

## Assessment of the teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in higher educational institutions in Lao PDR

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**Abstract:** *This research used the qualitative method and the SWOT analysis. The study has found that strengths, infrastructures have been developed and improved in good and sufficient; teachers are active and highly responsible. Weaknesses, the curriculum of Marxist philosophy is not real appropriate, lacking qualified teacher in Marxism; materials and ITCs are not sufficient; and scholarships, skills of teachers are limited. Opportunities, the government has paid attention, proved strategic framework and priorities; and international cooperation is available. Threats, the impact of socioeconomic competition and change in the globalisation. The teaching and learning should be solved by both the government and the HEIs by themselves to improve in the new curriculum, and method of teaching and learning, research and community service, quality, assurance, resources, facilities, and governance and management for the better teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy and needs of the political task and socioeconomic development in the future.*

**Keywords** - Assessment, Higher educational institutions, Marxist philosophy, Teaching and learning, Lao PDR.

**Research Area:** Education

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the fundamental changes and social transition, it was absolute that sustainable development and cohesion of society depend on the educational achievements of all citizens and on their capacities to understand largely as including knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values (Zgaga 2005). Therefore, the fundamental aim of education is individual sustainability and societal improvement and development, the procedure contains both tangible and intangible or moral dimensions (Türkkahraman 2012), for Higher education institutions, there are five main functions of higher education that society expects to be fulfilled the first is providing education and training with a structure that combines teaching and research; the second is to provide professional training; the third is to be research institutions and responsible for carrying research's output in a broad range of disciplines that including the increasing amount of interdisciplinary work and link it to train a constant supply of qualified people for all employment's fields; the fourth is a part of playing in contacts of regional and international developments; and the fifth is a societal function in fostering the intellectual and social development of the society (Seidel 1991), and in the UNESCO World Conference on higher education has urged investments in higher education to help build different knowledge in societies and to advance research, innovation and creation, the conference has affirmed the role of higher education in lifelong learning with statements that the pieces of training offered by higher educational institutions should respond and anticipate to societal needs, which including research promotion for the development and use of new technologies and to ensure

that the provision of technical and vocational pieces of training, entrepreneurship education and programs for lifelong learning (Yang, Schneller, and Roche 2015). Higher educational institutions carry a deeply, moral responsibility to increase knowledge, skills, awareness, and values that needed to form a suitable and sustainable future, they play role to prepare the most of professionals for development, leadership, management, teaching, employment and influence of societal institutions, and they have freedom of unique academic and critical mass and variety of skills to develop new ideas, to comment on the society and its challenges, and engagement of experimentations in the sustainable living (Cortese 2003). Also, higher education represents a critical factor in innovation and human resource development, and it plays a central role in the success and sustainability of the knowledge economy. Thus, it has become increasingly important on national agendas and has undergone changes and reforms deeply in worldwide over past decades. Moreover, today, higher education is characterised by large expansion and participation; the emergence of new players, more diverse profiles of the HEIs, programs and their students, broader adoption and more integrated use of communications and technologies, greater internationalisation, competition and signaling mechanisms, growth pressures on costs and new forms, modes and roles of governance, which includes increasing emphasis on performance, quality and accountability (Tremblay, Lalancette, and Roseveare 2012). As in today's world, higher education's role is changing due to the world itself is changing, there also will be consequences for how we approach scholarship, teaching, and learning, and how occupations of our faculty revealed, the responsibilities and roles of staffs, our institutions' structure, and how our mission will be supported. There also will be changes in our interactions with both internal and external communities that make up the world, which the future open up to us is both challenging and exciting (Ramaley 2014). However, it sometimes has been going through a deep crisis, on one hand, higher educational institutions; especially universities are forced to justify their intellectual mission as centers of education and research, and on other hands, higher educational institutions find themselves caught up in a worldwide crisis that affecting to all areas of society, especially to socioeconomic conditions (Portella 1991). Therefore, in higher education, the continuing or tertiary education plays the important role as a necessary and increasingly in human society and socioeconomic development. The UN has viewed that higher education as integral to all developmental aspects such as environmental awareness, poverty reduction, post-conflict solution, sustainability, and values cultivation such as human rights, health care issues, and cultural conservation or change. In the most of developing world, in general, the education has seen as playing a necessary role in national socio-economic development and cultivation and the necessary civic values for social and political participation (Thomson 2008). In all countries, higher education is heavily dependent on the governmental budgeting in an age of widespread fiscal limitations, even industrial, as well as developing countries, are struggling with challenges of preservation or improvement on the quality of higher education as educational funds and expenditures per students are compressed (The World Bank 1994). Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is a landlocked and least developed country, Lao PDR is considered by the international community to be one of the poorest countries in the world, its population is about 6,5 million (in 2015), the majority of population, more than 70% living in rural and remote areas with very limited access to basic infrastructure and services. Since 1986, the government has implemented a comprehensive economic reform programme called the "New Economic Mechanism" (NEM), it was to shift from centrally planned economy to the market-oriented economy, and the national development priorities of the government are to lift Lao PDR from the ranks of least developed countries by the year 2020 (Siharath 2004, 2). Over 30 years of the new change (1986), the Lao national education system has been improving and

