Exploring Reinvented Curriculum Models: Bridging Humanities Education and Generation Z in Thai Higher Education

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Abstract

The landscape of Humanities education in Thailand has undergone significant changes due to evolving student expectations and global educational trends. The emergence of Generation Z, characterized by digital fluency and a preference for interactive learning, necessitates a curriculum reinvention that aligns with their learning habits and professional aspirations. Traditional Humanities curricula, often criticized for their theoretical rigidity and lack of employability-focused skills, must now integrate interdisciplinary, technology-enhanced, and competency-based approaches. This paper examines the theoretical underpinnings of Humanities education, challenges in adapting to Gen Z's needs, and innovative curriculum frameworks that bridge traditional Humanities disciplines with career-oriented skills. Through an analysis of curriculum reform initiatives, digital and hybrid learning models, industry collaborations, and modular learning structures, this study provides insights into best practices for modernizing Humanities education. The paper

also offers policy recommendations for Thai universities to enhance curriculum flexibility, faculty development, and international collaboration.

Keywords: Generation Z, Humanities Education, Thai Higher Education, Curriculum Innovation, Digital Learning

Introduction

Anticipating the evolving demands of the global economy, future professional landscapes will be shaped by rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, digital technologies, and sustainability-driven initiatives. Essential skills for the workforce will transcend technical competencies, emphasizing cognitive flexibility, analytical thinking, and adaptability. As automation and digital transformation reshape industries, proficiency in technological tools, data-driven decision-making, and creative problem-solving will be pivotal for professional success. Ghimire et al. (2024) highlight that the integration of agentic generative AI into education systems is redefining workforce development by necessitating critical thinking, adaptability, and digital proficiency. Additionally, the expansion of AI-powered digital marketing underscores the demand for analytical and strategic thinking skills in navigating complex, technology-oriented markets (Zulfikar, 2024). Furthermore, fostering entrepreneurial intent, innovativeness, and a commitment to continuous learning will be vital in preparing graduates for competitive and dynamic economies (Kavitha & Joshith, 2024). These insights underscore the need for interdisciplinary education approaches that align with future economic trends, ensuring that graduates are equipped with both specialized knowledge and adaptable,

cross-functional skills to navigate emerging professional challenges successfully.

The historical development of Humanities education in Thailand reflects the country's emphasis on cultural heritage, ethical reasoning, and analytical thinking. Traditionally, Humanities disciplines such as history, philosophy, and literature have played a vital role in fostering critical perspectives and civic responsibility. However, as Thailand's economy globalizes, the role of Humanities in higher education is being reevaluated to ensure its continued relevance in a technology-driven job market (Seemiller & Grace, 2019).

In recent decades, enrollment in Humanities programs has declined in favor of STEM and business-related disciplines. Studies suggest that Gen Z students prioritize practical, skills-based education that enhances their employability and aligns with global labor market trends (Pragholapati, 2020). Unlike previous generations, Gen Z is deeply influenced by technological advancements, social media, and personalized learning experiences (Purwantara, Ashari, & Nurhadi, 2023).

As higher education institutions in Thailand strive to balance academic integrity with modern industry expectations, it is imperative to rethink Humanities curricula to make them more adaptable, interdisciplinary, and skill-oriented (Kozová, 2024).

Purpose of the Article

The primary purpose of this article is to critically evaluate and propose strategies for reinventing Humanities curricula in Thai higher education to align with the educational and professional expectations of

Generation Z. In response to the evolving academic landscape and global educational trends, this study explores four core objectives:

1. Analyze how traditional and contemporary theoretical perspectives of humanities education align or conflict with the interactive, technology-driven learning preferences of Generation Z students, focusing specifically on digital engagement, critical thinking, and cultural awareness.

2. Identify and critically assess the key structural and pedagogical challenges, including declining enrollment, perceived lack of career applicability, and institutional resistance, encountered when adapting humanities curricula for Generation Z learners in Thai universities.

3. Examine and evaluate the effectiveness of specific reinvented curriculum frameworks—including digital and hybrid learning models, industry-oriented and experiential approaches, modular and personalized learning structures, and globally integrated curricula—in enhancing student engagement and employability for Generation Z.

