A Study on the Problems of Legal Reasoning in Answering Examination Questions for Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures by Third-Year Students in the Second Semester of the Academic Year 2023, Bachelor of Laws Program, Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to study the evaluation of written responses to legal exams in the subjects of labor law and labor court procedure of third-year students. And to study the problem of using legal reasoning in writing answers to examinations in labor law and labor court procedures of third-year students, semester 2/2023, Bachelor of Laws program, Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University. The sample group consisted of 55 third-year Bachelor of Laws Students. Using the purposive sampling method, there were 46 people. The research tools were an assessment form for writing legal exam answers and a note-taking form. By using data analysis with content analysis.

The research results found that Test scores that were in the range of 16-20 points were at a good level. There were 13 people, accounting for 28.26 percent. Next is the score range of 6-10 points, which is at the level that needs to be improved, and the score range of 21-25 points, which is at a very good level, the same number of 10 people, accounting for 21.73 percent. Followed by a score range of 11-15 points, at the fair level, 8 people, representing 17.39 percent, and a score range of 1-5 points, at the level requiring urgent improvement, 5 people, representing 10.36 percent. In addition, it was found that students still lacked legal reasoning skills because 27 students received diagnostic scores between 1-10 points, accounting for 58.70 percent. more than 19 students who received scores between 11-15 points. Accounting for 41.30 percent. 11 students received a score of 0 on the issue that required diagnosis due to the cause. that is, there was no decision to adjust the law with the facts that were set out as an issue, resulting in incorrect calculations or legal results. and there is no legal reasoning that is clear, the language used must be elegant, your answers must be coherent and logical and your answer does not use legal language. From this research, the problem was found that the students did not have legal reasoning as to which facts must be adjusted according to the provisions of the law. And can the law or legal principle raised be able to adapt to the issue of fact or not. Therefore, legal reasoning in writing exam answers directly affects students' test scores.

Keywords: Legal reasoning, Writing exam answers, Labor Laws and Labor Court Procedures

Introduction

The Bachelor of Laws program underwent a curriculum revision in 2022 to focus on developing the attributes of law students. The aim is to equip learners with competencies to produce law graduates who possess essential foundational legal knowledge while allowing the flexibility to study specialized legal fields based on their aptitude or interests. This approach aligns with the diverse developments in Thai society, economy, and politics. It also aims to develop essential skills for legal professions or other careers related to law, foster self-directed learning, and instill ethical behavior and professional responsibility. Graduates are expected to have a strong commitment to justice, the rule of law, social responsibility, and professional integrity.

Additionally, the program aims to establish a distinct identity for Korat law graduates, preparing them to serve their local communities effectively. These graduates are expected to have a deep understanding of local issues, social contexts, and resources, enabling them to contribute to genuine local development. Law graduates from Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University must exhibit desirable qualities, including morality, ethics, knowledge, intellectual skills, interpersonal and responsibility skills, as well as numerical analysis, communication, and information technology skills. The program strives to produce graduates who can serve as "pillars of the community," applying legal knowledge effectively in local contexts.

Once students are admitted into the Bachelor of Laws program, the curriculum provides academic advisors and preparatory activities before the semester begins to ensure a positive university experience. These efforts aim

to reduce dropout rates and manage student risks, enabling them to complete their studies within the prescribed timeframe. This aligns with the expected learning outcomes for each academic year. For third-year students, in particular, they are expected to gain knowledge and understanding in specialized legal subjects, which may be compulsory or elective, and be capable of applying legal knowledge to social or local issues with integrity and ethics.

The study of law emphasizes the development of students' analytical and reasoning skills to interpret legal facts and respond to exam questions effectively. Intellectual skills (IQ) are critical to foster logical thinking in law students at all levels. According to Wicha MahaKhun (1980, p. 48), good reasoning should meet four criteria: 1) clarity, 2) correct and elegant language usage, 3) consistency, and 4) alignment with common sense. Writing legal exam answers requires students to analyze legal issues by reasoning through the application of laws to specific facts and assessing whether the conclusions are legally accurate and just.

The researcher, with over 18 years of teaching experience in legal subjects, including Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures, has observed that some students face difficulties in studying law and answering legal exam questions. This impacts their academic performance, even in the third year. Writing legal exam answers requires a combination of science and art to convey legal knowledge effectively. Students must follow proper structures and communicate their answers logically for the examiner to understand their reasoning, demonstrating their ability to apply laws to factual scenarios.

