

Development Status and Countermeasures of “Chinese + Vocational Education” in Thailand

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Abstract: This thesis introduces the general situation of the development of Chinese vocational education in Thailand. The study investigates and analyses the development of Chinese vocational education in Thailand in the form of questionnaires. The study then discusses the construction of teaching resources of Chinese Tourism, Chinese Railway, Chinese Medicine, Chinese E-commerce, Chinese Law, and Chinese Industrial Robot in Thailand. Lastly, this paper puts forward three suggestions. First, formulate the Chinese vocational education ability grade standard and teaching syllabus in line with the local and national conditions of Thailand. Second, train multi-talented vocational Chinese teachers in Thailand who are familiar with both Chinese and vocational education. Third, the teaching resources of Chinese vocational education in Thailand should adhere to the principle of joint research and development of China-Thailand cooperation, and fully develop the systematic local teaching resources covering the whole coverage of primary-middle-high school, with a focus on the development of supporting digital and three-dimensional teaching resources.

Keywords: Thailand; Chinese + vocational education; Case analysis

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1. Overview of the development of “Chinese language + vocational education” in Thailand

“Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand is on the rise. Chinese language and vocational education government departments of China and Thailand, Chinese and Thai vocational colleges and universities, Confucius Institutes in Thailand, Chinese and Thai enterprises, and social organizations are vigorously carrying out “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand. The promotion entities on the Thai side include the vocational education Committee of the Thai Ministry of Education, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, the Immigration Department, the Police Department, the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Courts and other governmental units, as well as Thai vocational and technical colleges and universities, and Thai vocational or industry associations (such as the Tourism Practitioners Association of Thailand, the Thai Hotels Association, the Thai Bar Association), and so on. The promotion entities on the Chinese side include the Center for Sino-

Foreign Language Exchanges and Cooperation of the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China and Chinese vocational colleges, Chinese promotional entities include the Sino-Foreign Language Exchange and Cooperation Center of the Chinese Ministry of Education, Chinese vocational institutions, Chinese-funded enterprises, and social organizations (such as the Chinese Language Alliance), and so on. Chinese-Thai cooperative entities include the Confucius Institute of Thailand, the Sino-Thai Institute of Language and Vocational Education, the Thai Branch of Chinese Vocational Schools, the Thai Luban Workshop, the Thai Chinese Language Workshop, the Thai Jingshih Academy, as well as various types of Chinese-Thai vocational education Institutes, bases, centers, and classrooms.

1.1. The vocational education council of the Ministry of Education of Thailand and its subordinate vocational and technical colleges is the main force of the Thai side to promote “Chinese + vocational education”

The Office of the Vocational Education Commission, Ministry of Education (OVEC), established in 2003, is the leading department of vocational education and training in Thailand, aiming to provide high-quality and professional vocational education and training. The units and agencies under OVEC include the Office of Administration, the Office of Cooperation, the Office of Vocational Monitoring and Evaluation, the Office of Vocational Policy and Planning, the Office of Teachers’ Career Development, the Bureau of Vocational and Occupational Standards, the Office of Vocational Research and Development, the Office of the Private vocational education Authority, the Personnel Administration and Legal Affairs Division, and 948 vocational colleges and technical colleges in Thailand, both public and private.

Vocational and technical colleges in Thailand are divided into two categories by name, Vocational College and Technical College, with two levels, secondary and tertiary. They are under the unified management of the Office of the Vocational Education Council of the Ministry of Education of Thailand. As of June 2021, there are a total of 948 Vocational Colleges in Thailand, including 431 public colleges and 517 private colleges, with a total of 868,478 students enrolled. **Table 1** below shows the distribution of students enrolled in vocational and technical colleges in Thailand ^[1].

Table 1. The number of students enrolled in Thai vocational and technical colleges as of June 2021

	Secondary school	Tertiary school	Total
Public	400,555	151,658	552,213
Private	210,830	105,435	316,265
Total	611,385	257,093	868,478

1.2. Thailand’s “Chinese language + vocational education” is characterized by one-way output from China to Thailand

From the perspective of Chinese language education, since 2003, the Chinese and Foreign Language Exchange and Cooperation Center of the Ministry of Education of China has sent volunteers to Thailand to carry out Chinese language education, and over the past 20 years, more than 20,000 volunteers have been sent to Thailand. Their footprints have spread to all primary and secondary schools in Thailand, which has greatly promoted the prosperity and development of Chinese language education in Thailand ^[2]. From the perspective of “vocational education”, under the background of China’s policy of adhering to and expanding the opening up of education to the outside world, Chinese governments at all levels, colleges, universities, and enterprises are also firmly promoting Chinese vocational education to go global, exploring the internationalized development

of “Chinese + vocational skills”. Exploring the internationalized development mode of “Chinese language + vocational skills”, the brand competitiveness and international influence of Chinese vocational education are increasing day by day, and Chinese vocational education’s professional standards, curriculum standards, and teaching resources are constantly being exported to countries all over the world (including Thailand).

