ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION READINESS ATTRIBUTES: A DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR THAI PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES TRANSFORMATIONAL READINESS ASSESSMENT TOWARDS STRATEGIC POSITIONING

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ABSTRACT

Organizational transformation is a complex and important issue for many organizations. It is associated with all organizational operations and requires systematic management. Developing a transformational readiness assessment tool is essential for university transformation because it enables university administrators to understand current readiness status and gain useful information for transformation planning. It also helps to reduce problems caused by lacks of significant factors and create synergy among university personnel, which leads to the achievement of organizational transformation goals. The objective of this research was to study the characteristics of key readiness categories in order to develop a self-assessment tool for the organizational transformation towards strategic position of Thai private universities. The qualitative method was used to study related documents and collect information from the key informants. The typological analysis, analytic induction, and content analysis techniques were applied to analyze the data. The research results showed that there are 8 readiness categories that are important for the assessment of transformational readiness: university profile, university's size, environment underpinning, target market and core business, resource, strategic focus, management, and cultural. Universities can use the transformational readiness assessment tool to assess their transformation readiness, determined strategic plans, and develop readiness factors in various categories in order to accelerate organizational operations, which contributes to the success of organizational transformation towards strategic position and the achievement of organizational competitiveness under changing external circumstances.

Keywords: Organizational Transformation, Readiness, Strategic Positioning, Thai Private University, University Transformation.

INTRODUCTION

In a changing environment full of complexity and uncertainty, industrial disruption and tremendous changes in economy, population, society, and technology result in a change in management patterns of organizations, especially the management pattern of higher education institutions (Thanitbenjasith et al., 2020). Changing life cycles of academic courses or educational services can no longer respond to market and social needs. Thai higher education

institutions, especially private universities, need to adjust themselves to be more competitive in terms of quality. They need to increase capabilities, adjust education management strategies, and change their role from producing manpower based on their capacity to become a university that can set the direction of manpower production according to national development needs both in terms of quantity and quality in order to produce a sufficient number of capable graduates who have academic competence, professional skills, and professional readiness in accordance with their strategic focus (WCDM-MHESI, 2020). They need to take into account their mission, organizational excellence, and capabilities in order to produce manpower, knowledge, and research works that can be used for national development (Clark, 1998; Hannon, 2013; Etzkowitz, 2013). In addition, Thai universities needs to develop and modify their strategic management systems and tools to create competitiveness and enhance organizational strengths (Lawler & Worley, 2006; Adcroft & Mason, 2007; Appelbaum et al., 2017).

Organizational transformation is a way to transform the management pattern of universities in order to keep up with changes (Burke & Litwin, 1992; Palmer et al., 2009; Jones, 2013; Cummings & Worley, 2014). However, organizational transformation is not an easy task. Organizational transformation may not be successfully implemented as expected because it is involved with complicated systemic changes that take a long time (Armenakis et al., 1993; Eby et al., 2000). Therefore, developing transformation readiness is considered an important factor for successful organizational changes. Private universities need to analyze and evaluate their transformation readiness in order to acknowledge their capacity to prepare necessary factors. However, based on the literature review about the factors required for transformational readiness assessment, previous studies mostly focused on the factors that are used for assessing behavioral readiness at the individual level and the factors that are used in business and industrial sectors. Those factors cannot be used to assess the transformation readiness of universities because universities have different missions and their strategic positioning. The objective of this research was to study the characteristics of key readiness categories in order to develop a self-assessment tool for the organizational transformation towards strategic position of Thai private universities.

This study aimed to answer two research questions:

(i)   What are the key factors in the analysis of transformational readiness of Thai private universities?
(ii)   What are the readiness categories in the self-assessment of transformational readiness of Thai private universities?

Thai Private Universities can use the results of this research to determine a clear development guideline for organizational transformation in order to efficiently and effectively achieve a strategic position under changing circumstances according to their readiness and capacity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Transformation

Organizational change occurs as a result of changes in external and internal forces such as changes in internal operations, changes in strategies and employees, and uses of new machinery or equipment (Robbins & Coulter, 2003). Expectedly, every organization has to adapt to environmental changes on a continuous basis. Thus, it is essential for organizational

executives to constantly develop and modify their policies and practices in order to cope with emerging changes (Ulen, 2010; Vartiak, 2016).

