Role of University Extension Education in a Learning Society

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the role of the University Extension Education in a Learning Society. The goal of establishing Community College provides the citizen an opportunity to self-learning, self-contented and the necessary skills in their career. No doubt, motivated by the interaction with each other can be a seed planed in the mind to be attentive to the growth and public affair of the city and living environment. In the paper, the innovative explanation to the connection between University Extension Education and the need to the learning society by the hierarchy of the needs in the view point of the anthropology initially. Later, the case in Taoyuan County is introduced. Through the analysis of the “Relative Weighted Method”, we discover the requirement in the citizen which is associated to the experiments form the working results of the Department of Continuous Education at Kainan University. Finally, we offer recommendations to the future developments to the department of the continuous education at Kainan University by SWOT analysis. It does not only enhance the performance of the management strategies but also modify the development direction to meet the urgent need of the citizen such that we can play an important role in the learning society.

Keywords: Adult education, Learning Society, Relative Weighted Method, Needs Theory.

INTRODUCTION

The development of lifelong learning toward a learning society is a trend that most of the advanced countries pursuit for. Taiwan is also not an exception. Since 1998, we founded the first community college, by now, we have had nearly 80 community colleges already. These community colleges have been produced a tremendous impact for a lifelong learning society. According to the White paper for the development of a learning society, published by the Department of Education, 1998. We need to sparing no effort for developing a learning society. It is in an all-round manner to integrate all the resources for the formal and informal education to establish a complete learning environment.

In fact, Taiwan is a over educated society. We already have 165 universities and colleges. The enrollment rate for senior high school graduate students to universities is over 90 percent. But, after university graduation, we still have a very long life for learning. We all face the world of work, how to make a earning, how to tackle of frustrations, the interact in the working group and family life between the employer and the employee; the parent and the children. We need to learn all the matters continuously. Learning is a lifelong matter. Even after the advanced education, we still need to learn the democratic political life; the green and peaceful life; cooperative spiritual; the good habits for sport and health care and the appreciation of the beauty. Lifelong learning provides us an opportunity to learn anyone, learn anytime, and learn anywhere. It will lead us to the realm of potential development and self-actualization.

According to the Maslow’s theory of humanity management or the theory of hierarchy need, The higher education does not necessarily provide us a satisfied life or a promise for self-actualization. Actually, many university graduates feel frustrate when they get into the world of work,
because of the gap between university learning and the need in the workplace. As the statistics of Department of Health, from 1994 to 2005, the persons to commit suicide increased from 1451 to 4282 annually. Average 11 persons to commit suicide every day in 2005. The pressure for life came from structural unemployment, apathetic human relations, insufficient and dreary daily life.

This study aimed at exploring the importance of a happy lifelong learning environment with the role of university continuous education to help the people to increase the content of their daily life to come to perfection. According to the literature review, questionnaires survey, in-depth interview and the case study of Kainan University, this study proposed some strategies and recommendations for practice to improve the function of University Extention Education for community learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The original idea of Community College came from the proposal of Taiwan University Prof. Wu-Shung Hwang. It was the basic principle of educational reform, by way of establishing community college to activate community, to educate the citizens the ability to participate local affairs decision. This is the main idea of learning society.

As to the idea of learning society, the International Committee for the 21th Century education of UNESCO, proposed four pillars of learning society in the Delors Report, 1996. From the view point of lifelong learning, everybody need: 1. Learning to live together; 2. Learning to know; 3. Learning to do; 4. Learning to be. Till 2003, they proposed the 5th pillar: learning to change, in order to response to the rapid changing society. The educational implication for the learning society is to combine lifelong learning, lifelong education, and adult education. The idea came from the book, “The Learning Society”, published by R.M.Hutchins, 1968. The idea of learning society is based on the human nature, to expound and propagate the idea of learning society, He advocated to make a examination of education system and social institutions and regulations by way of well-informed and refined education and to mobilize all available learning resources to enhance the balanced development of educational connotation and the equality of opportunity for education. It will let everybody to share learning, and to accomplish self-reconstruct and self-actualization. (Hutchins, 1968). In 1999, N, Longworth, the president of European Lifelong Learning Association contended that lifelong learning has profound influence on future educational policy, economic and social development, therefore, many countries actively give an impetus to lifelong learning for social development.

Prof. Mau Shiang Chen deems that university extention education is the best channel for integrating regular and irregular education and learning resources, They provide general public the channel for certifying their achievement of learning. (Mau Shiang Chen, 2002)

Community colleges are the learning center, activity center, educational resources center, and the center for livelihood and development. (Chen Yang Wang, 1996) They provide lifelong learning activities, inspire community people and all families to learn, by way of holding recreational activities, exhibits, school carnivals, book clubs, or achievement exhibitions to encourage the interaction of community residents, to enhance their learning habits and community identity. It is contributive to realize the idea of learning society for communitarianism.