1.3. The Confucius Institute in Thailand has played the role of a bridge and link in promoting “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand

Several “Chinese + vocational education” projects with remarkable results in Thailand have been led by the Confucius Institutes in Thailand or promoted by them as important participants, including “Chinese + Tourism” - Confucius Institute Phuket, Prince of Songkhla University, Thailand; “Chinese + Railway” - Confucius Institute, Khon Kaen University, Thailand; “Chinese + Traditional Chinese Medicine” - Confucius Institute, Queen Mother University, Thailand; “Chinese + vocational education” - Confucius Institute, Queen Mother University, Thailand; Confucius Institute, Queen Mother University, Thailand; Confucius Institute, Chong Sheng University, Thailand; Confucius Institute, Oriental University, Thailand; “Chinese + E-commerce” - Confucius Institute, Chiang Mai University, Thailand; “Chinese + Law” - Office of the Thai Court of Justice, National Anti-Corruption Commission of Thailand, Confucius Institute at Maritime Silk Road University, Thailand, Confucius Institute in Phuket, Prince of Songkhla University, Thailand. The liaison and communication between Chinese and Thai governments, vocational schools, enterprises, and social organizations also mostly use the Confucius Institute in Thailand as a platform or hub. The Confucius Institutes in Thailand not only greatly promote the development of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand, but also realize the development of “Chinese + vocational education” characteristics of their respective Confucius Institutes.

1.4. The Chinese and foreign language exchange and cooperation center of the Ministry of Education of China is an important promoter of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand

In recent years, the Center for Sino-Foreign Language Exchange and Cooperation of the Ministry of Education of China has made continuous efforts in the area of “Chinese + vocational education”, and has successively promoted the opening of “Chinese +” special courses, the joint establishment of the Sino-Thai Institute of Language and vocational education, and the first “Chinese + Vocational Skills” program in the country. It has also promoted the establishment of the first international promotion base for “Chinese language + vocational skills” and strengthened the training of teachers for “Chinese language + vocational skills”. The Center for Sino-Thai Language Exchange and Cooperation (CCLEC) has set up a “Language Cooperation Center - Bangkok Center” in Bangkok, Thailand, and promotes the development of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand through the “Language Cooperation Center - Bangkok Center”, with four important achievements. The “LCC-Bangkok Center”, has promoted the development of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand, with four important achievements: the establishment of “A Chinese Workshop” in Thailand; the construction of the “Chinese Music Classroom” in Thailand; the establishment of “Sino-Thai Language and vocational education Institute”; “Chinese Bridge” online group.

2. Survey on the current situation of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand

2.1. Teachers of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand

Chinese teachers in Thai vocational and technical colleges are scarce, as local Chinese teachers are the main

ones. The number of Chinese students in Thai vocational and technical colleges is close to 1/3 of the total number of students, but the overall Chinese language proficiency of the students is on the low side. The teacher ratio of Chinese teachers to Chinese students is only 2:1,000, with 2 Chinese teachers teaching 1,000 Chinese students, which makes it difficult for the students to learn Chinese and makes the teachers' teaching task heavy.

2.2. Thai “Chinese + vocational education” programs

Among the “Chinese + vocational education” programs offered by the respondents' vocational schools, “Chinese + Tourism” and “Chinese + Business” are the most popular ones. “Chinese + Business” courses accounted for the majority of the courses offered by the respondents' vocational schools. The “online + offline” or purely “offline” mode of delivery was the most popular, while the purely “online” mode of delivery was the least popular. If an online course on “Chinese language + vocational education” is to be launched, the preferred format is micro-teaching, followed by live-teaching and finally video-teaching. In addition, the ability to use modern educational technology is considered the most important teaching competency that the Thai “Chinese + vocational education” teachers' group thinks they should have.