Cummings & Worley (2014) classified organizational change into 3 types: 1) incremental or evolutionary change refers to minor adjustment that gradually occurs based on existing resources, 2) radical or revolutionary change refers to drastic change that has an impact throughout the organization or frame-breaking burst that causes the organization to reach a new equilibrium, and 3) planned change refers to predetermined change that takes into account the organization's expectation and current performance. In the current fluctuating economy, if organizations do not adapt to changes and adjust themselves, it may affect their operational continuity and business survival (Adcroft & Mason, 2007; Appelbaum et al., 2017). Organizational transformation is a form of organizational change that helps to transform the organization into a new status in accordance with external environment changes.

Cummings & Worley (2014) defined organizational transformation as a strategic activity aimed at changing corporate cultures and other characteristics that are the foundation of an organization. Organizational transformation is different from other organizational development activities. It is a revolutionary change or a paradigm shift that transforms how the organization operates. Jones (2013) explained that organizational transformation is a new way to improve the organization's status with the use of organizational resources and capacity, which enables the organization to create more values and increase benefits for its stakeholders.

Organization transformation is a drastic change in how an organization functions. It is considered a second-order change or transformational change, which is different from other organizational development activities that occur slowly and are classified as first-order change or transactional change (Wendell & Cecil, 1990; Cummings & Worley, 2014). Burke & Litwin (1992) proposed the Burke-Litwin Model that is relevant to organizational transformation. Based on this model, individual performance is classified as first-order change, while organizational performance is classified as second- order change. The first-order change is concerned with a change in management practice, structure, and system that has an effect on organizational environment, motivation, individual and organizational performance, and individual's tasks, needs and values. The first-order change is not a change in strategy, value, or identity that is fundamental to the organization. It focuses on developing and maintaining existing corporate identity (Palmer et al., 2009). The second-order change is associated with a change in mission and strategy, leadership, and organizational culture that is fundamental to the organization. A change in these 3 factors will affect individual and organizational performance and cause permanent changes based on changing external circumstances. In addition, transformational change has an effect on leadership, strategy, and organizational culture, which are the important fundamental factors affecting human behavior. Meanwhile, management practice, structure, and system are considered the factors causing gradual and environmental changes. Therefore, organizations should pay attention to both first-order change and second-order change in order to define goals and procedures and implement their transformation in an efficient and effective way.

Organizational Analysis

In order to make organizational transformation success, organizations need to carry out organizational analysis for change management. There are many types of organizational analysis

that aim to improve organizational effectiveness (Prosci, 2005). Many scholars have paid attention to the models of organizational analysis for organizational changes. Burke & Litwin (1992) introduced the *"Burke & Litwin Causal Model"* to present the variables and the variable relationships that affect organizational change. They suggested that, among 12 variables, there are 4 key variables that are very necessary for organizational change and can be used to drive organizational functions. Flamholtz & Randle (1998) proposed the Model for Building Successful Businesses, which indicated that in order to achieve successful organizational transformation in the long run, it is necessary to establish an analysis framework for the preparation of fundamental factors based on the characteristics of each organization. The critical factors affecting the design of a successful business include 1) business concept, which is the foundation of a business and operational practices that define how the organization works and what it intends to do, 2) six key *"building blocks"* of organizational success, which consist of identifying the market the organization want to serve and establishing a market niche, developing products and services suitable for the market, acquiring and effectively managing resources that are essential to organizational operations, developing and effectively managing day-to-day operational systems that are needed for the organization to function, developing management systems essential for long-term growth and development, and managing corporate cultures to support the organization's long-term goals, 3) organizational size, which is a model of organizational growth containing more than one organizational development task that need to be taken into account throughout the transformation process, and 4) organizational environment, which is composed of markets, competitions, and trends that have current and future impacts on the organization. Therefore, organizational analysis will enable organizations to create guidelines to improve and prepare operational resources for effective organizational transformation based on their organizational condition and context (Tichy & Nisberg, 1976).