4. Propose comprehensive policy recommendations and practical strategies for Thai higher education institutions to facilitate successful implementation of innovative humanities curriculum models through policy reform, competency-based education, faculty development, digital infrastructure enhancement, and international collaboration.

By examining international best practices and contextualizing them within Thailand's higher education framework, this article proposes actionable strategies to ensure that Humanities education remains an essential and dynamic component of Thai universities. The study ultimately seeks to contribute to the development of adaptable and future-oriented

Humanities curricula that resonate with Generation Z's aspirations and the broader demands of the global knowledge economy.

Theoretical Perspectives On Humanities Education And Generation Z

Humanities education has long served as a foundation for critical thinking and cultural awareness. However, in the digital age, traditional teaching methods struggle to engage Generation Z students, who prefer interactive and technology-driven learning. Thai universities must rethink their humanities curricula to align with modern student expectations and emerging career demands.

1. Humanities Education: Traditional and Contemporary Views

Humanities education has long served as a foundation for critical thinking and cultural awareness. However, in the digital age, traditional teaching methods struggle to engage Generation Z students, who prefer interactive and technology-driven learning. Thai universities must rethink their humanities curricula to align with modern student expectations and emerging career demands.

1.1 The Role of Humanities in Shaping Critical Thinking and Cultural Awareness

Historically, Humanities education has played a vital role in fostering critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and cultural literacy. Courses in philosophy, literature, history, and the arts provide students with the tools to analyze complex societal issues, make informed ethical decisions, and appreciate diverse cultural perspectives (Manganello & Rampulla, 2023). Humanities subjects promote intellectual curiosity and the ability to

construct well-reasoned arguments, qualities essential for professions in law, journalism, public policy, and education (Kolb & Kolb, 2006).

Thailand, Humanities disciplines have traditionally emphasized rote learning, memorization, and textual analysis, preparing students for academic rather than professional careers. However, globalization has increased the demand for problem-solving, intercultural competence, and communication skills, making it imperative for Thai universities to rethink their Humanities curricula (Novis-Deutsch, Cohen, & Alexander, 2024). By integrating real-world applications such as digital storytelling, historical simulations, and interdisciplinary research, Humanities education can evolve to maintain its relevance in modern society (Manganello & Rampulla, 2023).

1.2 Criticism of Traditional Teaching Methodologies in Modern Education

One of the major criticisms of traditional Humanities education is its reliance on passive learning strategies, including rote memorization, didactic lectures, and standardized assessments. These methods fail to engage Generation Z learners, who thrive on interactive, collaborative, and technology-enhanced learning (Høgetveit, 2024). Many Humanities courses do not emphasize practical skills or direct career pathways, leading students to perceive these fields as less employable compared to STEM and business disciplines (Camarda & Mercier, 2023).

Another limitation of traditional Humanities education is the lack of interdisciplinary integration. Humanities subjects are often taught in isolation, without meaningful connections to science, technology, or business. In contrast, contemporary educational models advocate for

blended learning, interdisciplinary coursework, and experiential projects to enhance student engagement and increase employability (Nikitchenko, Davydova, & Krylova, 2024). To modernize Humanities education, universities must adopt more flexible, skills-based approaches that emphasize collaborative problem-solving, project-based learning, and digital literacy (Ramírez-Montoya & García-Peñalvo, 2022).

To modernize Humanities education, universities must adopt more flexible, skills-based approaches that emphasize collaborative problem-solving, project-based learning, and digital literacy (Becker, Rai, & Rigdon, 2017).

2. Generation Z's Learning Characteristics

Generation Z students are digital natives who favor experiential and skills-based learning. Unlike previous generations, they engage more with multimedia content, gamification, and collaborative projects. Thai universities must adopt interactive learning strategies, such as virtual reality, digital archives, and project-based assessments, to maintain student interest.

2.1 Digital Nativity and Preference for Interactive, Technology-Driven Learning

Generation Z students—those born between 1997 and 2012—have grown up in a world dominated by technology, social media, and instant access to information. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z learners prefer visual and interactive content over traditional text-based instruction (Tan, Voogt, & Tan, 2024). Their exposure to digital platforms, gamified learning, and collaborative online environments has significantly influenced their learning preferences (Wang, Chen, Yu, Liu, & Jing, 2024).

