

CHAPTER 5

DATA SYNTHESIS

The Rajabhat University Act (2004) gave more autonomy to each Rajabhat University to become independent from the Ministry of Education. Previously, every Rajabhat Institute was controlled by the Office of the Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC) under the Ministry of Education, which determined the organisational structure, the degree programmes, curricula, staffing levels and financial matters. However, under the 2004 Act each Rajabhat University established its own University Council in order to make decisions and develop strategic plans, and to develop policies in line with the requirements of the Act. Each Rajabhat University set up new organisational structures, which respond to their objectives and main educational purposes. The administrators have more freedom and authority to run their universities, but at the same time they have to take responsibility for their decisions and are responsible for managing their own finances. The six case study Rajabhat Universities located in Bangkok accepted that challenge and developed different strategies.

This chapter is organised in such a way as to illustrate the similarities and differences among the six newly created universities. The synthesis is organised under two major headings: Responding to the Changed Environment, and Leaders' Response to Change. The subheadings of Human resource management and development, Introducing new degree programmes, Developing international relationships, and Financial considerations are included under the first heading, and Leadership dimensions and Underpinning philosophy are under the second heading. Tables are used to clarify the differences and similarities.

Responding to the Changed Environment

Human Resource Management and Development

Each President confirmed that the performance of their universities has been dependent on the capabilities of staff. They pointed out that the first things they have to improve and develop are the qualifications of staff. However, the ways in which

they attempted to change and manage their staff varied. Table 5.1 shows the different ways in which each President has attempted to manage their staff.

Table 5.1 Human resource management.

Management techniques	RA	RB	RC	RD	RE	RF
Used negotiation techniques		😊	😊	😊	😊	
Encouraged two-way communication	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
Encouraged team work	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	
Pay by performance	😊					
Established reward systems	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	
Created a friendly and supportive environment	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	
Separated teaching work from administrative work	😊		😊	😊		😊
Reduced teaching hours per week	😊		😊	😊		😊
Encouraged/forced information technology use	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
Decentralised power to the deans	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	

Note: 😊 means Definitely yes, and 😊 means To some extent

Most Presidents of Rajabhat Universities used negotiation techniques at least to some extent to motivate staff and in managing the organisation. However, it can be seen from Table 5.1 that RA and RF did not use negotiation techniques. RA uses a system in which the President explains that if staff do well, they will get paid well, if staff do badly, they get paid less or even be required to leave. For RF the President believes in controlling and setting up standard requirements. If staff do not achieve them, they are punished.

All Presidents used two-way communication to explain and persuade their members to change their behaviour and attitudes to respond to the policy of the universities.

Working as a team is a key concept in most Rajabhat Universities and for them has been implemented in every project. Some Rajabhat Universities work very successfully as a team and staff are willing to make decisions and take responsibility, but the others still depend on their President to make decisions. RA is the only Rajabhat University which pays more than the standard for government officers. If

staff want the greater salary and benefits they need to show that they can work and generate an income for RA more than the other staff. Money and benefits to pay for staff are not a problem for RA.

RA uses a business model to manage staff. The President tries to encourage staff to compete with each other and anyone who cannot achieve the university's plans is demoted. This is unusual for Thai culture, especially for staff who work at educational institutions or government organisations. Most Presidents try to motivate staff by giving them rewards if they achieve the universities' objectives. RF did not use these techniques, but used punishment techniques to control staff to achieve the university's goals instead.

RA and RF Presidents do not attempt to avoid conflict with staff, which is unusual in Thai culture. They demand change and they force everyone to follow their policies. Both Presidents believe that staff need to be controlled and monitored closely and if staff know that they are being watched, they will perform better. Other Presidents believe that their staff will want to improve and perform well for their organisations.

Many Presidents disagree with a system of performance related pay or paying productivity bonuses. The Presidents of RB and RC say that it is impossible to use a fair system of performance indicators because it is difficult to measure who contributed the greatest performance of their career and who has the poorest performance. They believe this would create a chaotic system instead. Many of Rajabhat Universities use a seniority system, which means that if a person works there longer and has higher qualifications, they should get higher salaries than younger and less qualified staff.

The six Rajabhat Universities have different policies to calculate work load per week. Some Presidents specify how many hours staff can teach per week and how many hours they have to do administrative work. However, Presidents do not specify exactly how many hours per week that staff should teach or do other jobs, but if staff are given orders from their deans, they are expected to obey. If anyone in a higher position directs them to do something, they cannot reject those jobs.

A number of Rajabhat Universities have separated teaching work from administrative work. Staff have to select between teaching and administrative jobs.

They are not permitted to do both jobs at the same time. This policy has been introduced to help staff to focus on what they are doing and at the same time the benefits of this policy will provide a better quality of life and in the long term will support them to improve and increase their performance.

Most universities set the maximum hours per week that their staff can teach. For example RA, RD and RF do not allocate staff to teach more than nine hours per week. The Presidents of RB, RC and RE stated that their staff should not teach more than 15 hours per week. However, if staff wish to teach more than the standard of the universities, the Presidents cannot prohibit them from doing that either. The more hours they teach, the more money they get. It is logical to assume that many of staff prefer to teach as many hours as they can.