Transformational Readiness

Organizational transformation cannot be easily implemented and may not be successful because it is a complex systemic change that takes a long time (Armenakis et al., 1993; Eby et al., 2000). Thus, creating transformational readiness is an important factor for successful organizational transformation. Transformational readiness is an indication of employees' intellectual abilities to behave against or in accordance with participatory change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Weiner, 2009) and employees' feelings that the organization is ready for change (Eby et al., 2000). Trahant & Burke (1996) stated that organizational change readiness can be divided into 2 aspects: 1) transformational readiness, which is associated with organizational preparation, strategic planning, and creating visions and corporate cultures in accordance with organizational change, and 2) transactional readiness, which is involved with creating or designing work systems to support organizational change. This is in line with Galyarat (2010), who defined organizational change readiness as an organization's social and technological abilities and systematic thinking attempts to use new things for organizational change in various ways.

Holt et al. (2007), described that the structure of change readiness, which has an effect on organizational continuity, consists of 4 factors: 1) content, which refers to what is being changed, related procedures, tools, and technology utilization, 2) process, which is concerned with employee participant in change processes after the change has started, 3) context, which is the condition and environment of organizations or situations that cause changes to occur, and 4)

individual attribute, which refers to individuals' characteristics of change management. These factors are very important for organizational change process. They help to develop individual behaviors useful for the organization and enhance the abilities to perform duties in accordance with organizational change.

Change readiness is the ability to assess whether an organization will be successful in implementing a change. Different perspectives are required to evaluate the confidence of those involved in organizational change (Combe, 2014a). Change readiness takes into account 3 main factors (Combe, 2014b): 1) cultural readiness, which is the degree of alignment between cultural norms and the change, 2) commitment readiness, which is the degree of resolve and ability of the organization, through its leaders at all levels, to see the change through to successful and sustainable completion within the organization's overall strategic agenda, and 3) capacity readiness, which is the degree to which the organization is able to bring supportive work processes, knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences, and resources to facilitate successful implementation and sustainability of the change.

In addition, Harold (2017) further explained that there are 4 organizational transformation components: people, process, system, and culture. The relationships among these components have an impact on change readiness of the organization. Change readiness places importance on organizational problem-solving, suitability, and capacity that contribute to the success of organizational transformation and the operation that leads to current readiness, which helps to ensure that organizational transformation will be achieved in the long run.

Based on the definitions and characteristics of organizational transformation and transformational readiness presented above, university transformational readiness can be defined as the ability of universities to develop organizational preparedness in various categories in order to obtain a higher level of readiness and achieve the transformation in a practical way.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm

The present study aimed to answer two research questions: 1) *"What are the key factors in the analysis of transformational readiness of Thai private universities?"* and 2) *"What are the readiness categories in the self-assessment of transformational readiness of Thai private universities?"* In order to answer these questions, the constructivism and interpretivism paradigms were adopted to make knowledge claims (Creswell, 2009). The researcher believes that there are many truths in people's minds (Guba, 1990), therefore, this study was conducted in a holistic manner (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As this research required different opinions from the informants as much as possible, the researcher needed to understand the key informants' different perspectives and focus on accurate data interpretation (Creswell, 2009). Thus, the qualitative method was applied to study the feelings, understandings, experiences, expertise, and opinions of the key informants in this research. Qualitative research tends to use human resources as a primary data source because it is believed that human resources are standardized tools that can adjust to various changing situations (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002). As this study intended to answer the research questions with in-depth and specific explanations that are in line with the nature of qualitative research (Creswell & Clark, 2007), the researcher used strategies of inquiry and phenomenology to obtain valid answers from the key informants based on their knowledge, experiences, and expertise (Creswell, 1998).

Selection of Informants

The purposive sampling method was used to select 14 key informants based on the principle of phenomenological research (Marshall et al., 2013). The key informants were divided into 2 main groups: 1) 8 higher education quality assessors at the institutional level, who were accredited with national and international certifications, and 2) 6 employers associated with the production of graduates based on strategic positioning. The first group of key informants consisted of 2 ASEAN University Network – Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) assessors (strategic level), 2 Education Criteria for Performance Excellence (EdPEx) assessors, 2 External Quality Assurance (EQA) assessors who were included in ONESQA's list of registered assessors, and 2 Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) assessors who met the criteria of the Office of the Higher Education Commission. The second group of key informants comprised 2 representatives of private organizations (the President of the Provincial Chamber of Commerce and the President of the Provincial Industry Council), 2 representatives of provincial government organizations, and 2 representatives of state enterprise organizations.

