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Identity of Students in Faculty of Management Sciences, Communication Arts Program in Digital Broadcasting, Yala Rajabhat University

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Abstract

The purpose of this research were to study the identity and patterns promoting student identity in Communication Arts Program in Digital Broadcast, Yala Rajabhat University. Key informants were 20 current students, alumni, graduate students, principal advisors, and lecturers. Research instruments were 1) in-depth interview 2) focus group discussion. The data were analyzed with content analysis. The results of this research found that: 1) Identity of students in Communication Arts Program in Digital Broadcast possessed; (1) various practical new media technology and traditional media skills in an integrated way (2) multi communication skills (3) skills to become content creator (4) outstanding in Bahasa Malaya and English skills prepared for 21st century careers (5) excellent communication skills in multicultural society, understanding social psychology and locals in the context of local cultures (6) good personality and ability to adapt to changing environments nationally and internationally (7) well rounded, alert and aware of people and surroundings (8) integrated creative thinking skills for local development and (9) adherence to moral values and professional ethics. 2) patterns promoting student identity showed that every arranged subjects especially Communication Arts in Future Digital Age for Complete Skill Development Practitioner course conducted the practice in classroom for professional experiences.

Keywords: Student identity, Communication Arts Program in Digital Broadcasting

Introduction

Higher education is of utmost importance for students as it serves to prepare them for future career. Therefore, developing students to possess desirable characteristics, practical professional skills that meet the requirements of workforce market and business organizations, knowledge and moral, social responsibility, and the ability to live with harmony and happiness in a multi-cultural democratic society, is the reinforcement that can be achieved through learning process and essential skill development in the 21st century. Furthermore, the framework of the standards of national higher education B.E. 2552 identifies five aspects of a graduate (Office of the Higher Education Commission. B.E. 2552, referred to in Supatcha Sri-iam, B.E. 2554: 35-36), namely morality, knowledge, intellect, interpersonal skill and responsibility, numerical analysis, communication, and information technology usage, resulting in the need for the curricular to clearly pinpoint the identities of the students, which is the expected result for students in accordance with the philosophy, visions, missions, objectives of the foundation of the curricular and make the identities of their students outstanding and distinguished from other students of the same field in other institutions.

The Bachelor of Communication Arts Program in Digital Broadcast, Faculty of Management Sciences, Yala Rajabhat University, is a newly developed curriculum open to students in B.E. 2558. The main reason for the development is to respond to the need of the graduates of digital broadcast to catch up with technological and communication transformations in the digital age. At the same time, due to the current situation, Yala Rajabhat University has devised its strategic plan to elevate its standard and quality to achieve excellence for one decade (from B.E. 2560 to B.E. 2569), aiming to develop and prepare the graduates to be professional practitioners (the Policy and Planning Department, Yala Rajabhat University, B.E. 2559). For this reason, the Bachelor of Communication Arts Program in digital broadcast, is obliged to undergo research to pinpoint the identities of its students in the field to suit for or align with the volatile environment of the labor market and the expectations of the entrepreneurs in local, domestic, and ASEAN scales.

Research objectives

1. To study the identities of the students of digital broadcast major of the Faculty of Management Science, Yala Rajabhat University
2. To study the patterns of the promotion of the identities of students of digital broadcast of the Faculty of Management Science, Yala Rajabhat University

Materials and methods

This research is qualitative research conducted by data collection via in-depth interview and focus group discussion with five major respondents derived from purposive samplings consisting of a total of 23 current students, alumni (communication arts), employers, entrepreneurs, experts (scholars and communication arts professionals in communication and information technology), and instructors of the communication arts curriculum in Pattanee, Yala, and Narathiwat provinces. In-depth questionnaires and group interview are used as main research tools. Data analysis is conducted by content analysis by data reduction and typological analysis into categories to determine sub-characteristics of identity; interpretation and sequencing of students' identities to extract and reach a conclusion on students' identities and the pattern to promote the identities of the students of Digital Broadcast Program, Yala Rajabhat University.

Results and discussion

The result is presented in two aspects, namely 1) the identities of the students and 2) and the pattern to promote the identities of the students of Digital Broadcasting Program, Yala Rajabhat University.

