

Chapter 5

The Changing Curricula of LIS Education in Southeast Asia

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ABSTRACT

LIS education in Southeast Asia is undergoing exciting changes. A newfound interest by LIS educators, in enhancing and modernizing the curricula, is occurring. Several factors are driving this. One is technology. Automated library management systems, online databases, websites, mobile applications, and more are all forcing LIS curricula to modernize. Another force is internationalization. As libraries in some SEA countries adapt to new, international standards and trends, libraries in neighboring SEA countries must either adapt as well or become incompatible. And still another force is new generations of library professionals. New LIS faculty in SEA countries, with exposure to training abroad, are bringing changes and ideas to reflect the new needs and opportunities of library environments. This chapter will reflect the author's own research, as well as library literature, in discussing the background, current status, and future outlook of LIS education in Southeast Asia.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, LIS education in Southeast Asia (SEA) has been experiencing exciting change. In previous decades, change was sometimes slow. This was due to various factors. For example, in countries like Cambodia and Laos, due to lack of a library environment. In countries like Vietnam, due to traditions from previous influences (Russian). In countries like Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines, due to an acceptance, by some, of the status-quo. However, in recent years, a newfound

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interest in changing and modernizing LIS curricula has occurred. One driving force is technology. Automated library management systems, online databases, websites, mobile applications, and more, are all forcing LIS curricula to modernize. Another force is internationalization. As libraries in some SEA countries adapt to new, international standards and trends, libraries in neighboring SEA countries must either adapt as well, or become incompatible. Increased international exposure within SEA (e.g., library delegation visits, library conferences, etc.) is also fostering change. And still another force is new generations of library professionals. New LIS faculty in SEA countries, with exposure to training abroad, are bringing changes and ideas to reflect the new needs and opportunities of library environments. This chapter is based on personal research by the author—of libraries and LIS education in SEA over the past 15 years—involving library visits and interviews with LIS professionals. It also draws from existing literature on SEA LIS. Various SEA countries will be discussed, noting the (1) library environment (for context), (2) LIS background and current status, and (3) future outlook of LIS.

BRUNEI

Library Environment

Brunei's library development is relatively new, within the past several decades. It currently has no national library, but the *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka* (DBP)—the government's Language and Literature Bureau Library—serves as the *de facto* national library <http://www.dbplibrary.gov.bn> (Ibrahim, 2015). In terms of public libraries, the DBP also serves as the country's central municipal library—with typical services of lending, children's collection, computers and internet access, etc.—and oversees 11 branches around the country (all listed and described here: http://www.dbplibrary.gov.bn/Themed/perp_seluruh_daerah.html). Brunei's public libraries, overall, are very well developed, with new buildings and modern technology—online catalogs, databases, RFID, etc. (Kassim, & Begawan, 2013). Regarding school libraries, all schools in Brunei have libraries. Brunei reported 154 school libraries in 2015, each overseen by a librarian or teacher-librarian (Ibrahim, 2015)—though not necessarily with LIS training, discussed below. Some reports have indicated the libraries are inadequate with not enough reading material (Sunny, 2012), but efforts by the Ministry of Education and DBP to assist school libraries—with technology and DBP mobile library visits—have been occurring since 2011 (Jalil, 2015). In terms of academic libraries, all of Brunei's higher education institutions have libraries. Given Brunei's strong economy and the government's support of education, these libraries are better funded (for infrastructure, technology, etc.) than some other SEA

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