Research Instrument

The research instrument in this study was interview forms. The language accuracy and content validity of the research instrument were examined and approved by experts. The researcher used in-depth interviews (Patton, 2002) to collect insightful information from the key informants (Erlandson et al., 1993). Moreover, the researcher carried out documentary research to collect additional information about organizational analysis and organizational transformation from related documents, books, texts, articles, and previous research in Thailand and foreign countries in order to ensure that the managerial implication of this research can be applied in practical situations.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews with the key informants were classified and analyzed using the data reduction, data display (Miles & Huberman, 1984), typological analysis, and analytic induction techniques (Hatch, 2002) in order to assure the accuracy and relevance of the data before drawing conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The data gained from the documentary research were categorized and compared using the content analysis method. The triangulation technique was also used to ensure the academic rigor and enhance the reliability of the qualitative research results and the data interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

RESULTS

This qualitative research used the data collected from the interviews with the key informants and the documentary research to explore the key factors and readiness categories for the assessment of transformational readiness of Thai private universities. The obtained results could answer the research questions about transformational readiness as follows.

What are the key factors in the analysis of transformational readiness of Thai private universities?

Procedure 1: Analyzing key factors: the researcher determined that when at least 7 out of

14 key informants suggested the same factor during the interview, that factor would be regarded as the key factor for analyzing the transformational readiness of Thai private universities in this study. According to the research results, there were 27 key factors suggested by the key informants as Table 1 and researcher used these key factors to further develop the readiness categories for the organizational transformation of Thai private universities.

Table 1			
Key factors in the analysis of transformational readiness of Thai private universities			
Key Factors	**Key Informants**	**Category**	**Reference**
1) Basic context and profile of the university	14	University Profile	[1]
2) Alternative of the university for growth	7	University's Size	[1]
3) Quantitative manpower capacity of the university	14	Resource	[1] [2] [3]
4) Financial and budgetary capacity of the university	13	Resource	[1] [2] [3]
5) Resources, infrastructures, buildings, laboratories, technology, and specific and professional tools	14	Resource	[1] [2] [3]
6) Cooperative networks and resource utilization of the university	14	Resource	[1] [2] [3]
7) National strategy, policy, and development direction	12	Environment Underpinning	[1]
8) Supportive policy from the government and affiliated agencies	11	Environment Underpinning	[1]
9) Law, regulations, and practices of affiliated agencies	14	Environment Underpinning	[1]
10) Economic, social, political, technological, and population environment and trends	14	Environment Underpinning	[1]
11) Competitors and other educational institutions inside and outside the area	11	Environment Underpinning	[1]
12) University's stakeholders such as graduates, employers, communities/societies, and local agencies	13	Environment Underpinning	[1] [2]
13) Students, customers, and educational target group	10	Target & Core Business	[1] [2]
14) Curriculum and/or other (existing) academic services that are the university's strengths	11	Target & Core Business	[1] [2]
15) Expertise, ability, and competence of personnel	9	Resource	[1] [2]
16) Mission support of the university and related agencies	14	Resource	[1] [2]
17) Curriculum, learning management, teaching and learning, research and innovation, (new) academic services that can create distinction	14	Strategic Focus	[1] [2] [3]
18) Strategic plan of the university	14	Management	[1] [2] [3]
19) Administrators of the university, faculty, and department and the structure of the chain of command	14	Management	[1] [2] [3]
20) Internal communication	14	Management	[1] [2] [3]
21) Personnel motivation system and mechanism	14	Management	[1] [2] [3]
22) Information management system and administrative support system	13	Management	[1] [2] [3]
23) The university' strategic focus-oriented performance assessment system	8	Management	[1] [2] [3]
24) Administrator evaluation system and good governance	13	Management	[1] [2] [3]

Table 1			
Key factors in the analysis of transformational readiness of Thai private universities			
Key Factors	Key Informants	Category	Reference
monitoring system			
25) Philosophy, vision, mission, values, goals, objectives, and identities of the university	9	Cultural	[1] [2] [3]
26) Participation of personnel at all levels	14	Cultural	[1] [2] [3]
27) Institutional supervision structure	14	Cultural	[1] [2] [3]

What are the readiness categories in the self-assessment of transformational readiness of Thai private universities?