Every Rajabhat University had spent a considerable sum of money to renovate and improve Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities. Most of the universities' policies required staff to use e-learning, e-mail and other electronic technologies in their work. RA, RD and RF have been successful in getting staff to use ICT for teaching and learning. RB, RC and RE have persuaded staff to change and learn new technologies more gradually.

Another major change that has occurred in the six Rajabhat Universities is a process which transfers power and authority from the President to the deans. After Rajabhat Institutes became Rajabhat Universities, the Presidents found that the previous organisational structure, where the Presidents controlled every decision, did not work well. Staff were unable to respond immediately to solve problems, most staff did not have enough power to make any decisions. RA, RD and RE Presidents empowered deans to make decisions that are directly related to their faculties, and deans have motivated other staff to get involved with the projects that are related to their work.

RB and RC supported deans to learn and make decisions for their faculties, but this takes time to develop the necessary skills. The President of RF explains that, although ready to devolve authority to the deans, the deans have not been able to make decisions without consulting with the President. In the future if RF continues to grow, the President knows that there will be a need to encourage deans to make more decisions for their faculties.

Every President acknowledged the importance of their staff and the necessity to encourage them to achieve higher qualifications. Each Rajabhat University has introduced different projects and workshops in order to increase the performance of their human resources. Table 5.2 shows the summary of human resource development policies for each Rajabhat University. There are five major plans to develop human resources. The first priority has been given to support staff to get higher academic positions, the second is encouraging staff to write textbooks and to publish academic journal articles, the third is motivating them to conduct research, the fourth is providing scholarships and supporting staff to gain doctoral degrees, and the last one is encouraging staff to focus on the quality of teaching and developing resources for teaching and learning processes.

Table 5.2 Human resource development policies.

Human resource development's policies	RA	RB	RC	RD	RE	RF
Higher academic positions	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
Writing textbooks	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
Conducting Research	😊	😐	😊	😐	😐	😐
Higher qualifications (doctoral degree)	😊	😐	😐	😊	😐	😐
Focusing on quality of teaching and resources	😊	😐	😊	😊	😐	😊

Note: 😊 means Strongly support and 😐 means Support

The Office of the Higher Education Commission has established benchmarks for the number of higher academic positions in each Rajabhat University. None of the case study universities have reached this level yet. There are two ways to get higher academic positions, firstly, by writing textbooks, and secondly, by conducting research. All six Rajabhat Universities found it easier to support staff to write textbooks than to conduct research. Thus, from Table 5.2 it can be seen that six of them have focused on supporting staff to get higher academic positions while encouraging them to writing textbooks at the same time.

Conducting research is difficult and takes more time than writing textbooks. RA and RC are working hard to encourage staff to conduct research more than the others. However, RA is more successful than RC. For RA, conducting research has been

proceeding well because most of their staff already have knowledge and experience before they became a university. RA has sufficient finance and facilities to help staff conduct research. RA has established a research centre to service staff and other organisations to conduct research. Income from research is one of the major sources of income for RA.

Six Rajabhat Universities have implemented similar strategies to encourage staff to write textbooks and conduct research. Each of them provides many kinds of training and workshops. These projects have been arranged every semester. Some of them have been successful in increasing the number of textbooks written and research undertaken. However, the quality of their textbooks and research cannot be compared with the established universities. The six Presidents of the Rajabhat Universities believe that the quality will be improved and accepted by other universities in the future.

The fourth plan of human resource development is supporting staff to get doctoral degrees. This plan had been discussed in the six Rajabhat Institutes before they became Rajabhat Universities. However, some of them do not have sufficient funds to provide full scholarships, and they cannot help staff pay for undertaking doctoral programmes, especially from overseas universities. RA and RD do not have problems in providing full scholarships for everyone to study abroad or in Thailand, but the others do not have enough money to assist in study abroad.

The Presidents of RB, RC, RE and RF agree that they need to increase the numbers of staff who have doctoral degrees, but they do not believe that this is the only way to compete with other universities. The President of RF will not support staff to study for higher degrees abroad as she does not believe that degrees from overseas universities are any better than those gained in Thailand. Apart from lack of scholarships, proficiency in the English language is another problem that stops many staff from studying abroad.

The final plan of human resource development is encouraging staff to focus on the quality of teaching, and developing equipment and resources for supporting teaching and learning processes. Teaching is still the most important work for the six Rajabhat Universities. RA, RC, RD and RF confirm that they want to be the best teaching universities and they have many programmes to support and motivate staff to

develop their teaching skills and provide a large amount of their budgets for new and better resources and equipment. Quality of teaching is a key factor in many Rajabhat Universities. Most staff are professional teachers and have much experience in teaching over a long time. Previously, the six Rajabhat Universities had been recognised as the best teacher colleges. The Presidents of RA, RC, RD and RF place emphasis on the quality of teaching as the major strategic plans of the universities.

RA has been most successful in achieving every element of their plans, more than the others. The Presidents of other Rajabhat Universities explain that they cannot achieve as much as RA because they do not have sufficient money. Every human resource development plan needs much money and takes time to be successful. If RB, RC, RD, RE and RF have enough money, they will do the same thing as RA did.