Thai universities must integrate digital tools such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and gamification to enhance Humanities education. Studies suggest that students retain information better when engaged in interactive and participatory learning experiences (Camarda & Mercier, 2023). The use of educational technology in Humanities subjects—such as digital archives, online discussions, and multimedia storytelling—can significantly improve student engagement and knowledge retention (Hodžić, 2024).

2.2 The Shift from Rote Memorization to Skills-Based Learning

Unlike previous generations, Generation Z values experiential, hands-on learning over passive instruction. They prefer practical applications of knowledge rather than abstract theoretical discussions (Kandemir, Ulusoy, & Kandemir, 2024). Traditional assessment methods such as memorization-heavy exams and essay writing are increasingly seen as ineffective for measuring real-world competencies (Baños, Blanco-Reina, & Bellido-Estévez, 2024).

Instead, Gen Z students benefit from skills-based learning models that include:

1) Project-based assessments (e.g., multimedia projects, digital storytelling)

2) Experiential learning opportunities (e.g., internships, service learning)

3) Competency-based evaluation methods (e.g., portfolio assessments, real-world problem-solving tasks) (Khurma & El Zein, 2024).

By shifting from content-heavy courses to skills-driven models, Thai universities can ensure that Humanities graduates possess the practical skills

needed for modern careers in media, public relations, policy analysis, and cultural entrepreneurship (Skenderi & Skenderi, 2023).

3. Educational Theories Relevant to Curriculum Innovation

Educational theories like constructivism and student-centered learning advocate for active knowledge construction. Modern humanities education should embrace interdisciplinary learning, flipped classrooms, and case-based approaches to make lessons more applicable to contemporary challenges. Integrating STEM, business, and media studies can enhance the employability of humanities graduates.

3.1 Constructivist and Student-Centered Learning Models

The constructivist learning theory suggests that students learn best when actively engaged in constructing their own knowledge through real-world applications and collaborative learning experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2006). This theory aligns with Gen Z's preference for interactive and participatory learning.

Key features of constructivist and student-centered learning include:

1) Collaborative group projects that encourage peer-to-peer learning

2) Flipped classrooms where students engage with content before class and apply it in discussions

3) Case-based learning where students analyze real-world problems and develop practical solutions (Bakar, 2021).

3.2 Interdisciplinary and Experiential Learning Approaches

To make Humanities education more applicable to contemporary challenges, universities are blending disciplines such as

Humanities, STEM, and business studies. Interdisciplinary learning ensures that students develop cross-functional skills necessary for modern careers (Cruz, 2020).

Some examples of experiential learning models are:

1) Study-abroad programs to expose students to global cultural perspectives

2) Internships in media, policy, and business sectors to provide hands-on experience

3) Community-based research projects that address real-world issues (Pozuelos-Estrada & Rodríguez-Miranda, 2024).

These models ensure that Humanities graduates possess the skills necessary for the evolving job market.

Humanities education in Thailand must evolve to meet Generation Z's learning needs. By integrating constructivist, interdisciplinary, and experiential learning approaches, universities can enhance student engagement and increase career readiness (Dara & Kesavan, 2024). The next section will explore specific challenges and opportunities in modernizing Humanities curricula for Thai universities.

The evolving landscape of Humanities education requires rethinking traditional teaching approaches to align with Generation Z's learning preferences. Embracing technology-driven, interactive, and interdisciplinary strategies will enhance relevance, foster critical thinking, and prepare students for modern careers while preserving the core values of the Humanities.

Challenges In Adapting Humanities Education for Generation Z

A key challenge in humanities education is declining enrollment, as students prioritize STEM and business fields. Many perceive humanities degrees as lacking clear career pathways. Thai universities must address this by introducing industry collaborations, digital humanities courses, and entrepreneurial humanities programs to showcase practical applications of these disciplines.

1. Declining Enrollment and Interest in Humanities

1.1 Statistical Trends in Thai Universities

The Humanities disciplines in Thai universities have witnessed a steady decline in enrollment rates over the past decade. Reports indicate that students increasingly favor STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and business-related programs, which are perceived to provide better employment opportunities (Espinoza-Rodríguez, 2021).