With over 18 years of experience teaching legal subjects, including Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures, the researcher has consistently

evaluated exams in these courses, which are assessed through essay-based examinations consisting of four questions, completed within a three-hour timeframe. Through grading exams, reviewing assignments, and providing students with advice on studying law and writing exam answers, the researcher has observed that some students continue to encounter problems with studying law and crafting legal exam responses. These issues result in suboptimal academic performance, even among third-year students. Despite reaching an advanced stage in their studies, challenges in writing legal exam answers remain evident. Writing legal exam answers requires a skillful blend of science and art to effectively convey legal knowledge in written form. This involves diagnosing and applying legal principles to the facts at hand. If students can craft their exam responses with a proper structure and format, while communicating their reasoning clearly and logically to the examiner, it demonstrates their understanding of the subject matter and their ability to apply the law effectively to specific factual scenarios. For essay-based legal exams, the grading criteria are divided into three components: stating the legal principles, analysis, and conclusion. Among these, the analysis section carries the most weight, as it reflects the student's ability to apply legal reasoning and adapt legal principles to the specific facts of each issue outlined in the exam. Accurate and comprehensive reasoning in this section significantly influences students' overall scores and highlights the areas needing improvement. Addressing these issues is vital to ensure that third-year students meet the expected learning outcomes as defined by the curriculum. This will enable students to explain or provide legal reasoning effectively, whether in classroom discussions or in their written exam responses.

Therefore, the researcher aims to study the criteria and assessment of written responses in labor law and labor court procedure examinations, as well as the issues related to the use of legal reasoning in answering these exams. The study focuses on third-year students in the second semester of the academic year 2023 under the Bachelor of Laws program at Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, who still face challenges in writing exam answers that align with the established criteria. These challenges include difficulties in identifying key issues in questions, applying legal provisions, and understanding legal statutes. This research will contribute to enhancing students' capabilities, equipping them with the competencies necessary to become true legal scholars, in alignment with the objectives of the 2022 curriculum revision.
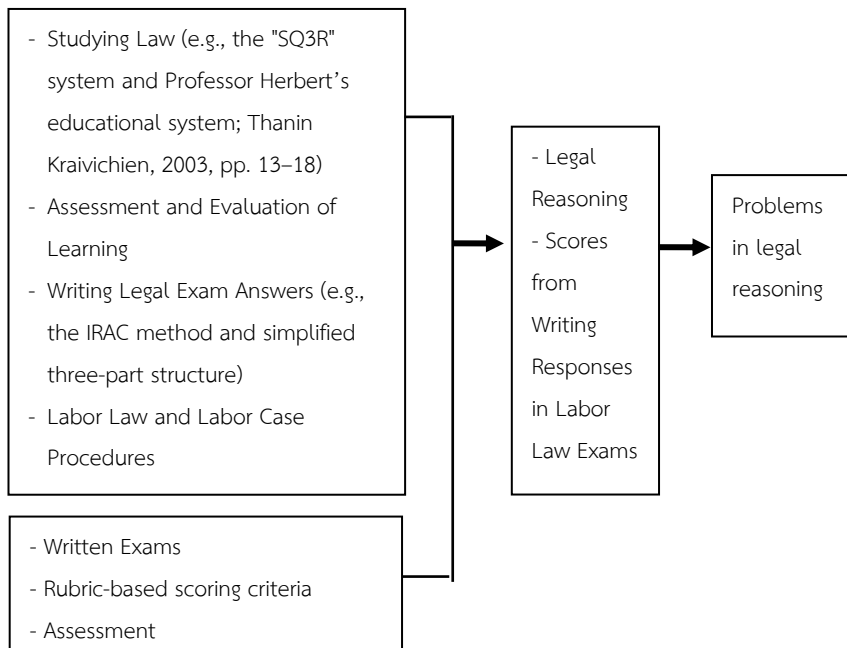
Research Objectives

1. To study the criteria and assessment of written responses in labor law and labor court procedure examinations of third-year students in the second semester of the academic year 2023 under the Bachelor of Laws program at Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University.

2. To examine the problems related to legal reasoning in answering exams in Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures among third-year students during the second semester of the 2023 academic year, under the Bachelor of Laws program at Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University.