A lack of money is a major problem in five Rajabhat Universities in terms of the provision of a good human resource development plan. Since 2004, there have been four major new environments (Economic, Political-legal, Social, and Technological) so that each of the Rajabhat University needs a good strategy by which to adjust and to change staff behaviour. At the beginning RA has adapted to the change more efficiently and faster than the others, but in the long term the other Rajabhat Universities believe that they will become successful universities, similar to RA.

Introducing New Degree Programmes

Before the six Rajabhat Institutes became Rajabhat Universities, all of them had the same curriculum. During the economic crisis in 1997, many graduates, especially in teacher education, could not get appropriate work. This problem had been discussed in the six Rajabhat Universities and once they became autonomous universities each began to introduce new degree programmes in response to what they saw as changing needs and demands in the Thai labour market. The six Rajabhat Universities had to find the best way to attract new students. This was especially important after they became universities because they had to generate more of their own income and most of this income comes from tuition fees. The more students they have, the more income they will generate. Table 5.3 shows the different new degree programmes that each Rajabhat University developed after 2004.

Table 5.3 New degree programmes introduced in the six Rajabhat Universities since 2004.

Name	New degree programmes	Comments from the President
RA	4 new programmes (1) Computer technologies (2) Foreign language (English, Japanese, Mandarin) (3) Personal skills (4) Fashion design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer only degree programmes which are in response to the demand of the market • Emphasis on vocational education rather than on professional education • Provide notebook computers for all new students
RB	2 new programmes (1) Buddhist study (in bachelor, master and doctoral degrees) (2) Thai culture and Thai tradition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has strong supported from the Thai temples • Focus on Section Seven of the Rajabhat University Act (2004)
RC	2 new programmes (1) Chinese traditional medicine (2) Doctoral degree in good government management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer only programmes that have not been offered before • Has strong relationship with Chinese universities
RD	4 new programmes (1) Thai dancing, Thai traditional drama, Thai traditional music, Designing Thai traditional clothes (2) Film and software for television production (3) Thai and Chinese traditional medicine (4) Geriatric and Paediatric nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on demand of labour market • Has strong relationships with other organisations who can joint venture with them in every new degree programme that they teach • Improve computer and foreign language skills to everyone
RE	none	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve current programmes to be more advanced and to be more competitive with other universities and exchange students with overseas universities • Focus on developing computer skills and equipments to everyone • Offer five foreign languages for free (English, Mandarin, Japanese, Vietnamese and Cambodian)
RF	3 new programmes (1) Fashion design (2) Food design (3) Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on computer skills and English language • Offer new degree programmes that respond to the demand of the labour market

New degree programmes have been designed to meet the demands of the labour market, use the current resources of the universities, cater for the students' preferences, and to meet the requirements of the Rajabhat University Act (2004). Six Rajabhat Universities developed degree programmes which focused on specific vocational education, rather than professional education. For example, none of them have new degree programmes in science or research, even though there is a need for graduates in these areas.

RA has four new degree programmes and offers notebook computers for every new student. The other Rajabhat Universities cannot afford to offer notebook computers and they do not agree that offering them to students will make any difference to their reputation or will increase the quality of learning and teaching. RA believes that the new degree programmes in computer technologies, foreign languages, personal skills and fashion design will allow students to get reasonable jobs.

RB has two new degree programmes, with an emphasis on Buddhist studies and Thai culture. The President has a strong relationship with local Thai temples and he believes that RB has qualified staff who have knowledge and experience in Buddhist studies. The Buddhist studies curriculum has been supported by the Ministry of Education and the Office of the Higher Education Commission through the provision of infrastructure and budgeting to operate bachelor, master and doctoral degrees. The new degree programme on Thai culture and Thai tradition has been supported by local communities and the Thai Government.

RC has two new degree programmes, traditional Chinese medicine and good government management. RC has staff who are proficient in Mandarin. The President and staff have developed relationships with Chinese universities for over a decade. The President believes that traditional Chinese medicine will be an alternative medicine for Thai people. The second degree programme is a doctoral degree in good government management, which focuses on the demands of government officers who want to get higher degrees and increase their qualifications in conducting research while undertaking their studies in Bangkok, where they work.

RD has four new degree programmes. The President wants to combine performance art with education and offers degree programmes that are unique. The first degree programme is Thai traditional dancing, drama, music and designing Thai traditional

clothes. RD has strong support from a large entertainment company in Thailand and students who graduate can apply to work with that company. The second degree programme is film and software for television production, which will be supported by the same company. Students will get hands-on experience by working with them. The third degree programme is Thai and Chinese traditional medicine. This degree programme is similar to RC, but RD has incorporated Thai traditional medicine into this programme. It has been considered beneficial for students to study both Thai and Chinese traditional medicine. The final new degree programme is geriatric and paediatric nursing. The President confirms that market research has confirmed that there will be a high demand in the labour market. Students who want to get a good job after they graduate could consider study in this programme. Apart from four new degree programmes, RD has focused on improving computer skills and proficiency in foreign languages for students. The President believes these will help students who graduate from RD to compete with other students to get a good job.