According to data from the Office of the Higher Education Commission of Thailand, Humanities programs have seen a 20% decline in enrollment over the past five years, while STEM and business fields have experienced a growth rate of over 30% (Brehm, 2022). Similar trends are observed globally, with students opting for degrees that align with emerging job markets such as technology, finance, and healthcare (Kitamura & Brehm, 2020).

1.2 Perceived Lack of Career Applicability

One of the primary reasons for the declining interest in Humanities education is the perception that these degrees lack direct career applicability (Winichakul, 2018). Many students view Humanities disciplines

as theoretical and research-based, with fewer clear-cut job prospects compared to STEM and business fields. Employers often prioritize technical skills, industry certifications, and applied knowledge, making Humanities graduates feel less competitive in the job market (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994).

Integrating STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) into humanities education is pivotal for equipping Generation Z with interdisciplinary skills essential for the complexities of modern careers (Oeurn, Tharith, Seingheng, & Leang, 2023). Studies demonstrate that blending applied mathematics with visual arts enhances innovative problem-solving (Karsan, Hasan, & Jeyakumar, 2024), while problem-based learning environments foster analytical reasoning and applied knowledge (He & Wei, 2021). Such integration ensures students develop both technical and cognitive competencies, facilitating active contributions to real-world challenges (Ullah, Shoaib, Ali, & Ullah, 2022). Moreover, STEM-focused curricula enhance adaptability, collaboration, and global awareness, bridging the gap between technology and human-centered problem-solving (Wu & Gordon, 2022). This approach not only cultivates transferable skills but also promotes ethical reasoning and cultural sensitivity, preparing Generation Z for future roles that require navigating technological and societal complexities (Chun, Yau, Leung, & Tang, 2023).

To counteract these perceptions, Thai universities must integrate practical skill-building courses into Humanities programs, such as:

1) Digital Humanities: Teaching students how to apply data analytics, digital archiving, and AI-driven research to traditional Humanities fields (Fry, 2018).

2) Industry Collaboration: Creating partnerships with media companies, think tanks, and cultural organizations to offer internships and hands-on learning experiences (Cheok, Edirisinghe, & Shrestha, 2024).

3) Entrepreneurial Humanities: Introducing courses on cultural entrepreneurship, social innovation, and policy advocacy to showcase real-world applications of Humanities studies (Buasuwan, 2018).

2. Structural and Pedagogical Limitations

Rigid course structures and outdated assessments hinder the modernization of humanities curricula. Traditional reliance on essays and memorization-based exams does not align with Gen Z's preference for hands-on learning. Competency-based education, hybrid learning models, and digital assessments can make humanities education more engaging and skill-focused.

2.1 Outdated Course Content and Rigid Structures

Many Humanities curricula in Thailand remain rooted in traditional academic structures, emphasizing memorization, textual analysis, and classical literature without modern interdisciplinary applications (Anyadiegwu & Osegbo, 2024). As global education systems evolve, Thai universities must embrace modular and interdisciplinary course designs that integrate Humanities with emerging disciplines like digital media, environmental studies, and behavioral science (Wahyugi, 2025).

2.2 Traditional Assessment Methods vs. Competency-Based Evaluation

Traditional assessment methods in humanities education, such as written exams, essays, and long-form research papers, have long been central to evaluating student performance. However, with Generation Z's preference for interactive, hands-on, and practical learning experiences,

it is essential to transition toward more dynamic assessment models that focus on competencies rather than rote memorization (Ashby & Exter, 2019). Competency-based evaluations emphasize the application of knowledge and skills in real-world scenarios, encouraging deeper engagement and critical thinking (Makda, 2025).

To effectively assess competencies, Thai universities should implement diverse and innovative evaluation methods. Firstly, formative assessments should be employed to provide continuous feedback throughout the learning process. These may include case studies, peer evaluations, and interactive quizzes, which help identify learning gaps and support students in achieving competency benchmarks (Laskar, 2024). Formative assessments encourage self-reflection, adaptability, and consistent skill development, aligning closely with modern educational demands. Secondly, authentic assessments should be introduced to ensure real-world applicability. These involve tasks that mirror professional challenges, such as policy simulations, multimedia presentations, and portfolio projects. Authentic assessments are instrumental in fostering problem-solving skills and practical knowledge application, preparing students for complex, interdisciplinary challenges (Yadav, 2024).

