

An Analysis of the Thai Police Cadets' Culture

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— *Review of* —
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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to analyze the police cadets' culture using descriptive research and qualitative research. The data were collected by using the in-depth interview and focus group of a group of police officers and 4 groups of police cadets as well as the interview of 9 police cadets' commanders and teachers. The collected data were analyzed by the 5 experienced scholars to identify the expected police cadets' culture and recommendations for cultivating the culture. The findings, from an analysis of documents and interviews, revealed 33 issues of the expected police cadets' culture and after conducting a focus group, all issues were divided into 5 categories, including 1) seniority system, 2) integrity system, 3) rights of police cadets in each year class 4) main police ceremonies and 5) specific languages for police cadets. It was also found that there were 15 principles of the expected police cadets' culture including 1) the attachment among the Royal Police Cadet Academy's alumni, 2) the sacrifice for helping people, 3) the humbleness, 4) the care for junior officers by the senior officers, 5) the royalty to the Royal Police Cadet Academy, 6) the responsibility, 7) the academic success, 8) self-learning, 9) the use of English in daily life, 10) the welcome ceremony for the first-year police cadets, 11) the wrist-binding ceremony, 12) the ethic cultivation, 13) the observation and awareness, 14) the consideration and kindness, and 15) the role model.

Keywords: Police cadets, Culture

1. INTRODUCTION

In this study "culture" refers to something that brings prosperity to the group of people such as Thai culture, dress culture, and folkway etc. (Thai Dictionary, 1999). Moreover, culture can be a complex body of knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, traditions, skills and other habitual behaviors that has been transferred among the members of society (Tylor Edward Burnett, 1871: 1). Thus, culture is an important part of society that makes people to be able to orderly live together in society with love and harmony, which brings sustainable prosperity to society.

Police cadets have to be trained in order to build good personality and attitude for becoming professional police officers. This makes police cadets different from other university students in terms of police personality, police education and training, and patriotic ideology cultivation. All of these serve as a tool to make all police cadets the same standard. This process can change personality and attitude of regular youth to become a gentle man in a uniform (Benjashi P. 2013: 1-20). To produce qualified

police cadets who have academic excellence and good morality, police culture plays a crucial role. This is because the way of police cadets' life, including tradition and rite, is a unique characteristic.

The culture of police cadets is an important part of police cadets' life. It is unique in terms of belief, value, language, tradition and rite in each year of police cadet class. Academically, there is no research on this issue in Thailand. Therefore, it is crucial to study and understand the culture of police cadets in order to create proper culture for police cadets to become police officers with good professional characters who can protect people and maintain peace and orders.

The expected outcomes of this research include : first, the Royal Police Cadet Academy will get guidelines for creating the expected culture of police cadets; second, the good culture will be maintained and transferred to a new generation of police cadets; third, police cadets will still have good culture to cling on and serve as a goal of work life; and last, the Royal Thai Police and the Royal Police Cadet Academy can use the findings from this research to improve the curriculum and create extra-curricular activities for police cadets to obtain the expected culture.

The objectives of this research are 1) to analyze the current police cadets' culture and 2) to study the expected culture of police cadets and explore guidelines for strengthening the expected culture.

2. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

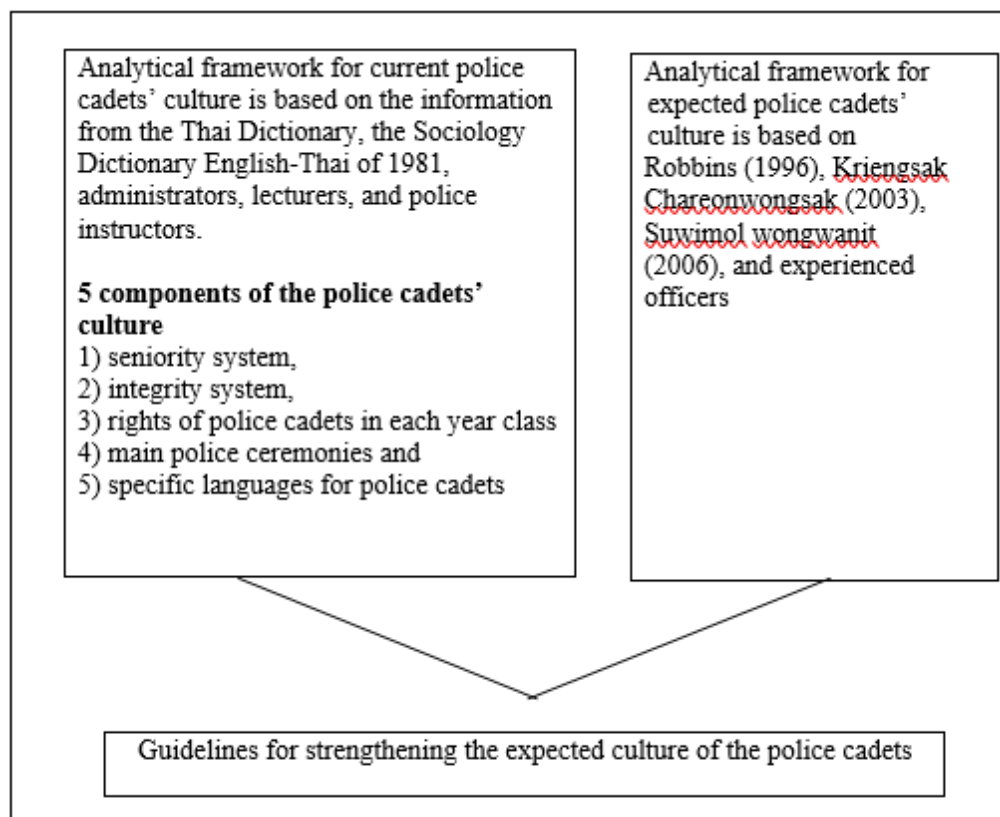


Figure 1. Analytical framework

3. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research aimed to study the current culture of police cadets, the expected culture of police cadets, and guidelines for strengthening the expected culture of the police cadets in the bachelor's program of Public Administration in Police Science at the Royal Police Cadet Academy, the first and only institution that offers training to commissioned police officers in Thailand. Data were gathered through a study of relevant documents, focus group, and interview of the samples. The samples of this research include 4 groups of 5 police cadets who were studying in the second semester of 2014 in the bachelor's program of Public Administration in Police Science at the Royal Police Cadet Academy, a group of 5 police officers who graduated from the Royal Police Cadet Academy, and 9 lecturers and police instructors. In addition, the collected data were analyzed and the primary findings of the expected police cadets' culture were brought to the 5 experienced scholars for the final analysis.

Data Collecting Instrument

This research employed 6 data collecting forms including 1) culture synthetic form, 2) interview form for culture issues, 3) form for police cadets' focus group discussion, 4) form for police officers' focus group discussion, 5) interview form for the expected police cadets' culture, and 6) form for the appropriateness evaluation and possibility of the expected police cadets' culture and guidelines for strengthening it.

Data Analysis

1. An analytical framework of current police cadets' culture was derived from the review of relevant documents from domestic and international scholars, Thai Dictionary, Sociology Dictionary English-Thai of 1981, and information from the interviewed administrators and lecturers in the Royal Police Cadet Academy. The reviewed information was brought to a focus group discussion of 5 police officers who were former section heads of police cadet, chief commander of police cadet, and cadet commanders. Content analysis and constant comparison were employed in this section.

2. An analysis of the expected police cadets' culture and guidelines for strengthening the expected culture was conducted as follows:

2.1 The focus group discussion of 4 groups of police cadets in each year class was employed to collect data. Each group contains 5 police cadets using the purposive sampling method to select the attendant cadets. The 5 police cadets in each group included 2 police cadets with good manner, 2 police cadets with good grades and 1 police cadet with a lower grade.

2.2 The interview of 9 lecturers and police instructors in the Royal Police Cadet Academy, using the purposive sampling method.

3. The appropriateness evaluation and possibility of the expected police cadets' culture and guidelines for strengthening it was obtained from 5 academic scholars. Descriptive statistics were used in this section.