Research Scope

Conceptual Framework

- Studying Law (e.g., the "SQ3R" system and Professor Herbert's educational system; Thanin Kraivichien, 2003, pp. 13–18)
- Assessment and Evaluation of Learning
- Writing Legal Exam Answers (e.g., the IRAC method and simplified three-part structure)
- Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures

- Written Exams
- Rubric-based scoring criteria
- Assessment

- Legal Reasoning
- Scores from Writing Responses in Labor Law Exams

Problems in legal reasoning

Research Methodology

This research is a classroom-based study using a mixed-methods research approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

1. Population and Sample Group

1.1 Population

The population includes 55 third-year students enrolled in the Bachelor of Laws program who registered for the Labor Law and Labor

Case Procedures course during the second semester of the academic year 2023 (2/2566).

1.2 Sample Group

The sample group for this research consists of 55 third-year students enrolled in the Bachelor of Laws program who registered for the Labor Law and Labor Court Procedure course in the second semester of the academic year 2023. The sample size and selection process were determined using purposive sampling, focusing on 46 students who took the midterm exam, which consisted of one question worth 25 points. The rationale for selecting this sample group is that third-year students have more experience in writing exam responses and the course is specialized. The students' exam answers were then assessed using a written examination evaluation form.

2. Data Collection Instruments

The research instruments utilized in this study included a legal exam answer evaluation form and a problem recording form. To develop these tools, the researcher reviewed relevant documents and textbooks to identify the criteria for writing legal exam answers. This process informed the creation of the "Legal Exam Answer Evaluation Form," which was divided into three sections for each question. The first section focused on legal principles or legislation. The second section centered on the analysis and application of legal provisions to specific factual scenarios, comprising three subtopics: the effects of agreements preventing employees from receiving statutory rights, calculations of overtime pay, holiday work pay, and holiday overtime pay for Mr. Wayu, and similar calculations for Ms. Ratri. The final section required students to present a conclusion.

Additionally, the problem recording form consisted of two parts: general information and an analysis of issues related to legal reasoning in answering exam questions. The evaluation of legal reasoning followed the guidelines proposed by Wicha MahaKhun (1980), emphasizing clarity, linguistic correctness, consistency, and alignment with common sense. The instruments were subjected to expert validation to ensure their reliability and accuracy. Following expert review, the tools were revised and finalized for use in analyzing the legal exam writing methods of the sample group.

3. Data Collection

The researcher collected data from third-year students who were enrolled in the Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures course during the second semester of the academic year 2023 (2/2566). The students participated in a midterm examination featuring one essay question, which they were given one hour to complete. The content of the exam covered labor protection laws under the Labor Protection Act B.E. 2541 (1998). The exam question was as follows:

"On February 1, 2022, Mr. Wayu and Ms. Ratri began working as employees at Nakornburin Co., Ltd. Mr. Wayu was employed as the head of sales, earning a monthly salary of 24,000 baht, while Ms. Ratri worked as an assistant secretary, earning a daily wage of 800 baht for 25 working days per month.

Both employees signed an employment contract with the company, which included Clause 5 stating:

"If the employer requires any employee to work overtime (O.T.), on holidays (H.), or overtime on holidays (O.T.H.), the employee will not claim any compensation for such work."

In January 2024, the employer instructed both Mr. Wayu and Ms. Ratri to work overtime for 10 hours on four weekly holidays and one New Year's holiday, totaling five days, and to work two hours of overtime on each holiday (O.T.H.). The employer refused to pay compensation for this work, citing Clause 5 of the employment contract. Consequently, both Mr. Wayu and Ms. Ratri filed a case with the Labor Court.

Questions:

a) Does Clause 5 of the employment contract between Nakornburin Co., Ltd., and the employees hold legal validity? To what extent?

b) Are Mr. Wayu and Ms. Ratri entitled to compensation for overtime (O.T.), holiday work (H.), and holiday overtime (O.T.H.)? Explain."

After the students completed the exam, their answers were graded based on predefined criteria to evaluate their academic performance. The researcher conducted purposive sampling, selecting 46 students' answer sheets for analysis. The focus was on identifying deviations in their writing styles from the grading criteria set by the course instructor.

For recording observations, the researcher noted issues related to whether the exam answers adhered to the principles of legal reasoning. Once sufficient data had been collected, the researcher proceeded to analyze the information for further insights.

4. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using content analysis based on the students' written responses to the exam questions, compared with the

grading criteria established by the instructor. The analysis focused on linking the grading criteria to the written responses, presenting an evaluation framework that explains the observed phenomena as follows:

4.1 This section focuses on the identification and application of relevant statutes, including Sections 150, 4, 30, 61, 62, 63, 64, and 68. Scores are assigned as follows:

All relevant statutes are completely and correctly identified.

5 points

Most relevant statutes are correctly identified.　　4 points

Some relevant statutes are identified.　　3 points

Few relevant statutes are identified.　　2 points

Very few relevant statutes are identified.　　1 point

No statutes are identified.　　0 points

4.2 Analysis and Application of Legal Provisions to Factual Scenarios

4.2.1 Legality of the Agreement Between Employer and Employees

Comprehensive and accurate application of legal provisions and reasoning. 5 points

Mostly accurate application of legal provisions and reasoning. 4 points

Partially accurate application of legal provisions and reasoning. 3 points

Minimal application of legal provisions and reasoning. 2 points

Very limited application of legal provisions and reasoning. 1 point

No application of legal provisions or reasoning. 0 points

4.2.2 Calculation of Overtime, Holiday Work, and Holiday Overtime Pay for Mr. Wayu

Comprehensive and accurate application of legal provisions and reasoning. 5 points

Mostly accurate application of legal provisions and reasoning. 4 points

Partially accurate application of legal provisions and reasoning. 3 points

Minimal application of legal provisions and reasoning. 2 points

Very limited application of legal provisions and reasoning. 1 point

No application of legal provisions or reasoning. 0 point

4.2.3 Calculation of Overtime, Holiday Work, and Holiday Overtime Pay for Ms. Ratri

Comprehensive and accurate application of legal provisions and reasoning. 5 points

Mostly accurate application of legal provisions and reasoning. 4 points

Partially accurate application of legal provisions and reasoning. 3 points

Minimal application of legal provisions and reasoning. 2 points

Very limited application of legal provisions and reasoning. 1 point

No application of legal provisions or reasoning. 0 point

4.3 The conclusion focuses on whether the agreement is void and calculates the compensation for Mr. Wayu and Ms. Ratri (both receiving 32,500 baht).

Fully accurate and complete conclusion, addressing all points and numerical calculations. 5 points

Mostly accurate conclusion, addressing almost all points and numerical calculations. 4 points

Partially accurate conclusion, addressing some points and numerical calculations. 3 points

Minimal accuracy, addressing few points and numerical calculations. 2 points

Very limited accuracy, addressing very few points and numerical calculations. 1 point

No conclusion provided or entirely inaccurate. 0 point

The total score is interpreted as follows:

1-5 points: Requires urgent improvement

6-10 points: Needs improvement

11-15 points: Satisfactory

16-20 points: Good

21-25 points: Excellent

The problem recording form data regarding the use of legal reasoning in answering exam questions in Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures was also analyzed using content analysis. Data was categorized

into related groups and analyzed for connections between the categories. These were then structured into a conceptual framework that reflects the observed phenomena and explains their relationships.

Research Results

This research aims to study the criteria and assessment of written responses in labor law and labor court procedure examinations of third-year students. Additionally, it seeks to examine the problems in legal reasoning when answering labor law and labor court procedure exam questions among third-year students in the second semester of the academic year 2023 under the Bachelor of Laws program at Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, the research results can be summarized and discussed as follows:

1. The evaluation focused on the legal exam responses of 46 third-year students who took the Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures midterm exam, consisting of one essay-based question worth 25 points. The evaluation was conducted using the scoring criteria developed by the researcher. The analysis of total scores, categorized by performance levels, is presented in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1

Analysis of Total Exam Scores

No.	Score Range	Level	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
1	1-5	Requires Urgent Improvement	5	10.86
2	6-10	Needs Improvement	10	21.73
3	11-15	Satisfactory	8	17.39
4	16-20	Good	13	28.26
5	21-25	Excellent	10	21.73

From Table 1, which presents the total scores of 46 students' written responses, accounting for 100% of the data, the findings indicate that 13 students scored in the range of 16 to 20 points, classified as "Good," representing 28.26% of the total. The next highest proportion included two categories: students scoring between 6 to 10 points, classified as "Needs Improvement," and those scoring between 21 to 25 points, classified as "Excellent." Each of these categories included 10 students, accounting for 21.73% of the total, respectively. Following this, 8 students scored between 11 to 15 points, classified as "Satisfactory," representing 17.39% of the total. Lastly, 5 students scored in the range of 1 to 5 points, classified as "Requires Urgent Improvement," accounting for 10.36% of the total.