RE is the only Rajabhat University of the six that did not have any new degree programmes. The President points out that currently RE would like to improve the old degree programmes and curricula to respond to the demands of the labour market. Moreover, RE tries to provide better computer software technology and a high quality of teaching of foreign languages to students. The President does not believe it is necessary to create any new degree programmes if the current degree programmes are working well. Exchanging students with overseas universities is a major project that will build RE's reputation. The President encourages every faculty to join this programme and will increase the numbers of exchange students every year. The President believes that students will get more practical experience when they spend time during their studies in overseas universities.

RF has three new degree programmes that are focused on vocational education. These are fashion design, food design and hospitality. All three new degree programmes have been supported by private companies who have considerable experience and good reputations in these industries. The President suggests that it is the right decision to offer new degree programmes that are in high demand and that provide good job opportunities to students after they graduate. Students are strongly encouraged to study English and computer software programmes to a certain level as RF believes it will help students to compete with other graduates. Moreover, RF has

developed exit examinations for proficiency in English and computer skills, and every student has to pass the tests before they graduate.

Developing International Relationships

Most Thai academic and executive administrators in the universities acknowledged that Western knowledge and technologies are important. Since 1897, after King Chulalongkorn returned from visiting many countries in Europe, he believed that it was of more benefit for Thai children to go to schools that operated in the same ways as in Western countries rather than go to schools that have been operated by monks at temples. His perspective not only set up schools that have operated as in Western countries, but also established universities that provided the same degree programmes as Western universities. Following the concept proposed by King Chulalongkorn, who established teachers' training colleges in Thailand, it is little wonder that the Presidents of the six Rajabhat Universities would try to develop and improve relationships with overseas universities as much as possible. The Presidents confirm that they need academic support and modern technologies from overseas universities to develop and grow their universities.

The ways chosen to develop international relationships in the six Rajabhat Universities are similar. There are three steps to develop joint venture programmes with overseas universities. The first step is visiting target overseas universities with whom they want to cooperate. The second step is to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The third step is signing the MOU. After they have an MOU, they can follow the projects to which they have committed themselves in the contract. Table 5.4 shows the major MOUs that six Rajabhat Universities have developed with overseas universities.

Table 5.4 Developing international relationships.

MOUs with overseas universities and creating joint venture programmes	RA	RB	RC	RD	RE	RF
Australia	☺	☺		☺	☺	☺
Bulgaria						☺
Canada			☺	☺	☺	
China	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
Egypt						☺
France	☺					
Hungary			☺			
Japan	☺	☺		☺	☺	☺
Netherlands	☺			☺		
New Zealand	☺	☺		☺	☺	
Philippines						☺
Taiwan						☺
USA	☺	☺			☺	
Vietnam			☺		☺	☺

Note ☺ means developing joint venture programmes

The six Presidents confirm that is necessary and highly beneficial to be in contact with overseas universities as well as to develop joint venture programmes. The knowledge exchange and learning associated with modern technologies is always of benefit to staff and students. It is a fast way to improve the quality of teaching and the experience of the Rajabhat Universities.

The most popular country with which the six Rajabhat Universities have MOUs is China. All the Presidents explain that China has had a strong relationship with Thailand for more than 200 years and many Thai families have ancestors from China. Most students who applied to study in combined degrees with Chinese universities were already proficient in Mandarin. Staff and students feel comfortable studying some programmes in China and staying with Chinese families because the life styles of Chinese people and Thai people are similar.

The second most popular countries are Australia and Japan. For Australia, it can be explained that this country uses English as a formal language and this is the most important language in the world. Thai people want to improve their English language as much as they can. Most Rajabhat Universities agree that Australia is

geographically close to Thailand and the cost of living in Australia is cheaper than in other English speaking countries. Moreover, the high standard of higher educational institutions and quality of life have been accepted by international countries, thus it is popular for the six Rajabhat Universities to develop combined programmes with Australian universities.

Many big Japanese companies have been located in Thailand and these companies want to recruit Thai people who can speak Japanese. Many combined degrees have been developed with Japanese universities to respond to the demands of the labour market in Thailand. Most Rajabhat Universities have seized this opportunity and have tried to develop many training workshops and exchange programmes with Japanese universities.

Overall, it can be said that the six Rajabhat Universities focus on developing relationships with overseas universities as part of their strategic plans. The six University Councils provide an extra budget for executive administrators to sign MOUs with target overseas universities. The six Presidents believe that overseas universities can help them to increase and improve their reputation, knowledge and technologies.

Financial Considerations

The interview data from the Presidents and the Vice-Presidents of the six Rajabhat Universities about how they manage their finances have shown that these questions are the most difficult to answer and explain. Even though some Rajabhat Universities currently have sufficient income for their administrative costs, they are not sure what will happen with their income in the future.

Table 5.5 shows the major sources of income for the six Rajabhat Universities and the strategies to increase their income in the future. The Presidents play important roles in making decisions about financial management. In the past, all six have relied on government funding. However, the Presidents of the universities have been preparing for a future when the government is likely to reduce financial support. Financial survival is one of the major reasons why the six Presidents have changed the way they manage their universities.

Table 5.5 Sources of funds in six Rajabhat Universities.