4. FINDINGS

The Analysis of Current Police Cadets' Culture

The analytical scope of current police cadets' culture was retrieved from the review of relevant documents from domestic and international scholars, Thai Dictionary, Sociology Dictionary English-Thai of 1981, and information from the interviewed administrators and lecturers in the Royal Police Cadet Academy. As a result, there were 33 issues of culture that were later brought to the focus group discussion of 5 police officers who graduated from the Royal Police Cadet Academy and then these issues were finally divided into five main categories. The details of the 5 main categories of police cadets' culture are as follows:

1. Seniority system refers to the fact that the junior police cadets must pay respect to the senior police cadets and obey the orders of the senior strictly. On the other hand, the senior cadets have to take care of the junior cadets. The seniority system helps police cadets to learn how to friendly associate with other people in the society and how to be a good model for others.

2. Integrity system refers to being honest with others and themselves, having dignity, being proud of being a police cadet, paying respect to others and themselves, taking responsibility, accepting mistakes, and willing to improve themselves.

3. Rights of police cadets in each year class refer to the eligible rights that was granted by the commanders to the police cadets in each year class

The first year police cadets are assigned the blue color as their company's color and the motto for the first year cadets is "Patient and Diligent" meaning that the first year police cadets have to be patient to the mental pain and not to be afraid of any hardship.

The second year cadets are assigned the yellow color as their company's color and the motto for them is "Analytical Thinking" meaning that the second year police cadets have to be able to think, analyze, and synthesize information before making any decisions to solve a given problem.

The third year police cadets are assigned the purple color as their company's color and the motto is "Being Disciplined" meaning that the third year police cadets have to follow all the regulations and be responsible for their duties.

The fourth year cadets are assigned the green color as their company's color and the motto is "Integrity" meaning that the fourth year police cadets have to keep the honor system.

4. Main police ceremonies refer to traditional rites of police cadets proudly inherited from the previous generations such as the annual parade ceremony on the police day of 13 October, the graduation and granting the rank of sub-lieutenant ceremony, and the granting royal sword ceremony.

5. Specific languages for police cadets refers to words or languages used among the police cadets such as "jump" meaning going away from the name checking, "frank" meaning generosity of the senior, "white rat" meaning pillow, "black rat" meaning combat boot, and "PX" meaning a shop, etc.

The Expected Police Cadets' Culture

There were 15 principles of the expected police cadets' culture including 1) the attachment among the Royal Police Cadet Academy's alumni, 2) the sacrifice for helping people, 3) the humbleness, 4) the care for junior officers by the senior officers, 5) the royalty to the Royal Police Cadet Academy, 6) the responsibility, 7) the academic success, 8) self-learning, 9) the use of English in daily life, 10) the welcome ceremony for the first-year police cadets, 11) the wrist-binding ceremony, 12) the ethic cultivation, 13) the observation and awareness, 14) the consideration and kindness, and 15) the role model

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Regarding the 5 categories of the police cadets' culture, a former commissioner of the Royal Police Academy mentioned during the interview on May 24, 2015 that the most important culture of the police cadets was the seniority system and integrity/honor system. This is because the police cadets are obliged to hold on to these 2 systems as long as they are policeman. This is consistent with the annual report of Royal Police Cadet Academy in 2014-2015, concluding that the police cadets have to be loyal to the Police Academy, proud to be a police cadet, keep seniority system and brotherhood. Meanwhile, a lecturer at the Royal Police Cadet Academy mentioned that an eminent culture of police cadets was the rights of police cadets in each year class. This was because it is different from other educational institutions. The main rites of police cadets reflect traditions, rites, beliefs, thinking system, attitudes, and values of the members (Wiroj Saratana, 2003: 314). In addition, traditions and rites among the seniors and juniors were part of culture (Napaporn Kaewnimitchai, 1997). For the specific languages of police cadets, culture stems from the symbolic communication system such languages and rites (Yos Santisombat, 1997: 11-13). Moreover, all 5 categories of police cadets' culture were mentioned in the meaning of culture by Supatra Suphap (1999) that culture was everything that reflects the way of life of a group of people including knowledge, beliefs, arts, ethics, law, tradition, and languages.

The expected culture of police cadets and guidelines for strengthening it are, for example, being a good model, listening to precept, doing mediation, doing voluntary work, participating in field training at the police station, and helping victims of natural disaster. These activities are essential for the police cadets during their 4 years of training in the Royal Police Cadet Academy in order to make them become professional police officers who can truly protect and serve the society.

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