developing in both quality and quantity but it is a mixed system of colonialism and feudalism, and revolutionary and new educational system which has derived from the educational development of many countries in the world (MOE 2005). The higher educational institution in Lao PDR means post-high school education, it is vocational education, it is counted from associated or vocational education to Ph.D. education, which its duty to provide scholars, scientists, researchers for social service and enable to run jobs by themselves (Educational law 2007). The Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) has its origin from the Indochinese Communist Party founded by Ho Chi Min in 1930, and then the LPRP was formed on March 22, 1955, by Kaysone Phomviharn. The LPRP holds Marxism-Leninism is the basic notion, direction, performance and implementation (The LPRP 2011). The LPRP and Lao people's multi-ethnic carried out the very arduous and difficult struggle of the great sacrifices until they broke the yokes of domination and oppression of the colonials and feudal regimes, and established the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) on 2 Dec 1975, then they have together implemented the two strategic obligations of the national defense and building, especially for undertaking of reforms and preservation the Lao People's Democratic Regime and conditional creations to move forwards socialism in the future (Lao constitution 2003). Since new change (1986), Lao national education system have been improving and developing both in quantity and quality but it is mixed systems between colonialism and feudalism, and revolutionary and new educational system which has derived from educational development of many countries in the world, which Lao education is not properly responded in both quantity and quality, educational development is not really unable to follow to national education strategy and it is not really responded to present's socioeconomic development; while teachers' role enhancing and policy implementations are not properly unity. Thus, it is the time of us to improve, resolve and reform Lao national education system (MOE 2005), to enhance political notion affair and concentrate to improve theory and practice affairs, we continue to stand for Marxism-Leninism, proletariats and socialism, and Marxism-Leninism's application and innovation; and we have to hurry up to improve curriculums, course syllabus, textbooks of the political subject in each educational level and political subject is a compulsory subject in each course in Lao national education system, particularly in higher educational institutions (Vongsa 2008). Hence, Marxist philosophy is a part of Marxism-Leninism and it is a part of the political subject in Lao national education system. However, according to the difference of condition, situation, and the reality of institutions, colleges, and universities, there is the difference of characteristics, models and challenges. Thus, this research, the researcher would like to assess on teaching and learning Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR. The question is what are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the HEIs in Lao PDR?

## **2. METHOD AND SAMPLE OF STUDY**

This research used the qualitative method which secondary data was gathered by curriculum and course syllabus summarizations and documents, review law of education, educational policy, decrees, and additional information through observation and review of supplementary documents are concerned. The depth interview, focus group discussion, observation was techniques of gathering on primary data; The sample group focused on five groups of students, ten teachers, five head of departments, six Deans and Vice-Deans, and six presidents of the HEIs in Lao PDR that including the National University of Laos (NUOL); University of Health and Sciences (UHS); Souphanouvong University (SU); Savannakhet