2.3. Textbooks for “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand

Chinese + vocational education textbooks in Thailand are most popularly available in Chinese and Thai, followed by Chinese and English or pure Chinese, and there are also some Thai textbooks, but no pure English textbooks. The standardization of Chinese + vocational education teaching materials used by teachers is high, and most of them are officially published, but the satisfaction level of the teaching materials is not high. The respondents generally believe that the biggest problem with the teaching materials of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand is the lack of supporting teaching resources.

2.4. Demand for “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand

Respondents generally know more about the “Chinese + vocational education” program in Thailand and believe that the demand for it is high, and most of them are very supportive of the “Chinese + vocational education” program in their respective vocational schools. Most of the respondents were very supportive of the “Chinese + vocational education” program in their respective vocational schools and believed that the students gained a lot from the program. The respondents generally hoped that the Chinese and Thai governments would take the lead in carrying out cooperative programs such as the transfer of scholarship students, mutual visits of vocational teachers, lectures on vocational education, joint cultivation of dual degrees in Chinese and Thai vocational schools, and the construction of cooperative bases in Chinese and Thai vocational schools.

3. Case study of Chinese + vocational education in Thailand

At present, the degree of development and construction of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand is mixed. From the viewpoint of local teaching resources, most of the paper teaching materials are mainly for junior high school, most of them lack intermediate and advanced teaching materials, and the digital and three-dimensional supporting resources are not yet complete ^[3].

3.1. “Chinese + Tourism”, “Chinese + Railway” and “Chinese + E-commerce” in Thailand

The construction of local teaching resources for “Chinese + Tourism”, “Chinese + Railway” and “Chinese + E-commerce” in Thailand is relatively perfect, as a series of digitalized and stereoscopic supporting resources have been developed systematically.

3.1.1. “Chinese + Tourism”

Associate Professor Yang Wenbo, the seventh Chinese Director of the Confucius Institute in Phuket, Prince of Songkhla University, Thailand, has presided over the preparation of the teaching materials for “Walking around Thailand” (Chinese-Thai bilingual edition) and the “Pocket Book of Chinese for the Tourism Industry in Thailand” (Chinese-Thai parallel edition) (Six volumes: 100 Sentences of Chinese for Airports; 100 Sentences of Chinese for Hotels; 100 Sentences of Chinese for Transportation; 100 Sentences of Chinese for Immigration; 100 Sentences of Chinese for Restaurant; and 100 Sentences of Chinese for Shopping Malls). He developed supporting digital resources such as micro-teaching lessons, teaching courseware, and short animation videos.

3.1.2. “Chinese + Railway”

Associate Professor Hu Lin, former Chinese Director of Confucius Institute at Khon Kaen University, Thailand, presided over the development of the catechism course “Go to China, Learn Technology—Chinese for Railway Transportation”, which is divided into two parts: basic Chinese and professional Chinese which is presented in the form of Chinese explanations and Chinese-Thai subtitles.

3.1.3. “Chinese + E-commerce”

The Vocational Education Committee of the Ministry of Education of Thailand, the National Teaching Guidance Committee of E-commerce vocational education (China), the Development Council of the “One Belt and One Road” E-commerce Valley Industry-Education Integration International Cooperation Project, the Confucius Institute of Chiang Mai University, and the Beijing Boguide Prospective Information Technology Co. Ltd. organized Chinese and Thai institutions and industry enterprises to jointly develop a bilingual series of Thai “Chinese + e-commerce” “junior-intermediate-higher” integrated teaching materials, including Introduction to E-commerce and Operation Basics (Elementary), E-Commerce Operation Practice (Intermediate), and E-Commerce Data Operation (Advanced). In addition, core training courses including training programs, courseware, micro-courses, portfolios, question banks, and so on, have been developed to accompany the series of textbooks, as well as the “Qingyun E-commerce” international online training platform and skills training platform, which supports Chinese, English, and Thai languages. This series of teaching materials is a series of teaching materials for the 1+X E-commerce Data Analysis Vocational Skill Level Certificate of the China-Thailand Cooperation “Chinese + vocational education” Program. In addition, the series of teaching materials and the supporting resources have been recognized by the Vocational Education Committee of the Ministry of Education of Thailand as a recommended curriculum.

3.2. “Chinese + Traditional Chinese Medicine” and “Chinese + Law” in Thailand

The local teaching resources of “Chinese + Traditional Chinese Medicine” and “Chinese + Law” in Thailand are mainly paper-based and scarce and are still in the exploration and start-up stage.