Procedure 2: Classifying key factors: in order to develop the categories for the assessment of transformational readiness, the taxonomy analysis method was used to study the relationships between keywords and classify the key factors that were obtained from the interviews by taking into account of [1] the Model for Building Successful Businesses (Flamholtz & Randle, 1998), [2] the Change Readiness (Combe, 2014a), and [3] the Organizational Transformation Components (Harold, 2017).

Procedure 3: Identifying categories: the results of Procedure 2 were used to determine 8 groups of key factors, which consisted of university profile, university's size, resource, environment underpinning, target& core business, strategic focus, management, cultural. Then the results of Procedure 3 would be used to develop the readiness categories in the next step.

Developing Readiness Categories

Procedure 4: Defining characteristics of categories: university transformational readiness demonstrates the ability of universities to create preparedness in various categories in order to obtain a higher level of readiness and achieve the transformation in a practical way. The researcher investigated the characteristics of the factors and categories and then used the analytic induction method to define readiness categories. Based on the research results, the researcher could divide the readiness categories for the assessment of transformational readiness into the following 2 main university readiness attributes and 8 categories as:

University Readiness Context

University readiness context reflects a university's characteristics, background, history, growth, and operational environment that are related to strategic positioning. University readiness context consists of 1) university profile readiness, which refers to the overview background, basic context, and important characteristics of the university that have an effect on the implementation of strategic positioning such as curriculum courses and services; 2) university's size readiness, which refers to the growth or development pattern such as expansion that is in line with external environmental changes and enables the university to have effective management practice and achieve organizational transformation towards strategic position; and 3) environment underpinning readiness, which refers to external environment of the university that is a contributing factor to successful organizational transformation and a major challenge facing the university such as national strategy, national policy, national development direction,

supportive policy from the government and affiliated agencies, laws, regulations, practices of affiliated agencies, economic, social, political, technological, and population environment and trends, competitors and other educational institutions inside and outside the area, students, customers, and (current) educational target group, and the university's stakeholders such as graduates, employers, communities/societies, and local agencies. These factors may be a threat to university operations, which influences the success of organizational transformation.
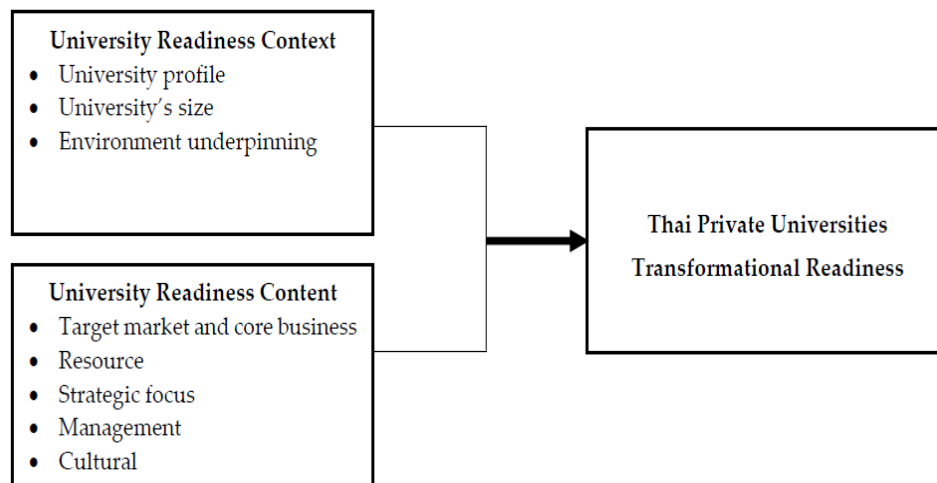
University Readiness Content