The purpose of university extention education is disseminating knowledge to the general public, and giving the learning channel for the adults who was obliged to discontinue schooling during their childhood, and anyone who want to know or renew their knowledge. (Bowl, 1992) “University Extention” was first used by British education system since 1840. It means to extent the university education
facilities. Therefore it contains two implications: 1. Setting up new universities or colleges. 2. Universities hold lecture courses in cities and towns for adult education. They are contributive to the development of adult lifelong learning. (Jennings, 1985; Kelly, 1970)

University extension education provides learning opportunities for the general public, usually they are part-time students learning in after-hours. The outstanding achievement such as British Oxford and Cambridge universities professors was devoted to university extension education as early as in the 1870’s. After more than one century’s effort, they promote the new frontier for British education and democratization. It becomes the model of university extension education for other countries. (Guo-Der Yang, 2004) To sum up the distinguishing features of university extension education are as follows:
1. Bringing academic services to the needed people
2. Part time learning.
3. Flexible classes arrangement
4. Cheap tuition fee
5. Taking care of the education need of women and disadvantaged groups
6. Multiple teaching methods.

KAINAN UNIVERSITY AS AN EXAMPLE-CASE STUDY

The Development of Kai-Nan University Extension Education

Kai-Nan University (former Kai-Nan Institute of Management) was founded in 2000, from the beginning, they set up a Department of Continuing and Extension Education. In 2006, Kai-Nan Institute of Management was reorganized into Kai-Nan University.

The development of continuing and extension education can be divided into three stages:
1. Introduction period, growth period, and continuing growth period.

In the introduction period, Kai-Nan University and its Taipei branch began to spread up extension education to local communities. It played the role of linking former and informer education. During this infant stage, the university made its extension education classes outsourcing to the experienced training agencies. In the beginning, there was only 7 departments, the university decided to start 4 accredited Programs and 3 undergraduate level night school classes for Business Management, Information Technologies and Aviation Management. Its Taipei branch started community college programs to provide the local people many kind of learning opportunities.

In the growth period, Kai-Nan University decided to reorganize their Evening Classes and Extension Division to Department of Continuing Education. The university also decided to end the outsourcing contract with other training agencies. The new continuing education department began to hold the spirit of “lifelong learning to add the value” with very limited prescribed number of personnel to expand the student number and raise the quality of teaching. The new department decided to cooperate with local township governments to set up many community colleges. In order to fulfill the idea of “Combining local resources to serve local people” (History of Kai-Nan University, 2004)

In the continuing growth period, the Department of Continuing Education developed as many as different classes as they can to expand their services to local people.

The Achievements of Kai-Nan University Extension Education

In order to popularize the idea of lifelong learning, and to broaden the scope of local people service, Kai-Nan University persists to provide extension education programs. There major achievements are as
follows:

1. Accredited Programs

These programs were designed for encouraging the working people to come back to university for renewing their knowledge and work skills. If they want to get Bachelor or Master degree, these programs provide them great chance to pass the pre-admission test. Since the year 2000 till 2008, over 10 thousands students have been completed these programs. The accredited programs are as follows:

(1) Professional Bachelor level accredited programs.
(2) Bachelor level two years accredited programs.
(3) Master level accredited programs.
(4) The Bureau of Vocational Training, Council of Labor Affair subsidized accredited programs.
(5) Other government agencies subsidized accredited programs.
(6) Local County Assembly subsidized accredited programs.

2. Non accredited Programs

These programs were designed for encouraging the working people to come back to university for renewing their knowledge and work skills. These programs can not provide the student the chance to get pre-admission test to undergraduate or graduate programs. But, through these programs, they can get practical skill for professional license or job skills. The non accredited programs are as follows:

(1) General English Professioncy Test Training Programs.
(2) TOFEL, GMAT or IELTS Test Training Programs.
(3) English or Japanese Conversation Training Programs.
(4) Computer Software Application Ability License Test Training Programs.
(5) Logistics and Bonded Warehouse Professionals Training Programs
(6) Fortune Tellers Training Programs
(7) Golf Training Programs
(8) Government Sponsors Training Programs
(9) Other kind of Licensing Training Programs

3. Local City or Township Councils Sponsored Community Colleges

Since 2004, Kai-Nan University has got the sponsorships from local city or township Councils to help them setting up “City College” or “Township College.” By now, the university has one City College and two Township Colleges. The colleges can set up as many accredited or non-accredited programs as they can.

These programs are sponsored by local Councils, therefore, local people pay only few tuition fee to get in a very useful learning courses. These programs are very welcomed by local people.

