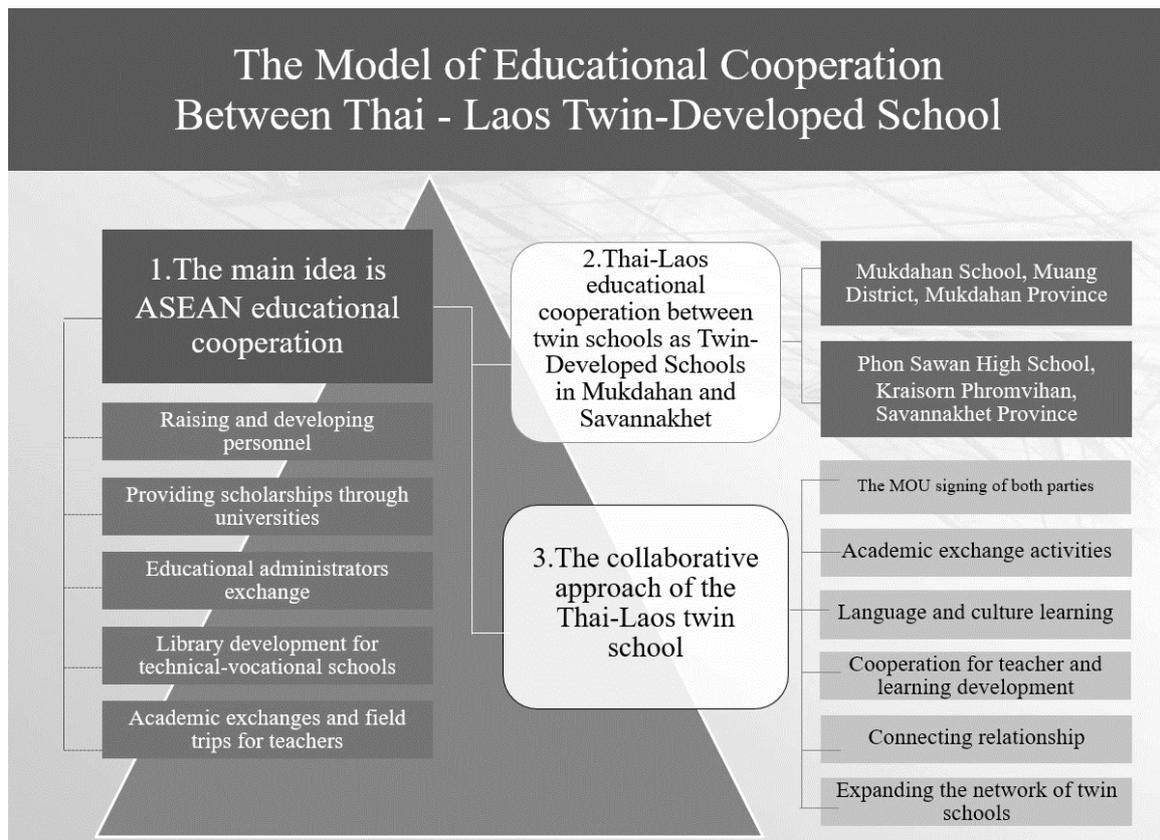
According to this study, the cooperation reflected the relationship that shared the same missions. This is conformed to the characteristic of Thai-Lao relation that is continually proceeding according to Thailand's policy that emphasized on elevating relationship with the

neighboring countries as can be seen in Lao PDR that has transformed to be market economic system in 1986 and entered ASEAN in July 1997. Likewise, Thailand and Lao PDR agreed to sign Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in February 1992 in order to confirm not to interfere with each other internal affairs and peacefully suspend the conflicts.

Guideline in promoting cooperation between Thai-Lao Twin Schools is to build languages and cultural learning in order to enhance understanding between teachers and students in terms of speaking and writing.

According to the study, it can be seen that cooperation between Thai-Lao Twin Schools is to build languages and cultural learning between each other. This is considered to be social and cultural cooperation which Thailand and Lao PDR are related in terms of race and culture for a thousand years due to (1) Influence of “Tai-Lao” language, (2) Local cultural exchange, (3) National cultural exchange, such as Southeast Asia Music and Dramatic Art Festival and (4) Religious relation of Thailand and Lao PDR (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1998).

From the above findings, it can be summarized as a pattern in the picture.



The picture 1: The model of educational cooperation between Thai - Laos twin-developed school

## Conclusion

This research creates the model of educational cooperation between the Thai - Laos twin school. It has 3 components: 1) The main idea is ASEAN educational cooperation through the academic cooperation of Thai-Laos both at the government level and local educational institutions, such as raising and developing personnel, providing scholarships through universities, educational administrators exchange, library development for technical-vocational schools, academic exchanges and field trips for teachers; 2) Thai-Laos educational cooperation between 3 pairs of twin schools as Twin-Developed Schools in the area of Mukdahan and Savannakhet as the third pair of twin schools namely Mukdahan School, Muang District, Mukdahan Province and Phon Sawan High School, Kraisorn Phromvihan, Savannakhet Province; and 3) The collaborative approach of the Thai-Laos twin school consists of 6 components, namely the signing of the MOU of both parties, academic exchange activities, language and culture learning, cooperation for teacher and learning development, connecting relationship, and expanding the network of twin schools.

## Suggestions and Recommendations

### 1. Policy Recommendation

1.1 Thailand and Lao PDR's official organizations should give priority to enhance Thai-Lao relation in terms of educational cooperation in the Twin Schools.

1.2 Educational cooperation in both sides of Mekong River should be supported from both countries to exchange lesson or to create learning process that conform to characteristic of neighboring countries and ASEAN Community.

### 2. Recommendation for Further Studies

2.1 Study about guidelines in Thai-Lao's educational cooperation for promoting relationship of educational organizations of both sides of Mekong River should be conducted.

2.2 Study about educational communication in terms of inter-state's culture of both sides of Mekong River should be conducted.

2.3 Study about educational direction and policy between Thailand and Lao PDR to promote close cooperation should be conducted.



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