University readiness content is involved with target groups, main educational products, supporting resources, implementation of vision and strategic focus, management, and corporate cultures that can drive Thai universities towards strategic position. University readiness content is comprised of 4) target market and core business, which involves the ability to analyze the educational needs, to identify current and future target groups (students and customers), to analyze educational products such as curriculum courses and other educational services that are the university's strengths, to promote the involvement of personnel in determining student recruitment strategies and executing marketing activities according to target groups, and to maintain and develop unique educational products in accordance with the national development direction and the needs of target groups and labor market; 5) resource readiness, which is the ability to analyze, assess, and determine supporting resources for the achievement of strategic position such as personnel qualifications, experiences, academic positions, sufficiency and efficiency of manpower, finance and budget, cooperative network and resource utilization, and mission support of the university and related agencies as well as infrastructures, buildings, laboratories, technology, and specific and professional tools that are considered physical resources; 6) strategic focus, which is the ability to determine a guideline or method to improve organizational performance and capacity in accordance with strategic positioning, national development direction, and important requirements of the affiliated organizations. Strategic focus is composed of 6.1) curriculum and learning management, 6.1.1) planning, designing, developing, and managing degree and non-degree programs, 6.1.2) developing learning management, instructional pattern, learning skills, professional abilities, new student support, knowledge application, and knowledge expansion, 6.2) research and innovation that is associated with creating new knowledge, theories, findings, innovation, research, and integrated research focusing on organization and knowledge, 6.3) academic services that place emphasis on developing, solving, and providing academic services according to organizational and community needs in order to make changes at the local and regional levels; 7) management readiness, which is the ability to determine 7.1) a guideline for development and/or improvement of strategic plans, 7.2) a guideline the development of university administrators, faculty and department, and the structure of the chain of command, 7.3) a guideline for promoting the participation of stakeholders such as students, graduates, employers, academic/professional service recipients, and local communities/societies, 7.4) internal communication, 7.5) a guideline for the development of personnel motivation system and mechanism, information management system, administrative support system, performance assessment system, executive evaluation system, and good governance monitoring system that can drive the university towards strategic position; and 8) cultural readiness, which is the ability to determine, communicate, and transfer the university's strategic direction, including philosophy, visions, missions, values, beliefs,

goals, objectives, and identities, in order to develop the involvement of personnel at all levels and accelerate the achievement of strategic position under the supervision of the university council committee in an efficient way. Based on finding, following university categories in Figure 1.

DISCUSSION

University transformation is considered a kind of organizational change that places emphasis on corporate missions and strategic focus. It occurs as a result of external environmental fluctuations and changes in labor market needs. When existing educational products can no longer respond to the needs of consumers, universities need to adjust themselves, develop more qualitative competitiveness, and determine strategic development guidelines in order to reach new equilibrium that is in line with changing environment. It can be said that university transformation is a radical organizational change (Cummings & Worley, 2014) associated with changes in mission, strategy, leadership, and organizational culture that will affect how each university operates (Burke & Litwin, 1992). If universities cannot utilize their strengths or determine effective strategies to produce manpower that meets the needs of national development, in terms of quantity and quality, based on their strategic focus, they will not be able to compete in the market, which is consistent with the study of WCDM-MHESI (2020).

University Readiness Context
- University profile
- University's size
- Environment underpinning

University Readiness Content
- Target market and core business
- Resource
- Strategic focus
- Management
- Cultural

Thai Private Universities Transformational Readiness

FIGURE 1
THE READINESS CATEGORIES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF THAI PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES TRANSFORMATIONAL READINESS

In addition, as the radical organizational change has an effect on the entire organization, universities need to develop capable and competent personnel, create organizational culture for creative change, and use existing resources and capabilities to improve their status so that they can create more values for the target groups, service recipients, and stakeholders. Furthermore, university transformation is a complex systemic change. Universities need to have a plan in order to achieve a successful organizational transformation in the long run. They need to develop a