2. Issues in Legal Reasoning in Writing Exam Responses for the Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures Course

2.1 Legal reasoning is reflected in the process of analyzing and applying legal provisions to factual scenarios. The scores for this section, with a maximum of 15 points, are presented in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2

Score Distribution for Legal Reasoning in Analyzing and Applying Legal Provisions to Facts

No.	Issues and Sample Groups	Legal Reasoning in Analyzing and Applying Legal Provisions to Factual Scenarios			Total 15 points
		1. Void Agreement	2. Calculation for Mr. Wayu	3 Calculation for Mrs. Ratri	
1	6440501101	5	3	3	11
2	6440501103	4	4	4	12
3	6440501105	5	3	3	11

No.	Issues and Sample Groups	Legal Reasoning in Analyzing and Applying Legal Provisions to Factual Scenarios			Total 15 points
		1. Void Agreement	2. Calculation for Mr. Wayu	3 Calculation for Mrs. Ratri	
4	6440501107	5	0	0	5
5	6440501108	4	4	4	12
6	6440501110	5	2	2	9
7	6440501111	1	1	1	3
8	6440501112	2	3	3	8
9	6440501114	0	2	2	4
10	6440501118	5	3	3	11
11	6440501119	5	3	3	11
12	6440501121	5	4	4	13
13	6440501122	5	5	5	15
14	6440501136	4	1	1	6
15	6440501203	5	3	4	12
16	6440501208	0	2	2	4
17	6440501209	5	4	4	13
18	6440501211	4	1	1	6
19	6440501212	4	1	1	6
20	6440501213	5	4	4	13
21	6440501214	4	3	3	10
22	6440501231	5	5	5	15
23	6440501232	4	2	3	9
24	6440501233	5	5	5	15
25	6440501238	5	5	5	15
26	6440501301	4	3	3	10
27	6440501305	2	0	0	2

No.	Issues and Sample Groups	Legal Reasoning in Analyzing and Applying Legal Provisions to Factual Scenarios			Total 15 points
		1. Void Agreement	2. Calculation for Mr. Wayu	3 Calculation for Mrs. Ratri	
28	6440501307	0	3	3	6
29	6440501308	2	3	4	9
30	6440501309	5	2	2	9
31	6440501310	4	4	4	12
32	6440501312	3	3	3	9
33	6440501316	4	3	3	10
34	6440501317	5	5	5	15
35	6440501320	2	0	1	3
36	6440501322	1	0	0	1
37	6440501326	5	3	3	11
38	6440501328	1	2	2	5
39	6440501406	1	0	0	1
40	6440501407	0	1	1	2
41	6440501410	2	0	0	2
42	6440501411	5	5	5	15
43	6440501415	1	1	1	3
44	6440501428	5	1	1	7
45	6440501430	5	1	0	6
46	6440501435	5	4	3	12

From Table 2, the scores for legal reasoning in analyzing and applying legal provisions to factual scenarios indicate that students scoring 10 points or below out of 15 lacked efficiency in using legal reasoning. Specifically, 27 students scored between 1 to 10 points, classified as "Needs

Improvement" or "Requires Urgent Improvement," accounting for 58.70% of the total. Conversely, 19 students scored between 11 to 15 points, classified as "Satisfactory", accounting for 41.30% of the total.

2.2 The evaluation of legal reasoning in analyzing and applying legal provisions to factual scenarios revealed that 11 studentsscored 0 points in specific areas assessed in Table 2. The detailed breakdown of these results is presented in Table 3.

No.	Issues and Sample Groups	Legal Reasoning in Analyzing and Applying Legal Provisions to Factual Scenarios			Total 15 points
		1. Void Agreement	2. Calculation for Mr. Wayu	3 Calculation for Mrs. Ratri	
4	6440501107	5	0	0	5
9	6440501114	0	2	2	4
16	6440501208	0	2	2	4
27	6440501305	2	0	0	2
28	6440501307	0	3	3	6
35	6440501320	2	0	1	3
36	6440501322	1	0	0	1
39	6440501406	1	0	0	1
40	6440501407	0	1	1	2
41	6440501410	2	0	0	2
45	6440501430	5	1	0	6