Moreover, adopting hybrid learning models and leveraging digital tools can further enhance competency-based evaluations. The incorporation of AI-powered grading systems, gamified coursework, and online simulations can create interactive and engaging assessment environments (Makhachashvili & Semenist, 2022). This approach not only caters to Generation Z's digital proficiency but also supports personalized learning trajectories, allowing students to progress at their own pace and

according to their unique learning styles. Through these multifaceted evaluation strategies, Thai universities can develop more adaptable, future-ready graduates equipped with critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills relevant to the modern labor market.

3. Resistance to Change in Academic Institutions

Resistance to change is another major obstacle. Many faculty members are reluctant to adopt new teaching methods due to concerns over academic integrity and lack of digital training. Institutional policies should support professional development, flexible accreditation, and funding for innovative teaching tools to modernize humanities education effectively.

3.1 Institutional Inertia and Faculty Adaptation Issues

One of the biggest barriers to Humanities curriculum reform is institutional inertia—the reluctance of universities to change long-standing academic traditions (Armstrong & Dyer, 2016). Faculty members who have taught using conventional methods for decades may resist new pedagogical strategies, fearing that digitized, interdisciplinary coursework could undermine the core values of Humanities education (Shen, Yang, & Zhou, 2023).

Common faculty concerns include:

1) Loss of Subject Integrity: The belief that incorporating STEM, business, or media studies into Humanities education dilutes the intellectual rigor of traditional subjects (Mitchell, Parlamis, & Claiborne, 2015).

2) Lack of Training: Many professors are not trained in using digital platforms, interactive teaching tools, or competency-based assessment methods (Graham, Danaa, Purevsuren, & Martínez, 2023).

3) Resource Constraints: Universities often lack the funding to implement new technologies, hire interdisciplinary faculty, or support innovative research initiatives (Ralston, 2021).

3.2 Policy and Accreditation Challenges in Thai Higher Education

Thai universities operate under strict national accreditation frameworks, which often reinforce rigid academic structures and standardized course requirements. Many Humanities faculties struggle to introduce new courses, interdisciplinary programs, or competency-based assessments due to bureaucratic obstacles (Gaebel, Zhang, Stoeber, & Morrisroe, 2021).

Reforming Humanities education in Thailand requires systemic changes at the policy level, including:

1) Flexible Accreditation Models: Allowing universities to experiment with interdisciplinary degrees, digital coursework, and modular learning systems without jeopardizing accreditation (Liu, Zha, & He, 2019).

2) Government Support for Faculty Training: Providing funding for professional development programs that help educators transition to digital and hybrid teaching models (Dumont, Ni, Van Wart, Beck, & Pei, 2021).

3) Industry Collaboration Incentives: Encouraging universities to partner with businesses, cultural organizations, and media companies to create job-relevant Humanities curricula (Mercader, 2020).

The challenges facing Humanities education in Thailand reflect global trends in higher education reform. Declining enrollment, outdated curricula, and faculty resistance highlight the need for systemic change in how Humanities programs are designed and delivered. Universities must modernize their courses, integrate interdisciplinary learning, and embrace

digital tools to align Humanities education with the expectations of Generation Z. The next section will explore reinvented curriculum models and their potential impact on Thai higher education.

Reinvented Curriculum Models: Frameworks And Applications

To adapt to Gen Z's needs, universities must implement hybrid learning models that combine online and in-person instruction. Industry-oriented humanities programs, digital literacy courses, and modular learning structures will enhance student engagement and career readiness. Emphasizing global perspectives and ASEAN studies can further enrich humanities education in Thailand.