Questionnaire Survey Results of Taoyuan City Community College Students

In order to know the programs need of local people and Kai-Nan University Extention Education’s performance, the author invited all students of Taoyuan City Community College to answer the questionnaire. The analysis of questionnaire survey results are as follows:

Total population of Taoyuan City, by the end of February 2009, reached 359,529 persons. 85% of them are below 50 years old. It is a young city. (graph 1) 39% of the city citizens are college or university graduates. (graph 2) Most of the labor force are working in Logistics, Electronics or other Manufacture industries. It is very important for the City Community College Programs to meet the need of city citizens.
The purpose of questionnaire survey is to know the performance of the Taoyuan City Community College, to review the practicality of the programs, to collect the pro and con opinions of the programs for evaluation and improving them.

1. Time of the questionnaire survey: Each mid-term of the school year.
2. Target of the questionnaire survey: Every student of the school year.
3. Process of the questionnaire survey:
   1. Beginning of the survey: The eighth week of each semester, to delivery the questionnaire
   2. Return of the questionnaire: The tenth week to reclaim the questionnaire
   3. Statistics: After the return of the questionnaire, we begin to make statistics and analysis.

The results of the questionnaire survey as the Appendix. We use “Relative Weights Analysis Methods” to analysis and review the programs.

For the example of the first semester of 2007, we ask the satisfaction of all students about the courses, quality of the teachers, quality of the services, and the quality of the facilities., we get four indexs ($a\%$, $b\%$, $c\%$, $d\%$) and total satisfaction ($T\%$):
\[
\begin{align*}
a &= (96.8 + 83.2) / 2 = 90 \\
\frac{b}{4} &= (99.2 + 98.9 + 84 + 94.9) / 4 = 94.25 \\
c &= 85.6 \\
d &= 77.1 \\
T &= 94.2
\end{align*}
\]

a means students’ satisfaction about courses,

b means students’ satisfaction about the quality of teachers.

c means students’ satisfaction about the quality of school services,

d means students’ satisfaction about the quality of facilities.

T means students’ total satisfaction, we judge from their willing to return or introduce other person to be the student or not.

We divided the results into two discussion groups \( A \in R \cdot B \in R \), and gave them different weights \( (W_1 \in R \cdot W_2 \in R) \), then, according to Formula \( 1 \) to get different weights by different combination.s

\[ AW_1 + BW_2 = T \tag{1} \]

The function \( 1 \), let \( W_1 + W_2 = 1 \), then the combination analysis are as follows:

**Lemma 1**, The courses as special weights:

\[
\begin{align*}
A &= a = 90 \\
B &= (b + c + d) / 3 = 85.65 \\
A \cdot B \cdot T \text{ and } W_1 + W_2 &= 1 \text{ put into function (1) } \Rightarrow \text{ then, } W_1 = 1.96 \text{, } W_2 = -0.96.
\end{align*}
\]

**Lemma 2**, The quality of teachers as special weights:

\[
\begin{align*}
A &= b = 94.25 \\
B &= (a + c + d) / 3 = 84.23 \\
A \cdot B \cdot T \text{ and } W_1 + W_2 &= 1 \text{ put into function (1) } \Rightarrow \text{ then, } W_1 = 0.99 \text{, } W_2 = 0.01.
\end{align*}
\]

**Lemma 3**, The quality of school services as special weights:

\[
\begin{align*}
A &= c = 85.6 \\
B &= (a + b + d) / 3 = 87.11 \\
A \cdot B \cdot T \text{ and } W_1 + W_2 &= 1 \text{ put into function (1) } \Rightarrow \text{ then, } W_1 = -4.69 \text{, } W_2 = 5.69.
\end{align*}
\]

**Lemma 4**, The quality of facilities. as special weights:

\[
\begin{align*}
A &= d = 77.1 \\
B &= (a + b + c) / 3 = 89.95 \\
A \cdot B \cdot T \text{ and } W_1 + W_2 &= 1 \text{ put into function (1) } \Rightarrow \text{ then, } W_1 = -0.33 \text{, } W_2 = 1.33.
\end{align*}
\]

We use questionnaire survey to know the students’ satisfaction of courses, the quality of teachers, the quality of school services, and the quality of facilities., we use “Relative Weights Analysis Methods” to get the weight of satisfaction \( 1.96 \cdot 0.99 \cdot -4.69 \cdot -0.33 \) respectively., then we know the students’ satisfaction of courses, the quality of teachers, the quality of school services, and the quality of facilities. From now on, we should emphasize the practicality of courses, and the quality of school services should be much improved.
The Strategic Analysis of Kainan University’s Extention Education for the Learning Society