1. The research reveals five identities of the students of Digital Broadcast Program, Yala Rajabhat University

1.1 From academic and professional identity perspective, it is found that an individual student and the whole field should possess outstanding characteristics that distinguish them from those of the same field in other institutions. Focus should be placed on equipping students with systematic thinking and the ability to learn new things on their own so that they can possess a broad and systematic spectrum of knowledge together with specific practical professional skills (Chatrtip Suwannachin and Panomporn Chantarapanya, B.E. 2558: 274). The students in the digital age should be knowledgeable in journalism and communication arts (multi skills) and should be an integrated communication arts professional who can work in multiple fields of communication arts (Supaporn Pokaew, Issaree Praditteera, and Pojjana Toobkaew, B.E. 2557). Being content creators who produce work which are useful for promoting understanding, change of attitudes, and development of behaviors in a creative manner for message receivers. Being skillful in using communication tools and equipment in the digital age. This is in line with research conducted by Tanya Chantrong and Kulthip Sarttraruji (B.E. 2557: 91) which reveals that data collection, production, dissemination, exchange and sharing process with message receivers through news reporter citizens makes use of various online media platforms, such as blogs, websites, Youtube, Twitter, and e-mails.

1.2 From language identity perspective, the students of digital broadcast program should possess basic Thai language communication skills; they should be able to listen, speak, read, and write official Thai language fluently. They should also be able to communicate with another two languages: Bahasa Malaysian and English, as the university is located in the area adjacent to other Asian countries; there is an opportunity for the students to access communication arts labor market by simply crossing the border to work as news reporters, newscasters, or news producers for local Malaysian T.V. and radio stations, such as Al Jazeera station, local TV1 and TV2 stations, or RTM (Radio Television of Malaysia). This is consistent with the defined identities of Yala Rajabhat University, which states that the students should be “capable of IT, voluntary, persevering, and fluent in Bahasa Malaysian (The Policy and Planning Department, Yala Rajabhat University, B.E. 2559).

1.3 From personality identity perspective, it is found that the students digital broadcast program should be outgoing and confident, have good human relations, possess communication skills and correspondence strategy, so that they can achieve their work goals (Supaporn Pokaew, Issaree Praditteera, and Pojjana Toobkaew, B.E. 2557), can interact and co-exist with others in the multi-cultural society happily, be patient and adaptable to situations, work under pressure with people from different careers in different environment, all of which are consistent with the concept of student development in the 21st century (Vijarn Panich, B.E. 2555).

1.4 From multi-cultural society communication identity perspective, it is found that communication arts students or practitioners in the borderless world should understand their communication partners who may be different in terms of races, religions, traditions, and customs. They should also respect the value and meaning of community history, be skillful in choosing communication channels, content, and methods to reach message

receivers in the multi-cultural society with respect for human rights, possess friendly communication behaviors, and enter into relationships and participate in activities with people of different religions sincerely. Working in the three southern provinces requires the use of Bahasa Malaysian, local southern Thai languages, or central Bahasa Malaysian to communicate so that trust can be built with target message receivers (Nichawadee Taneeheng, B.E. 2552).

1.5 From moral and ethical perspective, the important characteristics of the students and graduates of Digital Broadcast Program are that they should be cultivated with attitudes and trained to work as media producers and content creators with morality and conscience, possess professional ethics, and respect the grace of all human beings, as well as personal rights or space. This is in line with the research conducted by Prince of Songkla University (B.E. 2551) which found that the employers and users of the graduates of B.E. 2551 enjoy the highest satisfaction derived from the students' possessions of morality, ethics, professional ethics, honesty, and sound and happy co-existence with others.

Based on this research, synthesize and derive a conclusion to describe the students Identity of Bachelor of Communication Arts Program in Digital Broadcast , the Faculty of Management Sciences, Yala Rajabhat University, as follows:

“Proficient in communication in multi-cultural society, specialized in practical aspects, equipped with integrative and creative thinking and adherent to morality and professional ethics, being digital literacy” (Exhibit 1)