1. Digital and Hybrid Learning Models

The integration of digital learning into humanities education has become a crucial strategy in modernizing curricula to align with Generation Z's digital nativity. Hybrid learning models, which blend traditional in-person instruction with online education, have gained significant traction in higher education. These models leverage digital tools, learning management systems (LMS), artificial intelligence (AI)-driven learning platforms, and gamification to enhance student engagement and outcomes (Namboothiri, Varghese, Jacob, Job, & Cyriac, 2025).
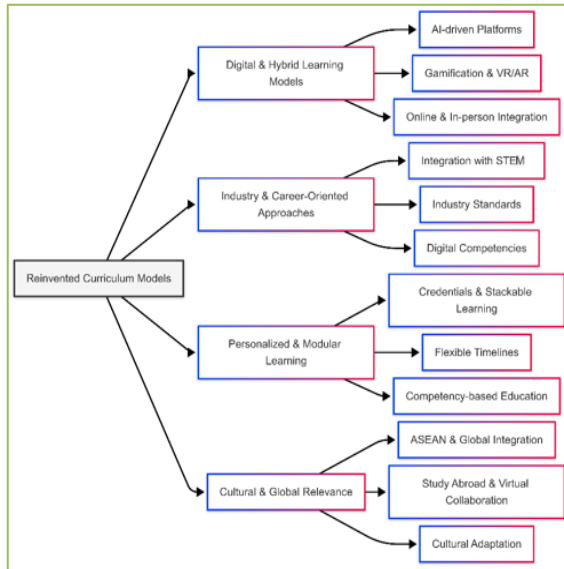
Figure 1 Reinvented Curriculum Models: Frameworks and Applications.

Hybrid learning has demonstrated various advantages, such as increased flexibility, accessibility, and personalized learning. According to a study by Alsowat (2022), hybrid learning fosters an interactive and student-centered learning experience, making it particularly effective for engaging digital-native students (Alsowat, 2022). Research comparing hybrid and virtual learning models found that hybrid learning significantly improved students' essay writing and digital literacy skills, emphasizing its effectiveness in humanities education.

Moreover, studies have highlighted the role of hybrid learning in digital humanities education. Liu (2024) analyzed hybrid digital humanities courses and found that a mixed classroom-digital experience fosters deeper engagement in critical analysis and interpretive skills. Additionally, the

integration of AI and big data analytics into hybrid learning enhances personalized feedback mechanisms, improving student learning outcomes (Karapakdee, Wannapiroon, & Nilsook, 2024).

While hybrid learning models offer multiple advantages, challenges remain in their implementation. Studies have identified issues such as digital equity concerns, faculty training, and technological infrastructure limitations. Nonetheless, with continuous advancements in digital education, hybrid models present a viable pathway for reinventing humanities curricula.

2. Industry and Career-Oriented Approaches

Blending humanities education with STEM, entrepreneurship, and media studies has emerged as a strategy to increase its career applicability. Traditionally, humanities disciplines have faced criticism for their perceived lack of direct career pathways, contributing to declining enrollments. To address this, interdisciplinary curriculum models have been developed to integrate humanities education with practical, career-focused skills (Benavot, Care, Lee, Takahashi, & Gong, 2021).

A promising model is the integration of humanities with digital innovation and entrepreneurship. Studies have shown that incorporating digital competencies, such as coding, data analytics, and design thinking, into humanities curricula enhances employability (Al-Abdulaziz & Al Darwesh, 2023). Similarly, humanities courses infused with media and communication studies foster skills in digital storytelling, social media strategy, and public relations, making graduates more competitive in modern job markets (Salmi, Hienonen, Nyman, & Kaasinen, 2023).

Another approach is embedding experiential learning opportunities through industry collaborations, internships, and project-based learning. Research indicates that real-world applications of humanities concepts, such as museum curation projects, digital archiving, and social entrepreneurship initiatives, significantly improve student engagement and practical skill acquisition (DeWinter & Rumbley, 1965). Thus, humanities programs that embrace career-oriented frameworks provide students with both intellectual depth and market-ready competencies.

3. Personalized and Modular Learning Structures

The shift towards modular and flexible curricula has gained momentum in response to the diverse learning preferences of Generation Z. Micro-credentialing, elective clusters, and competency-based education allow students to tailor their learning paths according to their interests and career aspirations. This personalized approach enhances student motivation and engagement while aligning education with industry demands (Brint, Proctor, Murphy, Turk-Bicakci, & Hanneman, 2010).

Micro-credentialing, in particular, enables students to acquire specific skill sets in areas such as digital humanities, linguistic analysis, or cultural heritage management. By earning stackable credentials, students can demonstrate expertise in specialized fields without committing to long-term degree programs (Channon, 2018). Likewise, elective clusters allow students to explore interdisciplinary themes, such as "Technology and Society" or "Ethics in Artificial Intelligence", fostering critical thinking across domains (Gundemeda, 2014).