Financial plans	RA	RB	RC	RD	RE	RF
Tuition fees	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
Government funding	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
Income from other businesses apart from tuition fees	☺					

Note: ☺ means Important

All six Rajabhat Universities have two things in common. Firstly, they have relied on income from tuition fees. Secondly, they need government support. Only RA can generate sufficient extra income apart from government funding. The most successful businesses that RA has developed for more than a decade are bakery products, a Thai restaurant, and a hotel. Other Rajabhat Universities have taught the skills to produce bakery products, Thai food and hotel management, but none of them can generate as large an amount of income from these businesses as RA has done.

The financial situation of RA is more secure than the other Rajabhat Universities. However, RA's President continues to develop many new programmes every year. He wants to maintain the extra income and increase it as much as possible for future investment. The success of RA has been criticised by other Presidents of Rajabhat Universities who claim that RA has misunderstood the actual concept of a 'Rajabhat University.' The main objectives of Rajabhat Universities is not making money, but supporting local students to become valuable human resources for the country. Most Presidents disagree with the government idea to push all the Rajabhat Universities to become independent and to be totally self-funding.

Five Rajabhat Universities have found it difficult to create other revenue raising activities apart from teaching. Most staff and administrators do not have any experience in business management at all. They want to teach and focus on their work rather than think about money and profit. The Presidents of all six Rajabhat Universities confirm that they want to increase their income. They realise that a university needs a lot of money to operate and work efficiently. However, only RA has managed to change the attitudes of staff and to generate income from every project that they undertake.

Leaders' Response to Change

The six Rajabhat Universities have developed different styles of leadership and every President has developed their own ways to change and communicate with their staff.

Leadership Dimensions

All Rajabhat Universities agree that the roles and concepts of their leaders are most important for their future. There are many different leadership dimensions that each Rajabhat University could have adopted. Some leaders of Rajabhat Universities consider certain leadership dimensions more efficient than others and some of them have applied more than one leadership dimension at the same time. Overall there are seven major leadership dimensions that have been used in the six Rajabhat Universities. Each President had selected the most suitable leadership dimensions that will support them to achieve their goals.

The leadership dimensions adopted by the different leaders were determined by which elements in the changed environment they considered to be most important. For example, the relationship between staff and the leaders has been influenced by modern Thai cultural values, globalisation, technology and the political-legal context. One university leader might place great importance on the globalisation aspect of the environment, while another might emphasise Thai culture. The essential factor is that each of the six Rajabhat Universities has been forced to respond to an environment which is highly complex and competitive and has had to create strategies for survival.

Complexity leadership theory (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007) provides a perspective about leadership beyond the traditional views, which is necessary for leaders in the time of change. Table 5.6 shows the seven leadership dimensions (Davies, 2005) which are related to complexity leadership theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) and both have been implemented by each Rajabhat University. It is important to note however, that although the researcher has analysed changes in leadership style as showing various leadership dimensions from complexity leadership theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007); none of the interviewees mentioned this theory in the interviews.

Table 5.6 Complexity leadership theory and seven leadership dimensions in six Rajabhat Universities.

Complexity Leadership Theory	Leadership dimensions	RA	RB	RC	RD	RE	RF
Administrative leadership	Political leadership	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
	Ethical leadership		☺	☹	☹	☺	☹
Adaptive leadership	Entrepreneurial leadership	☺			☹		
	Transformational leadership	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
	Distributed leadership	☺	☹	☹	☺	☺	
Enabling leadership	Strategic leadership	☺	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹
	Sustainable leadership	☺		☹	☺	☺	

Note: ☺ means Strong emphasis, and ☹ means Some emphasis

Although the Presidents are unaware of it, the concept of complexity leadership theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) can be used to provide a basic understanding of the complex environment of the six Rajabhat Universities and the way that they have responded to change. The seven leadership dimensions (Davies, 2005) indicated in Table 5.6 do not have precisely the same meaning as in Western cultures. There are some Thai variations. The two concepts of complexity leadership theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) and the seven leadership dimensions (Davies, 2005), are combined with Thai culture and the individual characteristics of each President to form a complex connected network of interactions. These all operate in the planning of the strategic goals of the universities.

Administrative leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) is the common responsibility of leaders in every bureaucratic organisation. Most Presidents have to implement tasks such as planning, organising, controlling and evaluating the university's strategic plans. However, by using complexity leadership theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) to analyse the situation, it is evident that the Presidents have to create a new pattern of staff behaviour or a new model of operating that responds to the new environment. From the researcher's perspective, political (Deal, 2005) and ethical leadership (Starratt, 2005) have been used as the new models to operate change and maintain the position and authority of the Presidents.