The findings from Table 3 indicate that 11 students scored zero points in the section evaluating legal reasoning in analyzing and applying legal provisions to factual scenarios. This group represents 23.91% of the total 46 students. The zero scores for these students resulted in their overall

reasoning scores falling below 10 points. The analysis of their responses revealed specific recurring issues. Student 4 received zero points due to the absence of calculations for both Mr. Wayu and Ms. Ratri, along with a failure to apply legal provisions to the facts. Similarly, Student 9 failed to analyze the issue of the void agreement, which required the application of legal provisions and reasoning, resulting in a score of zero. For Student 16, although an analysis was provided, it addressed the wrong legal issue, leading to an incorrect application of legal provisions and reasoning and ultimately a score of zero. Student 27 also scored zero because they did not include calculations for either Mr. Wayu or Ms. Ratri, nor did they apply legal provisions to the given facts. In the case of Student 28, the failure to analyze the void agreement issue, a critical component of legal reasoning, resulted in a zero score. Student 35's zero score was due to the omission of calculations for Mr. Wayu's compensation, an essential part of the required legal reasoning. Students 36, 39, and 41, while incorporating legal principles, made critical errors in their calculations for both Mr. Wayu and Ms. Ratri, which invalidated their responses and resulted in zero scores. Student 40 failed to analyze the void agreement issue, which was a key aspect of applying legal provisions and reasoning, leading to a zero score. Lastly, Student 45's failure to calculate Ms. Ratri's compensation, an essential part of the analysis, resulted in a zero score. These results highlight several challenges, including errors in calculations, omissions in addressing key legal issues, and incorrect applications of legal provisions. These issues significantly affected the students' performance, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to strengthen their legal reasoning and application skills.

Discussion of Results

The research findings can be discussed according to the study's objectives as follows:

1. Evaluation of Legal Exam Responses in the Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures Course

The research findings indicate that the performance of third-year students in writing essay-based legal exam answers is evenly divided. Among the 46 students evaluated, 23 students (50%) scored in the range classified as "Good" or "Excellent," while the remaining 23 students (50%) scored in the range classified as "Satisfactory" or below, including "Needs Improvement" and "Requires Urgent Improvement."

These results demonstrate that the students were generally able to follow the structure of essay-based legal writing, which includes three main components: stating the legal principles/statutes, analyzing and applying legal provisions to factual scenarios, and providing a conclusion. This aligns with the framework proposed by Yongyos Eiamthong (2004, p. 4), who outlined the three-paragraph structure: the first paragraph for stating legal principles, the second for analyzing facts against legal principles, and the third for concluding the answer.

The students' ability to adhere to this structure is attributed to their academic experience as third-year law students, as well as prior exposure to legal writing training during their first year in the Bachelor of Laws program. Such training was part of the program's initiative to improve students' legal writing skills. This finding also aligns with Manit Jumpa (2012, pp. 103-104), who emphasized the importance of beginning with an

explanation of legal principles before applying them to factual scenarios to determine the solution to a legal problem.

However, the findings do not align with the observed issues among the 11 students who scored zero. These students demonstrated an absence of legal reasoning in their answers, which significantly impacted their performance. Specific issues included a failure to calculate, analyze legal issues, or apply legal reasoning to address the questions.

Regarding the scoring criteria used by the instructor in the Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures course, the weight distribution was as follows: 5 points for legal principles/statutes, 15 points for analysis and application of legal provisions, and 5 points for the conclusion. This aligns with prior studies, such as Satid Jumrern (2021), which examined similar scoring frameworks in other law courses. Jamroen's study found that students generally adhered to the three-part structure of legal writing—stating legal principles, analyzing, and concluding. Students also understood the weight distribution of scores, particularly the emphasis on the analysis and application section (15 points out of 25). Similarly, Yongyos Eiamthong (2004, p. 5) noted that scoring in essay-based exams often emphasizes two key areas: l egal principles and the analysis of facts using these principles. While scores are typically evenly distributed, some courses may allocate higher points to legal principles, such as assigning 10-12 points to principles and 8-10 points to analysis in a 20-point question. These findings highlight the importance of a balanced yet flexible scoring framework in evaluating students' legal writing skills.

A significant factor contributing to low scores and exam failures in the Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures course is the incorrect diagnosis

of legal issues or failure to align responses with the expected answers. Specifically, many students were unable to accurately apply legal provisions to the legal issues raised in the exam questions. This inability stems from a lack of comprehensive knowledge and understanding of fundamental legal principles or statutory provisions. Consequently, students failed to analyze the core issues of the exam questions effectively.