3.2.1. “Chinese + Traditional Medicine”

Associate Professor Meng Xianjun, former Chinese Director of the Confucius Institute at Queen Mae University in Thailand, has written a textbook entitled “Glossary of Basic Chinese Medicine Terminology” (Chinese-Thai bilingual edition). Other than that, there are no other local textbooks on “Chinese + Traditional Chinese Medicine” in Thailand.

3.2.2. “Chinese + Law”

The International Affairs Division of the Office of the Court of Justice of Thailand has prepared a textbook

entitled “Guide to the Official Use of Chinese in the Courts (Criminal Cases) (Volume 1)” (Chinese-Thai bilingual edition). Other than that, there are no other Thai “Chinese + Law” local teaching materials.

3.3. Other programs

Thai programs such as “Chinese + Music”, “Chinese + Sports”, “Chinese + Computer”, “Chinese + Industrial Robotics”, and so on, are just beginning, so there are no related local teaching materials published yet.

4. Suggestions for the development of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand

Summarizing the research in this paper, the author’s suggestions for the future development of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand are as follows.

4.1. Developing competency level standards and syllabi for “Chinese + vocational education” in line with Thailand’s local conditions

Standards come first for quality improvement. In the face of the localization, informatization, digitization, and intelligence needs of “Chinese language + vocational education” in Thailand, educators should formulate the competency level standards of “Chinese language + vocational education” according to the national conditions of Thailand, and establish the corresponding assessment and certification program of “Chinese language + vocational education.” The development of “Chinese + vocational education” competency level standards by Thailand’s national conditions and the establishment of corresponding “Chinese + vocational education” assessment and certification programs play an important leading role in enhancing the authority and operability of Thailand’s “Chinese + vocational education” competency level standards and promoting the internationalization of Thailand’s “Chinese + vocational education.”

From the survey of this paper, only the category of “Chinese + e-commerce” in Thailand has formulated vocational standards (Thailand’s “1+X e-commerce data analysis vocational skill level standard”) in line with the current situation of the development of Thailand’s e-commerce industry and the future trend and developed corresponding vocational competency level certificates (China-Thailand cooperation). Educators have also developed corresponding vocational ability level certificates (1+X E-commerce Data Analysis Vocational Skill Level Teacher Training Certificate and Vocational Skill Level Certificate of the China-Thailand Cooperation “Chinese + Vocational Skills” Program). There are no relevant standards and certificates for the rest of the “Chinese + vocational education” category.

On December 8, 2023, after the validation by the Group Standards Committee of the World Society for Chinese Language Teaching (WSCLT), the WSCLT issued the “Chinese Proficiency Level Standard for Vocational Chinese” (T/ISCLT 002-2023), which is the standard for vocational Chinese language teaching and learning in China. At the same time, the Center for Sino-Foreign Language Exchange and Cooperation of the Ministry of Education of China released four “Research and Development Achievements of Chinese Language Standards for Occupations” at the World Conference on the Chinese Language: International Chinese Language Tourist Profession Skill Level Standard, International Pre-Chinese Literature Teachers Profession Skill Level Standard, Chinese Language Proficiency Level Standard for ICT Professionals, and Chinese Proficiency Level Standard for ICT Marketers.

In May 2024, the Vocational Chinese Language Syllabus organized and compiled by the Center for Sino-Foreign Language Exchange and Cooperation was released (the first two professional directions published were the Automobile Service Engineering Technology and Logistics Service and Management Programs), which aims to provide Chinese language teaching and teaching materials writing references for the Chinese language

proficiency development of Chinese as a second language learners in specific vocational fields and work tasks. The syllabus refers to the Chinese Language Proficiency Level Standards for Occupations and related vocational skills standards and stipulates the target audience of “Chinese Plus” related majors or occupations, the overall objectives of language proficiency in occupations, and the objectives of Chinese language proficiency in occupations by stages, to provide planning guidance for vocational Chinese language education in this field. In addition, the syllabus is accompanied by examples of typical work tasks, specialized vocabulary, specialized sentence patterns, and so on, to provide reference examples for specific language teaching.