Aspects of political leadership (Deal, 2005) are playing an important role in changing the behaviour and the motivation of staff in the six Rajabhat Universities. The six

Presidents strongly agree that political style of leadership (Deal, 2005) is necessary to control staff to move in the desired directions of the university. If anyone wants to be the President of any Rajabhat University, they have to understand and know how to apply political leadership dimensions (Deal, 2005), particularly as the management and leadership of the universities relies on personal relationships more than anything else. The Presidents are the most powerful people in the university, and always get support from staff, and everyone respects them. The ideas of the President are ‘the laws of the university.’ Nobody wants to argue with the President, even though sometimes staff feel that they disagree, they prefer to say nothing and follow the President’s orders rather than to suggest other ideas. RB, RC, RD, RE and RF have emphasised political leadership (Deal, 2005) more than RA. The relationships between the Presidents and staff are strong. The Presidents in these universities understand how to share the benefits between administrators and academic staff and always make decisions that will be of advantage to both sides. The Presidents realise that they need staff support and want to maintain their power during their presidency. However, the Presidents of RA and RD do not show much evidence that either of them are strongly concerned about the relationships between administrators and staff. The Presidents of RA and RD try to focus on the reputation of their universities more than the reputations of themselves.

The Presidents who apply an ethical leadership dimension (Starratt, 2005) accept that staff need to be treated well by the university to serve the interests of the people. Staff have the right to make their own decisions. The Presidents will not force them or put any pressure on them to achieve the universities’ goals without considering the emotional needs of their staff. As an educational leader, the President will provide factual information and support staff to achieve what they want to be. At the same time, the benefits to students have been considered as most important for the university’s strategic plans also. The Presidents have to take into account the intrinsic benefits of staff and students. Interpreting ethical leadership dimensions (Starratt, 2005) from a Thai perspective, it was found that the Presidents of RB and RE strongly focus on this concept. They are consider negotiation techniques as the major way to change staff thinking. Both Presidents try to avoid any conflict between staff and administrators. Staff have been respected by the Presidents and they are not punished when they cannot achieve the university’s goals. The Presidents use high

moral standards and believe in ‘karma.’ According to this belief system, if staff do bad things, they will get bad karma, so the Presidents do not have to punish them. RC, RD and RF have tried to use this concept in some situations. However, RA’s President does not believe that it is sufficient to trust and encourage people to act ethically. He believes that it is necessary to monitor everyone to ensure that they do what is expected of them. He does not believe that ethical leadership (Starratt, 2005) will work for RA. In spite of this it was obvious that the President acted ethically in his dealings with staff and expected his executive to do so as well.

Adaptive leadership is that part of complexity leadership theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) that is most appropriate when organisations undergo change. The important roles of leaders involve encouraging staff to know how to adapt to the new environment, such as learning to use new technologies, sharing knowledge with other members, and creating systems that will support interactive organisations. There are three major leadership dimensions that have been introduced in the six Rajabhat Universities: Entrepreneurial (Hentschke & Caldwell, 2005), Transformation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005), and Distributed leadership (Harris, 2005).

RA is the only Rajabhat University that has strongly adopted the dimension of entrepreneurial leadership (Hentschke & Caldwell, 2005). The President is always concerned about cost and profit when he makes decisions. Financial management is the most distinctive criterion in this type of leadership. If any project will not make a good income for the university, the President will reject it, and demand that staff change the project to provide an appropriate financial return. RD is the second Rajabhat University that has implemented entrepreneurial leadership (Hentschke & Caldwell, 2005), but the President tries to persuade staff rather than force them to adopt an entrepreneurial approach. The other Rajabhat Universities consider it is impossible to use entrepreneurial leadership (Hentschke & Caldwell, 2005). They do not consider that it is appropriate for universities to operate on a profit motive.

Transformational leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) has been used in all six Rajabhat Universities. The new higher educational environments and the Rajabhat University Act (2004) have transformed the organisational structures and the management systems of those universities in order to respond to the new demands of Thai society. When change is necessary, transformational leadership (Leithwood &

Jantzi, 2005) is required to support the process. Some universities can change quickly but many of them have applied gradual change. The new legislative environment has led staff and administrators to accept that they need to change and to try a new concept of management.

Distributed leadership (Harris, 2005) has been implemented by the Presidents of all six Rajabhat Universities. This can be seen through the President and the Vice-Presidents giving greater authority to the deans. Each faculty can create their organisational structures, which might be different from other faculties and make decisions without asking for permission from the President. In this situation, deans have to take on more responsibilities than in the past, however the Presidents still retain the authority to implement major decisions and if new problems are encountered, deans will consult with the Presidents before they make any decisions. RA, RD and RE have focused on distributed leadership dimensions (Harris, 2005) more than the other Rajabhat Universities. They confirm that each faculty needs to look after staff and students and at the same time they have to compete with other faculties by increasing the number of students, the quality of teaching and the quality of graduates. All of these are the major responsibility of the deans in each faculty. The Presidents and Vice-Presidents only provide them with the policy framework within which to work. The deans have to prove that they are able to manage their faculties. RB and RC have tried to encourage deans to take full responsibility by using distributed leadership (Harris, 2005) also, but the Presidents or the Vice-Presidents have to get involved and give some advice before the deans will make decisions.

Distributed leadership (Harris, 2005) is used as a solution for many Rajabhat Universities to increase the quality of organisational management and to provide better processes of teaching and learning. Many of the Presidents believe that as their universities develop, it will become impossible for the President alone, or in combination with the Vice-Presidents to make decisions quickly enough to solve all problems. It is better to empower other groups of administrators to share their experiences and service to the university. However, distributed leadership (Harris, 2005) is not popular at RF. The President wants to control every faculty and take full responsibility for every decision that is made in the university.