Additionally, competency-based education models prioritize skill mastery over traditional grading structures. These models provide students

with flexible learning timelines, enabling them to progress based on their proficiency rather than a fixed schedule. Research suggests that such approaches enhance student retention and overall academic performance, particularly in humanities disciplines that require iterative learning and critical analysis (Mestenhauser, 1976).

4. Cultural and Global Relevance in Humanities Education

As globalization reshapes education, incorporating ASEAN and global perspectives into humanities curricula is essential. A curriculum enriched with comparative cultural studies, multilingualism, and international collaborations provides students with a broader worldview and intercultural competence (Yuen, Yau, Lui, & Tam, 2019).

In Thailand, humanities education can benefit from regional integration through ASEAN-focused courses that explore Southeast Asian literature, philosophy, and history. Studies highlight that students exposed to cross-cultural dialogues and global perspectives develop enhanced analytical skills and adaptability in international job markets (Lai, Wang, & Huang, 2023).

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Furthermore, digital collaborations with international universities enable students to engage in virtual exchange programs and collaborative research projects. Such initiatives provide experiential learning opportunities

and prepare students for careers in global institutions, NGOs, and multinational corporations (Li, 2024).

By embracing digital, career-oriented, personalized, and globally relevant curriculum models, Thai higher education can enhance the relevance and impact of humanities education in the 21st century.

The development of reinvented curriculum models is essential to ensuring the adaptability and relevance of Humanities education in the 21st century. By integrating hybrid learning models, interdisciplinary studies, and experiential learning opportunities, Thai universities can create more flexible, engaging, and career-oriented programs. Emphasizing global perspectives, digital literacy, and modular course designs will further enhance student motivation and employability. These frameworks encourage innovative thinking and real-world problem-solving, preparing graduates for diverse professional landscapes. Moving forward, continued refinement and application of these models will contribute to the long-term sustainability and global competitiveness of Humanities education.

Implications And Recommendations for Thai Higher Education

Thai higher education must reform policies to promote interdisciplinary curricula, competency-based assessments, and faculty development. Increased funding for digital infrastructure and research will support curriculum innovations. By modernizing teaching strategies and embracing global collaborations, Thai universities can ensure that humanities education remains relevant in the 21st century.

1. Policy and Institutional Recommendations

The transformation of Humanities education in Thai higher education necessitates a policy framework that aligns with contemporary educational needs. Thailand's education reform efforts under the "Thailand 4.0" initiative aim to create a knowledge-based economy, but significant gaps remain in curriculum modernization and policy implementation (Napathorn, 2022). Policymakers and educational institutions must consider flexible, interdisciplinary curricula that integrate digital learning, career-oriented approaches, and student-centered pedagogy.

One critical area of reform is the decentralization of curriculum design to allow universities to tailor programs based on student demand and labor market trends. The rigid structure of Thai higher education, characterized by top-down policy directives, often stifles innovation. Effective policy implementation should involve collaboration between government agencies, universities, industry stakeholders, and student representatives to ensure curricula remain relevant (Rohana & Shaikh Mohd Khalid, 2023).

Additionally, policies should prioritize competency-based education models, which emphasize skills acquisition rather than rote memorization. The Thai government's competency-based education reforms aim to enhance workforce readiness but have faced challenges due to a lack of clear guidelines for implementation (Chairungruang & Piriyasurawong, 2023). To address this, institutions should integrate competency assessments, industry partnerships, and micro-credentialing systems to validate student learning outcomes.

Moreover, funding mechanisms should be restructured to provide financial incentives for universities that adopt innovative curriculum models. Current financial constraints and reliance on international students have limited the ability of Thai higher education institutions to compete globally (Rukspollmuang & Fry, 2022). Increased investment in digital infrastructure, faculty training, and research initiatives would enable universities to implement and sustain curriculum innovations effectively.

2. Faculty Development and Teaching Innovation

The successful implementation of curriculum reforms in Humanities education depends on faculty readiness and pedagogical adaptability. Many Thai educators still rely on traditional lecture-based methods, which are increasingly misaligned with Generation Z's preference for interactive and technology-enhanced learning environments (Kohnke & Ulla, 2024). To foster pedagogical innovation, universities should invest in comprehensive faculty development programs focusing on digital teaching strategies, competency-based assessment, and student-centered learning.