framework to analyze their environmental contexts and conditions and determine a guideline to improve and prepare operational resources for organizational transformation in the most effective and efficient way (Tichy & Nisberg, 1976). The readiness categories for the assessment of transformational readiness of Thai private universities obtained from the present study could be divided into 2 main groups: a) university readiness context, and b) university readiness content. University readiness context reflects the operational characteristics of the university. It is concerned with how the university operates and what the university intends to do base on changing environment (Holt et al., 2007). University readiness context is comprised of the following: university profile readiness, which is the readiness that results from the university's foundation, background, and direction and has an impact on the strategic positioning. Universities need to assess their readiness and analyze whether their operational characteristics are in line with their strategic position. This is because if universities have a low level of readiness, organizational transformation can affect their operational characteristics and performance at the individual and organizational levels (Burke & Litwin, 1992); university size readiness, which involves the ability of universities to determine and control the direction of organizational growth and development according to environment changes in order to achieve organizational transformation based on strategic position (Flamholtz & Randle, 1998). Moreover, in order to ensure that their organizational transformation practice is effectively implemented in the long run, universities need to analyze whether their current and future readiness is suitable for their operational environment or not; and environment underpinning readiness, which is a major challenge facing Thai universities that are classified as open system organizations. This is in line with Burke & Litwin (1992), who stated that universities have a relationship with their environment. Thus, universities have to analyze and use uncontrollable external environmental factors to enhance their strengths. They also need to find ways to reduce problems threatening their organizational operations and affecting the success of organizational transformation (Holt et al., 2007).

In terms of university readiness content, it reflects the ability to develop and prepare important factors that can drive Thai private universities to achieve their strategic position. University readiness content is composed of the following: target market and core business, which is involved with the readiness that affects the survival of universities and the success of organizational transformation (Flamholtz & Randle, 1998). Once universities can properly estimate educational needs, identify target groups, and analyze educational products, they will be able to determine effective marketing strategies for each target group and develop unique educational services as their strengths according to the needs of labor market; resource readiness, which is the ability of universities to acquire and develop supporting resources required for current and future development towards achieving strategic position (Combe, 2014b; Harold, 2017). If universities are not able to attract or acquire sufficient resources for organizational transformation, it may affect their competitiveness in the market; strategic focus, which is the ability to develop organizational capacity and performance in accordance with strategic positioning and national development direction. It is important for universities to apply strategic focus to the development of core competence and innovation in order to create competitive advantage based on organizational visions (Combe, 2014b; Harold, 2017); management readiness, which is a component of management infrastructure that enables universities to create sustainable competitive advantage, although there are similar higher education organizations in the market (Flamholtz & Randle, 1998). Management readiness is the development of

management capabilities that can enhance operational continuity of universities. If universities pay no attention to management readiness, it may influence the achievement of strategic position; cultural readiness, which indicates how organizational members should behave during transformation processes. The assessment of cultural readiness will enable universities to create an atmosphere conducive to transformation under the participant of all related parties (Burke & Litwin, 1992) and to achieve strategic position in an efficient manner (Combe, 2014b; Harold, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study introduced the characteristics of readiness categories that are necessary for organizational transformation. This is to make Thai universities develop a clear guideline for implementing organizational transformation and achieving strategic position under rapid environmental changes in an efficient and effective way. Organizational transformation cannot be easily executed and may not be successful because it is a complex systemic change that takes a long time. Thus, creating transformational readiness is an effective mean to make organizational transformation succeed in the long run.

The results of this research showed the development of readiness categories for assessing the transformational readiness of Thai private universities, comprising 4 procedures: 1) analyzing key factors, 2) classifying key factors, 3) identifying categories, and 4) defining characteristics of 8 readiness categories. However, when applying the readiness categories to the assessment of organizational transformation, Thai private universities need to have appropriate assessment tools and methods. They should design questions based on the definitions of readiness categories in order to obtain answers that truly reflect the level of their transformational readiness, preparedness, and capacity. In addition, the assessment of university readiness context should consist of questions that require long answers and explanations. On the other hand, the assessment of university readiness content should contain questions about development levels such as applying the ADLI factors in the development of transformational readiness of Thai universities. The ADLI concept is a guideline for organizational development that has been included in national and international quality assessment systems such as Baldrige Performance, Thailand Quality Award (TQA), and EdPEx that aim to make an organization achieve a higher band or higher level of maturity in terms of organizational excellence and sustainability. The assessment of transformational readiness for the organizational transformation towards strategic position of Thai private universities is considered an organizational change tool that helps Thai private universities to develop strategic management systems and create competitiveness in accordance with their strengths and strategic direction. In addition, it enables Thai private universities to effectively produce outstanding graduates or manpower essential for the national development according to their strategic focus, mission, and capacity.

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