This outcome does not align with the essential principles of effective legal writing as outlined by Yongyos Eiamthong (2004, p. 3), who emphasized that a well-written exam response must include the following components: 1) Answers that are accurate, relevant, and comprehensive. 2) The use of appropriate legal terminology. 3) Clarity, conciseness, and avoidance of unnecessary verbosity. 4) Legible and neat handwriting. 5) Adherence to the instructions provided in the question. Therefore, success in legal exams and the achievement of high scores depend on providing answers that are accurate, comprehensive, and structured in a manner that incorporates legal reasoning and principles in every aspect. To address this issue, a suitable approach aligns with the suggestions of Manit Jumpa (2012, p. 102-103), who proposed a systematic method for answering legal exam questions. Students should follow these steps: 1) Identify the main issue in the question. 2) Determine the statutory provisions relevant to the identified issue. 3) Analyze the facts provided in the question against the relevant legal provisions to understand their implications. Students with these skills and techniques are more likely to produce high-quality legal exam answers effectively.

Additionally, some students merely copied relevant statutory provisions into their answers without analyzing the issues set out in the exam

questions. This practice is inadequate and demonstrates a lack of understanding of how to apply legal principles to the factual scenarios. Thanin Kraivichien (2003, p. 166) emphasized that students cannot expect to score well if they fail to analyze the legal issues raised in the questions. This observation aligns with the principles outlined by Thanin Kraivichien and Apichon Chantasena (2014, p. 179), who explained that the most effective way to analyze legal issues includes the following steps: 1) Clearly defining the issues presented in the question. 2) Analyzing all aspects of the issues and identifying all potential solutions. 3) Temporarily setting aside the issue to revisit and reassess the possible solutions. 4) Selecting the best possible answer from the options considered. In cases where students failed to analyze the issues and relied solely on copying legal provisions, their scores often failed to meet the criteria required for success. Without proper diagnosis of the issues and application of legal reasoning, students cannot produce answers that align with these fundamental principles. To improve their exam performance, students need to strengthen their legal knowledge, analytical skills, and understanding of how to apply legal principles effectively. Employing systematic methods for structuring answers—such as identifying the issues, applying the relevant statutes, and analyzing their implications—will result in more effective and accurate exam responses. These changes are critical for addressing the deficiencies observed in their performance and ensuring alignment with the expectations of the course.

2. Issues in Legal Reasoning in Writing Exam Responses for the Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures Course

The research findings revealed that all 11 students who scored below 10 points in their reasoning section lacked the necessary skills to

apply legal reasoning effectively in their responses to the Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures exam. The students who scored zero displayed significant deficiencies, including failure to perform calculations or incorrect calculations based on legal principles, reliance on flawed legal reasoning, and inability to address the issue of the void agreement correctly. These errors highlight that inaccurate application of legal principles during analysis leads to flawed conclusions, as the reasoning does not align with the expected solutions.

Thanin Kraivichien (2003, pp. 190-191) emphasized that reasoning is the soul of the law, quoting a Roman legal maxim: "Reason in law must be as clear as the light of the sun." Wicha MahaKhun (1980, p. 48) provided four essential criteria for sound legal reasoning: (1) clarity without ambiguity, (2) use of correct and elegant language, (3) logical consistency, and (4) alignment with common sense. Legal reasoning in this course required students to analyze disputes as though they were judges, applying appropriate statutes to specific facts and providing a reasoned conclusion. For instance, when analyzing legal issues, students were expected to justify their conclusions by identifying the relevant statutory provisions, determining whether these provisions applied to the facts, and explaining the rationale for their judgment. Thanin Kraivichien (2003, p. 194) noted that sound reasoning requires linking the dispute to specific legal provisions or explaining why a particular provision does not apply.

However, the students' responses revealed critical weaknesses. One student wrote, "a) The agreement between Mr. Wayu and Ms. Ratri and Nakornburin Co., Ltd. is unenforceable because it involves overtime work on annual holidays exceeding eight hours per person," without providing

legal reasoning to support this conclusion. Another student stated, "*Based on the facts, Mr. Wayu and Ms. Ratri entered into an employment agreement with Nakornburin Co., Ltd. However, the company did not pay compensation under the agreement, which included a clause stating they would not demand compensation for overtime or holiday work. Therefore, the agreement is unenforceable.*" This response lacked analysis of how the facts interacted with the relevant legal provisions.