We also did in-depth interviews with 3 former Department chiefs, and 1 present Division chief of Department of Continuing Education, Kai-Nan University. We asked them to do self-evaluation, with SWOT analysis, to find the four dimensions (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and treats) of Kai-Nan university extension education. As follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• High quality of teachers.</td>
<td>• Classroom and facility management need improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Near downtown, traffic convenience.</td>
<td>• New university the history is too short to be fame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New facilities</td>
<td>• The staffs are lack of experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good relationship with local governments.</td>
<td>• The inefficiency of teamwork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get public praise through good record of evaluation done by the</td>
<td>• Electronic facility is not enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education.</td>
<td>• The tenure of department chief is too short.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Number of students is over 8500, to fit in with scale economy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The courses are flexible, plentiful and various</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Near industrial area, so many enterprises are waiting for academic</td>
<td>• Too many universities, overeducated society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Near international airport and high speed railway station, convenient</td>
<td>• 6 universities nearby, they are potential competitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many low degree workers need improve their educational background.</td>
<td>• Financial crisis, high unemployment rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New university, but has many strategic alliance domestic and abroad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New university but has set up 3 community colleges.</td>
<td>• The government imposed many restrictions on the recruitment of foreign students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get government grant to reduce the tuition fee.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Strategic Combination Analysis According to SWOT Analysis

According to SWOT analysis, there are some specific strategies for future development

1. Enhancing the advantages and creating the opportunities
   (1) Universal perception, local manifestation
       To intensify local relations, continuing expand the present 1 City University and 2 County Universities, giving local citizens lifelong learning opportunities.
   (2) Nationwide Special Programs and Classes
       To cooperate with all kind of government agencies and Employers’ or Workers’ unions or associations, for designing special programs for them.
   (3) Overseas Education Programs
       A. To exchange students or programs with major universities in the mainland China, to intensify the services for Taiwanese who live in China and mainland Chinese people
       B. To introduce foreign education programs from Japan, U.K., Canada, Australia, or U.S.A. and intensify the cooperate relationship with foreign universities.
   (4) Students’ need oriented courses design
       Using questionnaire survey to know the students’ need, give them the professional programs design accordingly.
2. Eliminating the weaknesses and Escaping the threats

(1) Improving the constitution to face the market change
   Department of Continuing Education should be changed into businesslike organization.

(2) Recruiting the capable administrators
   Department of Continuing Education should recruit the capable managers to develop the market.

(3) Planning practical programs
   Department of Continuing Education should design practical programs suitable for lifelong learning.

(4) Recruiting well known teachers
   Besides of the excellent teachers of Kai-Nan University, Department of Continuing Education should invite experienced professionals to be the teachers of community colleges.

(5) Cooperating with private enterprises
   To help the private enterprises to utilize the Council of Labor Affair’s subsidies to hold on the job-training, KAI-Nan University, cooperates with them, to provide them qualified teachers, training facilities, etc.

(6) Cooperating with local governments
   To help the local governments to provide their citizens the lifelong learning opportunities, KAI-Nan University helps them to establish City College, or County College to provide them qualified teachers, training facilities, etc.

(7) Strengthening the propaganda to popularize the lifelong learning
   To use newspaper or radio, T.V., Internet homepage advertisement, D.M. handout, poster, or by word-of-mouth from graduated students or teachers to promote the lifelong learning ideas.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

An old Chinese saying, “If you want to know the growth of a tree, it takes you 10 years; if you want to know a person’s successful achievement, it takes you 100 years”. It’s means education is a long term career, we need a long period of time to examine the achievement of our endeavors. But, the education has a profound impact on politics, economic, social and culture development. Within the idea of learning society, the university extension education should bring academic services to anywhere where need be. We should provide them a flexible choice, let them have a chance to part time learning, affordable tuition fee, consider the special need of women and disadvantaged race or ethnic groups.

The feasible strategies for Kai-Nan University extension education are as follows:

1. To integrate all available local resources to carry out the lifelong learning idea.
2. To be a qualified occupational licensing organization.
3. To provide a e-learning website for distance learning.
4. To hold an exhibition; an exposition; a display; a show or famous person’s lecture to attract the attention of local people and to raise the fame of the university.
5. To create originality programs to attract the potential learners.
6. To cooperate with local enterprises to give them employee training programs.
7. To give local people a good image by molding a brand name, LOGO.
8. To design customers (students) oriented programs, and build a good long term relationship with students and local people.
9. To train a high quality work team to serve local people, satisfy them the lifelong learning need.
10. To communicate with major Chinese universities, exchange students and provide training programs for licensing programs.
11. To introduce foreign study programs from Japan, U.S.A, U.K. Canada, Australia, etc., cooperate with foreign universities, and develop oversea learning market.

REFERENCES