The successive release of the Vocational Chinese Proficiency Level Standards and the Vocational Chinese Syllabus is an important guide and reference for the development, implementation, and promotion of the proficiency level standards and syllabus for “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand. The Committee on Vocational Education of the Ministry of Education of Thailand can organize Chinese and Thai experts in the field of “Chinese + vocational education” to carry out the localized research and development of the standards and syllabus for vocational Chinese language proficiency in Thailand. In addition, the Bangkok Center of the Language Cooperation Center and the Sino-Thai Institute of Language and Vocational Education can also assist in the development and implementation of the Thai vocational Chinese proficiency level standards and syllabus.

4.2. To build a multi-skilled Thai vocational Chinese language teaching team that is proficient in both Chinese language and vocational education

The core of education is the three kinds of education, and the core of the three kinds of education is teachers. As mentioned in section 2, Chinese teachers in Thai vocational and technical colleges and universities are scarce and dominated by local Chinese teachers, as the ratio of Chinese teachers to teachers is only 2:1,000 (an average of 2 Chinese teachers teaching 1,000 Chinese students), which makes the teachers’ teaching task heavy. In addition, according to the author’s survey, at present, the teachers of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand have both better integration and relative fragmentation, which is specifically reflected in the following: “Chinese + tourism”, “Chinese + Chinese medicine”, “Chinese + vocational education” and “Chinese + vocational education.” In Thailand, most of the teachers of “Chinese + Tourism”, “Chinese + Railway” and “Chinese + E-commerce” are both Chinese language teachers and vocational teachers (even if Chinese language teachers and vocational teachers have their duties, they can still integrate and carry out teaching). In Thailand, the teachers of “Chinese + Industrial Robotics” are only responsible for teaching Chinese, and the vocational teachers are only responsible for teaching industrial robotics, as even the language of instruction is still English. The Chinese language teachers and vocational teachers are separated from each other and independent of each other, which may not be conducive to the integrated development of “Chinese + vocational education.” At present, the rapid development of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand has led to a strong demand for high-quality vocational Chinese teachers. Therefore, building a high-quality vocational Chinese teacher team that is proficient in both Chinese language and vocational education is a realistic need for the development of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand.

The General Office of the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China’s “Basic Standards for Vocational Education Multi-skilled Teachers” in 2022 provides detailed requirements for the national vocational skill level certificates or vocational qualification certificates that applicants for multi-skilled teachers in secondary vocational schools and higher vocational schools need to obtain: junior “dual-teacher” teachers are required to obtain a certificate of vocational skills or vocational qualification certificate. Detailed requirements: Junior multi-skilled teachers are required to obtain relevant national vocational skills level certificates or vocational qualification certificates; intermediate multi-skilled teachers are required to obtain relevant

national vocational qualification certificates or vocational skills level certificates of intermediate level or above; Senior multi-skilled teachers are required to obtain the relevant national vocational qualification senior certificate or vocational skill level senior certificate ^[4]. At the beginning of 2024, Shandong Province included the International Certificate for Teachers of Chinese as part of the vocational qualification for multi-skilled teachers, and for the first time, the International Certificate for Teachers of Chinese has become a supporting condition for the recognition of multi-skilled teachers. A series of Chinese initiatives on vocational education teachers provide favorable references for Thailand to build a multi-skilled vocational Chinese language teaching force.

4.3. China-Thailand cooperation in jointly developing local teaching resources for “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand, and building supporting digital and three-dimensional resources

Sino-Thai cooperation has always been the mainstream trend in the preparation and development of Chinese language teaching materials in Thailand. From the survey of this paper, Thailand’s “Chinese + Tourism”, “Chinese + Traditional Chinese Medicine”, “Chinese + E-commerce” and so on are jointly developed by the Chinese and Thai teams of professional teachers ^[5]. These teaching resources are developed by both Chinese and Thai professional teacher teams, which not only absorb the Chinese professionalism of the Chinese teacher team experts but also incorporate the local characteristics of the Thai teacher team experts, thus ensuring the professionalism and localization of the teaching resources of “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand, with the teaching resources of the above vocational Chinese language categories have all achieved certain results. On the contrary, the construction of Thai “Chinese + Law” teaching resources is full of errors (the author counted 160 Chinese expression errors) due to the participation of the Thai side only (such as “The Official Guide to the Use of Chinese in the Courts (Criminal Cases) Volume 1”), so similar lessons should be learned and avoided as much as possible in the future ^[6]. In addition, the development of systematic teaching resources covering the whole range of “primary, secondary and tertiary education” and the construction of corresponding digital and three-dimensional supporting resources are also the proper significance of the construction of resources for “Chinese + vocational education” in Thailand.

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