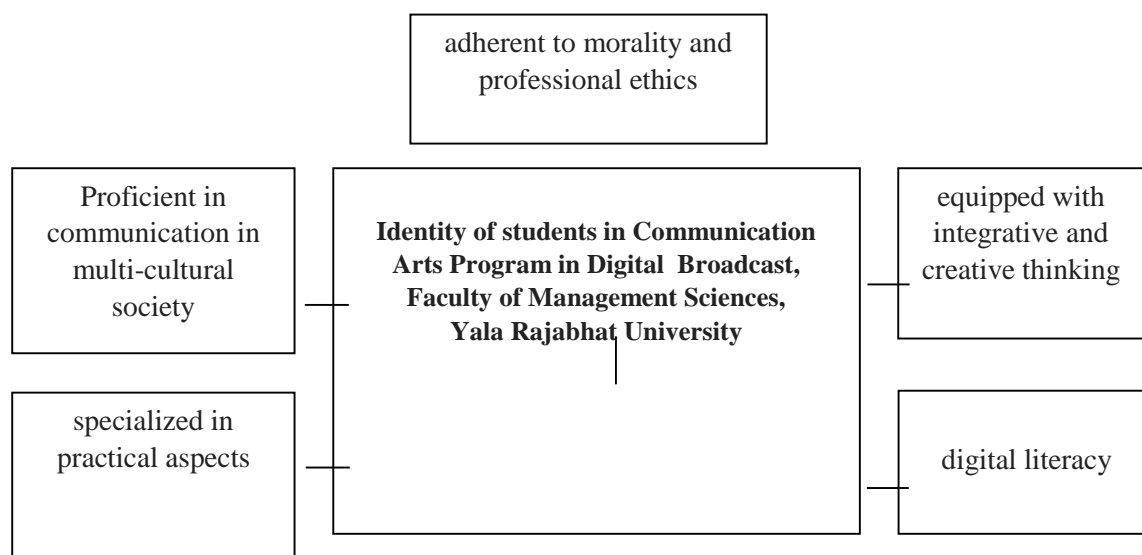


Exhibit 1: Identity of students in Digital Broadcast Program, Faculty of Management Sciences, Yala Rajabhat University

2. The research reveals the pattern for the promotion of the identity of the students of Digital Broadcast Program, Yala Rajabhat University, as follows:

2.1 It should also organize both intra-curricular and extra-curricular activities to develop the students. Principal respondents state that academic subjects promoting identity should be in place, consisting of (1) Digital media production – content communicated

through three languages, namely Central Bahasa Malaysian, English, and official Thai, should be produced (2) Announcers and speakers on radio and television (using all three languages), and (3) The management and Administration of broadcast radio and digital TV (focusing on marketing), all of which are in line with the curriculum of the digital broadcast program B.E. 2558, the faculty of Management Sciences of the university (B.E. 2558).

2.2 The program should organize all subjects that aim to develop the students to become skillful holistic communication practitioners, by focusing on the use of modern tools and equipment and technology in the digital age. The students will be enabled to work as communication arts professionals as of their first academic year and their skills will be enhanced till graduation. This is in line with the concept of the creation of students' identity in higher education level to prepare them for future careers. The students will possess desirable characteristics that meet the need of entrepreneurs, labor market, and the society (Chattip Suwannachin and Panomporn Chantarapanya, B.E. 2558: 277). The program should also support the students' actual careers upon graduation, after which they will have to apply for relevant positions (Digital Broadcast Program, B.E. 2558).

2.3 Sending students to participate in professional apprenticeship with governmental and state enterprise mass media organizations in Pattanee, Yala, Narathiwat, and other proximities of Bangkok or in neighboring countries during vacation will allow the students to experience, learn, and practice working in real situations. They will be able to adjust and develop themselves until graduation, which will increase their chance of being selected for work while studying or upon graduation. This is consistent with preparatory co-operative education subjects or co-operative education subjects provided by Digital Broadcasting Program, the Faculty of Management Sciences, Yala Rajabhat University (B.E. 2558).

2.4 The creation of opportunities or space for the students to participate in communication arts contests, competitions, or tests in various fields, in collaboration with professional organizations will allow the students to see the learning atmosphere, other students and practitioners in other areas, enabling them to review, manage, improve themselves when conformed with rivals, be able to analyze their own strengths, weaknesses, or obstacles of themselves and of their rivals from other institutions. They will also be inspired to make their ways to success and prepare themselves for career upon graduation (Digital Broadcasting Program, Yala Rajabhat University, B.E. 2558). There should be the organization of student and instructor exchange with foreign institutions for at least one academic term, with language preparation for one year prior to traveling. This is in line with the 10-year strategic draft plan of Yala Rajabhat University, B.E. 2559), which promotes cooperation and MOU entered into with other institutions in Asian countries to develop all programs of the university.

Conclusion

The identity and patterns promoting student identity in Communication Arts Program in Digital Broadcast, Yala Rajabhat University, it is founded the five dimensions: 1) From academic and professional identity perspective 2) From language identity perspective 3) From personality identity perspective 4) From multi-cultural society communication identity perspective and 5) From moral and ethical perspective. Based on this research, all respondents synthesize and derive a conclusion to describe the students of Digital Broadcast Program, the Faculty of Management Sciences, Yala Rajabhat University, as follows: "Proficient in communication in multi-cultural society,

specialized in practical aspects, equipped with integrative and creative thinking and adherent to morality and professional ethics, being digital literacy”.

The pattern for the promotion of the identity of the students of Digital Broadcast Program, consisting of the program should define the identity of the students before designing academic subjects, organize all subjects that aim to develop the students to become skillful holistic communication practitioners, sending students to participate in professional apprenticeship with governmental and state enterprise mass media organizations in Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and other proximities of Bangkok or in neighboring countries during vacation will allow the students to experience, learn, and practice working in real situations, creating of opportunities or space for the students to participate in communication arts contests, competitions and organizing students and instructors exchange with foreign institutions.

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