Enabling leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) is the role of leaders who are supportive and who provide good conditions for maintaining administrative leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) in the bureaucratic organisations. This style of leadership is also important in creating adaptive leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) in modern and flexible organisations. These are the most important parts of the strategy of complexity leadership theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Enabling leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) occurs when everyone in an organisation understands their roles and responsibilities. It occurs when administrators and staff share their knowledge and information, they want to achieve the same goals and they have adapted their behaviour to the new organisational systems. Strategic (Davies & Davies, 2005) and sustainable leadership (Hargreaves, 2005b) are part of enabling leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) and only some Rajabhat Universities have implemented these leadership dimensions effectively. RA and RD have placed strong emphasis on strategic leadership dimensions (Davies & Davies, 2005). Both the Presidents confirm that they need to create good strategic plans before they can change staff behaviour. The future of their universities depends on their strategic plans. The administrators encourage every dean to become involved in writing the university's strategic plans and after that each faculty has to develop their own plans to support those plans. Strategic leadership (Davies & Davies, 2005) is efficiently changing the attitudes of staff and the organisational structures in RA and RD. Not only do deans understand their roles and responsibilities but staff have also developed a strong commitment to the strategic and faculty plans. RB, RC, RE and RF accept that strategic leadership (Davies & Davies, 2005) supports them in communicating with their staff. It is important for the Presidents to have a clear vision for the future of their university and it will be more effective if they write this down to remind everyone. All six Rajabhat Universities have strategic plans. However, sometimes the decisions which have been made by the Presidents do not follow the strategic plans. For example, the President signed MOUs with some universities or funded new projects that were not written in their strategic plans, however, the President saw new opportunities that were considered beneficial in the future.

Many Rajabhat Universities are concerned about who will be the next President after the current President retires, and what will happen to the future of their universities.

Qualities of sustainable leadership (Hargreaves, 2005b) have been suggested by them to prepare for the new generation of administrators who can lead and are able to manage the universities in order to achieve their goals. RA, RD and RE have focused on developing new educational managers to follow the strategic plans. The three Presidents realise that they will retire in a short period of time, and their universities need professional administrative teams to manage and carry on. RC has introduced a sustainable leadership dimension (Hargreaves, 2005b) by training administrators to take responsibility for small projects and then reporting to the faculty. This has not been implemented in high level management teams, but the President agrees that on retirement, the university needs to have a good leader to compete with other universities. RB and RF are different from the others. During a time of large changes, they recognised that their staff are not ready to manage their faculties and take full responsibilities. Currently, the Presidents believe that they have to guide them in the right direction. Suggestions and recommendations from the Presidents are necessary in the new environments. It is considered inappropriate to transfer the leader's position to anyone during a chaotic and complex situation of change in higher education in Thailand.

Underpinning Philosophy

The six Rajabhat Universities focus their philosophies on Section Seven of the Rajabhat University Act (2004). The Rajabhat University Act (2004) emphasises that a Rajabhat University is an institute of higher education for local development and the promotion of local knowledge. The main objective of a Rajabhat University is in providing academic service to society and to maintaining Thai arts and culture. Each Rajabhat University has implemented this concept into their strategic plans in different ways. Table 5.7 shows the major philosophies of the six Rajabhat Universities after they implemented Section Seven from the Rajabhat University Act (2004). There are nine major philosophies that the Presidents confirm that have been implemented into their strategic plans since 2004.

Table 5.7 Major philosophies from the Rajabhat University Act (2004).

Major philosophies of six Rajabhat Universities	RA	RB	RC	RD	RE	RF
Morality and ethical practice	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
Local community development	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
Maintaining arts, culture, religion, (Thai culture)	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
Developing information technology	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
Developing quality of teaching	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
Provision of support for HRD	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
Focusing on research	☺		☺	☺		
Maintaining international standards	☺			☺		
Surviving as a university	☺			☺		

Note: ☺ means Strongly agree, and ☺ means Agree

Most Presidents point out that Rajabhat Universities have gained reputation as places that focus on morality and the ethical behaviour of students. The six Presidents point out that this is a good image for Rajabhat Universities' students and they want to maintain this reputation in the future. RB and RF take this philosophy very seriously and both have developed many programmes that emphasise this concept. The other Rajabhat Universities have developed some workshops to support this idea.

The second philosophy is local community development. The name 'Rajabhat' (meaning to look after and service local communities) has been given by the King to the former teachers colleges around the country that are now universities. Each university is expected to have that focus on the local community. All the Presidents of Rajabhat Universities support this idea. The major plans of the universities focus on developing a better quality of life for local people and many new projects have been introduced to help and support local communities.

The third philosophy is maintaining Thai arts, Thai culture, and religion. All of these were found in the strategic plans of each Rajabhat University. However, three of them emphasise this philosophy in the master plans of their universities. RB, RD and RF confirm that they can do this job better than other Rajabhat Universities. RB has a strong relationship with Thai temples and provides new degree programmes in Buddhist studies. RD has gained a reputation in Thai traditional drama, music and dance and has cooperated with the best entertainment company in Thailand. RF has

been recognised for its moral and ethical teaching, which includes Thai culture and Thai traditional etiquette.