A third student wrote, "*a) The agreement between Mr. Wayu and Ms. Ratri and Nakornburin Co., Ltd. is enforceable under Section 5 of the Labor Protection Act,*" without addressing the key issues in the question or demonstrating reasoning based on the statutory provisions.

These examples illustrate that the students failed to link legal provisions to the facts presented in the exam question, a critical step in achieving a complete and correct response. By failing to explain how specific legal provisions applied—or did not apply—to the case, the students missed opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and reasoning abilities. Their responses did not align with MahaKhun (1980, p. 48) guidelines for effective reasoning, which emphasize clarity, proper language use, logical consistency, and alignment with common sense.

To improve their performance, students must develop a stronger understanding of how to apply legal provisions to factual scenarios. This includes identifying the relevant legal issues, explaining the connection between the facts and the law, and providing clear and logical reasoning to support their conclusions. Mastery of these skills is essential for achieving success in legal exams and adhering to the standards of effective legal writing and reasoning.

To achieve high scores in legal exam responses, students must focus on key factors such as issue identification, organizing facts in a logical sequence, and applying these facts to the relevant legal principles. If a particular issue relates to specific legal provisions or statutes, the response should incorporate the precise language and terminology of those statutes as much as possible. This practice enhances the quality of the answer, as highlighted by Komkrit Wattanaseetian (2016, p. 70). According to Komkrit, the ability to analyze and apply legal principles is a true measure of a student's understanding, demonstrating not only their capacity to recall statutory provisions but also their ability to apply them accurately and clearly to specific scenarios.

The effectiveness of legal exam writing significantly depends on consistent practice. This aligns with the research findings of Jintana Suriyasri et al. (2013), which showed that students' performance in writing subjective exam answers improved significantly after using structured writing exercises. These exercises exceeded the set benchmarks, with post-exercise performance improving over pre-exercise levels at a significance level of 0.05. Students also reported finding this method highly beneficial. Similarly, Kamol Phothiyen (2004) emphasized that students should engage in systematic group activities to develop and enhance their subjective exam-writing skills effectively.

Writing effective legal exam answers is a crucial skill that law students must continuously develop alongside their understanding of course content. Even if a student can answer the exam questions correctly, the inability to clearly and accurately articulate their understanding within the exam's time constraints can result in lower scores. The written

response is the primary medium for students to convey their knowledge and comprehension, and its quality directly affects their performance. To excel in writing legal exam answers, students must follow structured principles. Yut Saenguthai (1987, pp. 29-36) outlined key guidelines for crafting high-quality responses: 1) Write answers assuming the examiner has no knowledge of the law. 2) Use clear and precise language, avoiding ambiguous or double-meaning words. 3) Ensure that handwriting is neat and legible, avoiding overly casual styles. 4) Write answers that are neither too brief nor excessively long. 5) Avoid beginning to write while feeling anxious or overly excited. 6) Read the entire question carefully and think critically about what is being asked before answering. 7) Do not include irrelevant information in the response. 8) Outline key points briefly before writing the full answer. 9) Start with questions that are easier to answer. 10) Be cautious of sudden ideas or thoughts that arise close to submission time. 11) Avoid including personal opinions or unrelated matters in the answer. Thanin Kraivichien (2003, p. 166) emphasized the importance of aligning legal principles with specific issues. One effective method for developing this skill is analyzing Supreme Court rulings. These rulings demonstrate how the court applies legal principles to resolve both legal and factual issues, serving as valuable examples for students.

Recommendations

From the study on the issues of legal reasoning in writing exam responses for the Labor Law and Labor Case Procedures course among third-year students during the second semester of the 2023 academic year in the Bachelor of Laws program at Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, the

following recommendations are proposed for improvement and future research:

1. Recommendation for Further Development

The Bachelor of Laws program should organize practical workshops focused on developing legal reasoning skills for writing exam responses. These workshops should also aim to improve students' overall skills in answering legal exam questions, providing opportunities for consistent practice. Such activities will help students build expertise and confidence over time.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

2.1 Develop evaluation criteria for subjective legal exam questions using a rubric-based scoring system.

2.2 Create and assess the effectiveness of subjective exam questions in other legal subjects.

2.3 Compare evaluation criteria for subjective legal exam questions designed in model scenarios with traditional essay-style questions.

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