Training educators in hybrid and online teaching methods is essential, particularly as digital learning becomes a central component of modern curricula. A study by Ahmad et al. (2023) found that hybrid learning models incorporating AI-driven assessments and gamification significantly improved student engagement and retention rates. Faculty members should be trained to integrate such technologies effectively, ensuring they complement rather than replace traditional pedagogical approaches.

Moreover, faculty incentive structures should be revised to encourage continuous learning and research in innovative teaching practices. Current promotion and tenure systems in Thai universities often prioritize

research output over teaching excellence, discouraging faculty members from investing time in curriculum development (Becker, Brown, Dahlstrom, & Davis, 2018). Implementing a balanced evaluation system that recognizes teaching innovation, student mentorship, and interdisciplinary collaboration would create a more dynamic and responsive educational environment.

Additionally, faculty exchange programs with international universities can provide exposure to global best practices in curriculum design. Thailand's push toward internationalization in higher education presents an opportunity to integrate global perspectives into Humanities education while improving faculty expertise (Benassaya, 2019). Collaborative research projects, virtual co-teaching initiatives, and joint curriculum development efforts could enhance the quality and relevance of Thai higher education.

3. Future Directions for Humanities Education

The future of Humanities education in Thailand lies in its ability to adapt to changing societal and technological landscapes. Traditional humanities disciplines must evolve to incorporate interdisciplinary frameworks, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical applications (Toro-Troconis, Reedy, Voce, & Bates, 2022). For instance, digital humanities, which integrate computational tools with traditional humanities research, offer new avenues for student engagement and employability.

Emerging fields such as environmental humanities, ethics in artificial intelligence, and digital storytelling provide opportunities for Humanities programs to remain relevant in a rapidly evolving job market (Thoyib, Ngoh, & Badrudin, 2024). By offering interdisciplinary courses that combine humanities with technology, business, and policy studies,

universities can prepare students for diverse career paths in media, education, international relations, and social advocacy.

Moreover, research in Humanities education should be expanded to assess the long-term impact of curriculum innovations. The introduction of learning analytics and AI-driven education platforms allows for data-driven insights into student performance and curriculum effectiveness (Soulé & Kakoulli Constantinou, 2024). Universities should establish research centers dedicated to studying the intersection of technology, pedagogy, and humanities education.

Another critical future direction is enhancing global engagement through ASEAN and international collaborations. As Thailand seeks to position itself as a regional education hub, incorporating ASEAN cultural studies and global perspectives into Humanities curricula would provide students with a broader understanding of regional and international issues (Miryala, 2024). Study-abroad programs, virtual exchange courses, and international research partnerships could further strengthen Thai Humanities education.

Modernizing Humanities education in Thailand requires strategic policy reforms, institutional innovation, and faculty development. Emphasizing flexible, interdisciplinary curricula and competency-based assessments will align education with labor market needs. Strengthening digital infrastructure, fostering international collaborations, and enhancing faculty training will ensure curricula remain adaptable and relevant, positioning Thailand as a leader in innovative higher education.

Conclusion

This article has explored the evolving landscape of Humanities education in Thailand, highlighting the necessity for curriculum reinvention to align with the learning preferences of Generation Z. The discussion has underscored key challenges, including declining enrollment, outdated pedagogical methods, and institutional resistance to change. However, innovative curriculum models—such as digital and hybrid learning, career-oriented humanities, modular and personalized learning, and globally integrated curricula—present viable solutions for enhancing student engagement and academic relevance.

Policy reforms must emphasize competency-based education, interdisciplinary curriculum design, and financial restructuring to support innovation. Faculty development is crucial for sustaining pedagogical advancements, requiring comprehensive training in digital teaching, competency assessments, and active learning strategies. Future directions for Humanities education should prioritize research-driven curriculum evolution, global partnerships, and interdisciplinary course offerings that prepare students for dynamic career opportunities.

By implementing these strategies, Thai higher education institutions can foster a more adaptable and future-ready Humanities education system that meets the demands of the 21st-century knowledge economy.

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