Most of the universities try to improve Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which is related to their quality of teaching and learning. The Office of the Higher Education Commission has set the minimum standard of ICT that every university has to provide for students. The public image of each university is influenced by the way in which ICT is used. The new generation of students prefer to use computers or any new equipment and many types of software, especially the Internet in their classrooms more than the traditional way of study. RA, RC, RD and RF have invested large sums of money and focused on improving their ICT in order to reach the same standards as older, established universities.

RB and RE have tried to encourage staff to use this technology and apply it in their work, but at this time (in 2006) neither university has reached the standard of the Office of the Higher Education Commission. The Presidents of both universities explain that they do not want to create any conflict between staff and administrators. If the staff are not ready today to adopt new technologies, tomorrow maybe they will try. Most staff from both universities are nearing retirement and are unfamiliar with computers or new technology. In the near future the situation in both universities will change and the new generations will apply this technology more easily than in the past.

Rajabhat Universities originally were established as teachers colleges. Thai people have admired Rajabhat Institutes as the best for teachers' training education. Now most of the Presidents want to maintain that image and encourage staff to continue to improve their skills and experience in teaching. RA, RC, RD and RF emphasise this philosophy as a strength area and provide many training workshops to support staff to acquire more knowledge and continuous improvement.

There is no doubt that all six universities accept that their future depends on the quality of staff. However, RA and RD strongly emphasise the importance of developing human resources in their action plans. RC and RE agree with this concept, but they have had a budgeting problem to develop staff. The other two Rajabhat Universities, RB and RF find it hard to provide extra money to develop the

quality of staff. Both of the Presidents point out that they have tried to support staff as much as they can, but at the same time staff need to support themselves also.

The seventh philosophy is focusing on research. This is a new strategic objective for all six Rajabhat Universities. In the past, there were two requirements that the University Councils expected from each staff member, which was being a good lecturer and a good administrator, but now the University Councils want them to be good researchers as well. The more research projects they undertake, the better opportunities they will have in their careers. This philosophy will be the biggest challenge of RB, RE and RF because most of their staff are nearing retirement and have never before conducted research. It is interesting that RA and RC had already prepared staff to conduct research before they became universities; staff have enough knowledge and find it is important to follow this idea. RD has focused on increasing the number of research projects and every faculty has responded to this philosophy.

All six Presidents acknowledge that it is necessary for their universities to be recognised as reaching international standards. The six Presidents explain that international standards have to be reached at least in three major areas. Firstly is the quality of staff, secondly is the quality of students, and finally is the quality of infrastructure and resources that have been used for teaching and learning. RA has been acknowledged by the Office of the Higher Education Commission as improving the quality of staff, students and equipment to the same level as overseas universities. RD is increasing the quality of staff, students and equipment more effectively than have the other four Rajabhat Universities. This is a long term plan for six Rajabhat Universities. They need substantial funding and time to compete and to achieve the same standards of quality as overseas universities.

The final philosophy is to survive as a university. This phrase was first mentioned by the President of RA, after that the other Rajabhat Universities have adopted it into their action plans. A surviving university means that the university has sufficient income and independence from the government, has freedom to manage their staff, and a university council that is able to make its own decisions. From six case studies, only RA that has enough money to pay for all their expenses and wants to be an independent university that is free from government controls. RD is preparing to be independent in the near future and is trying to generate extra income to pay for their

expenses. The other Rajabhat Universities found this philosophy difficult to implement. They argue that it might be better in the future but it is not suitable at the current time. Most of them have relied on government funding and they do not have extra income apart from their tuition fees.

Each of the six Rajabhat Universities has different goals. RA wants to be recognised as the best vocational university in Thailand and to maintain that position. RB wants to be recognised as the best university for Buddhist study in Thailand. RC wants to gain a reputation in social research. RD wants to be recognised as having the same standard of teaching as overseas universities. RE wants to support staff and students to go abroad and have international experience through exchange programmes with overseas universities' staff and students. Finally, RF wants to be recognised as the best moral and ethical university in Thailand. Students who graduate from RF will be accepted by other organisations as ethical people.

Conclusion

The data from the six case studies presents different perspectives on policies and how leaders responded to changes. The information from interviewing, document analysis and observations show that each Rajabhat University has developed their strategic plans to cope and deal with environmental changes. Since 2004, six Rajabhat Universities have implemented many new policies and changed their organisational structures. The six of them confirm that they are going 'in the right direction' and their future is promising.

It has been observed that leadership is the most important factor for changing and survival in the new environment confronting the six Rajabhat Universities. The Presidents play an important role to motivate staff and introduce new strategic plans. Change is unpredictable and is happening all the time as is a continuous process. Complex adaptive systems and complexity leadership theory both facilitate the understanding of change management in the six case studies and interpretation of data from the interviews.

The results of changing processes adopted in the six Rajabhat Universities have transformed them to become more competitive universities, and more focused on the demands of students and the labour market than in the past. There have been four

responding strategies to the changed environment: human resource management and development; introducing new degree programmes; developing international relationships and financial considerations. Each Rajabhat University has exercised these four strategies and they have successfully assisted them to operate in the new environment of Thai higher education since 2004.