University (SKU); Champasack University (CU), and National Academy of Politics and Public Administration (NAPPA). The researcher used the SWOT analysis as a tool. According to Stephen, Robbins. P and Mary Coulter (2012), the SWOT analysis is an analysis of organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. While internal factors cause the strengths (S) and weaknesses (W), and the opportunities (O) and threats (T) are influenced by external factors. The internal analysis provides an organization's specific resources and capabilities. The term external environment implies to factors and forces outside the organization that affects its implementation/performance, which they are demographical, cultural, social, economic, political or legal, technological and global environments. The combination of the external and internal analyses are called the SWOT analysis, which is an analysis of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. After completing the SWOT analysis, leaders should formulate appropriate strategies that are, strategies that 1) to utilize or exploit an organization's strengths and external opportunities, 2) to obstruct/buffer or protect the organization from external threats, 3) to solve or correct critical weaknesses. Therefore, in this particular study, the SWOT was used as a tool analysis of implementation/performance of the teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR in term of curriculum that concentrates to mechanism, resources, and facilities. The results of the SWOT will be disseminated and spread out through various policymakers, government, leaders, and managers. The HEIs in both public and private sectors toward improvement, solution, creation, and reformation of the implementation. Furthermore, the SWOT analysis will provide and emphasize a good practice and alternative approach for the teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR in the future.

### **3. RESULT OF THE STUDY**

#### ***3.1 Assessment of teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR***

To assess the teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR, the SWOT analysis, while internal factors cause the strengths (S) and weaknesses (W), and the opportunities (O) and threats (T) are influenced by external factors of five universities in Lao PDR, and Siharath (2004, 6) pointed out that the Government of Lao PDR initiated higher education reforms covering both public and private sectors with the Decree of Prime Minister on the Establishment of the NUOL in 1995, and subsequent decrees on private higher education in 1995 and higher education curriculum in 2001. The decree establishing the NUOL began to address the issue of a fragmented higher education system by combining ten HEIs under a unified structure of the NUOL. Within the framework, two regional universities were later established to broaden access to higher education such as the Champasak University (CU) in Pakse in southern Lao PDR in 2002, the Souphanouvong University (SU) in Luangprabang in northern Lao PDR in 2003, Savannakhet University (SKU) in 2009, University of Health and Sciences (UHS) separated from the NUOL in 2007, and National Academy of Politics and Public Administration (NAPPA) was established in 1995 (NAPPA, 2000) in middle part of Lao PDR. According to real interviews, group discussions and observation of those higher educational institutions, which the teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR could be assessed by the SWOT analysis as follows.

SWOT	Contents
<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most of the HEIs, infrastructure, and organisational structures are good, suitable, comfortable and good location and environment;</li> <li>-Most teachers are qualified, active and highly responsible; and</li> <li>-Under good leading and directions of the faculty and university.</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The curriculum of Marxist philosophy is not unity and unclear;</li> <li>-Lack of qualified teacher in particular Marxist philosophy and Materials for teaching and learning;</li> <li>-Some teachers use old method of teaching;</li> <li>-Lack of information and technology equipment and service; and</li> <li>-The financial system is not convenient and insufficient.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International and internal country situations is led to higher educational development;</li> <li>- The government pays attention to promote and develop higher education;</li> <li>- There are some international cooperation; and</li> <li>- Marxism and Marxist philosophy are a requirement of government officers.</li> </ul>
<b>Threats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impact of globalisation, integrations, and competitions;</li> <li>- Impact of technology and sciences development, and socioeconomic change;</li> <li>- Plan and mechanism of personnel development of the MOE are not clear; and</li> <li>- Scholarships and fund are still limited.</li> </ul>

Table: Assessment of teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR.

According to the table of assessment of teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR, it could be assessed as follow:

### 3.1.1 Strengths

Most of the HEIs particular universities in Lao PDR are good and comfortable locations, which comprise of campuses, faculties, offices, central libraries, institutes, centers, and dormitories; organisational structures have been improving strengthening, efficiency, and responsibility, and teaching and learning also have been improving to qualified standard of nationally educational system; textbooks have edited and improved to keep pace with needs. Most teachers are master’s degree and some bachelor’s degree and doctoral degree that is active and highly responsible, they have tried to improve their capacities in pursuance of studies, researches, textbook editions, they are responsible and adaptable for enhancing and improving their lectures with satisfaction of students due to understanding, awareness, and willingness of teachers and staffs based on strategic developments in the HEIs to enhance their capacities, qualification and values with dependence and strengthening by themselves, according to interview some of the presidents, Deans, and Head of departments said:

Before, most of the staffs and teachers’ qualification at NUOL and other HEIs, particularly faculty and the department levels are bachelors and master’s degrees, based on the NUOL’s strategy of educational development provided the goal from 1-6-3 in 2010-2015 to 3-6-1 in 2016-2020 (which means every department and faculty in NUOL

have to reform from 1 doctoral degree, 6 masters' degree and 3 bachelors' degree in 2010-2015 to be 3 doctoral degrees, 6 masters' degree and 1 bachelor's degree in 2016-2020). The strategy is also applied to other universities and institutions in Lao PDR. On the other hand, there are courses of political training/studies (course for forty-five days and five months) for leaders, teachers, and staffs in universities and other HEIs. Therefore, we have been promoting and developing our departments and faculties that many staffs and teachers have pursued their higher studies in both domestic and abroad, that has made the process of teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy or Marxism has been better improving.

Those achievements, due to of the good and closely related, leading and direction of the faculties and universities that have paid much attention to lead and giving opinions and directions to the faculties and departments to fulfill their academic affairs.

### ***3.1.2 Weaknesses***

The curriculums are inconsistency and unclear, which there is not specific curriculum of Marxist philosophy in all the HEIs that means Marxist philosophy is provided as subject of Marxist philosophies, or as a part of political subject that is thought in first year of only some HEIs, which some HEIs removed Marxist philosophy out of their curriculum due to they concentrated on only their major courses; most of universities are still lack of qualified teacher in particularly Marxist philosophy, which their majors are other fields and not really qualified on academic services in Marxism due to they are not Marxist scholars, and it was difficult to get scholarship in this field; while the old method of teaching is used by some teachers that are the teacher-centered method not student-centered method that teacher is the main key of speaking without discussion, which led to lacking participation and creativeness. On another hand, some teachers and students still could not access to new information and technologies to enhance and improve their teaching and learning, which is a cause of low quality and effectiveness; Marxist materials and information are also very old that are not probably suitable and insufficient to current and future of political affair, educational development, and socioeconomic development, even the NUOL, is the main university as well. Also, the financial system is inconvenient and insufficient for academic affairs, educational activities and salary, tutorial fees and other payments, and they were also late paid. According to the interview with the Head of departments and group discussions of students said:

Some teachers are still a lack of experiences and skills on teaching and transferring knowledge to students due to their explanations, identifications, comparisons and problems solving, in reality, were not properly clear and complicated due to lacking practices and experiences; there is not the particular Marxist curriculum, which Marxist philosophy is thought combining with the political subject. Textbooks of Marxist philosophy and Marxism are very old; they should be renewed, edited and improved. On the other hand, some students did not become active and paid much attention to their studies, they did not understand and not clear about Marxism due to time was short, lack of information and even the source of information is very less.

### ***3.1.3 Opportunities***

The universities in Lao PDR have developed an intense activity in the field of international cooperation; it is thus now in relation with over a hundred institutions worldwide, which it

has signed the MOU with overseas universities and various establishment, which are based in Asia, in Europe, in Oceania, and in Northern America. Through that international cooperation, universities aim to develop their human resources both in academic and administrative fields, to promote joint research and organise seminars, symposiums, pieces of training and scholarships, and to exchange scientific data and related publication in all disciplinary fields, that is good opportunity to develop, cooperate, and exchange skills and experiences of teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy and Marxism as well. The government has been paying attention to promote and develop education, which has proved strategic framework and priorities, which improved quality and efficiency of education services, education sector governance, and performance management. In accordance with the national education vision to the year 2020 (Ministry of education and sports 2000), which provided that the educational development in the future will focus on access and quality improvements for national human resource management to meet the need of socioeconomic development plan of the country, in particular, higher educational institutions are considered as a major intervention of poverty alleviation. In the twenty-first century, the general goal of education is to educate Lao people to be good citizens and loyal to the country and the Lao People's Democratic Republic regime. Under those conditions, Marxism and Marxist philosophy are required by government officers that is who will be leader in ranks that he/she has to study political theory or Marxism courses at least 45 days' course training that is a good opportunity and condition to develop and improve for better teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in the future.

### **3.1.4 Threats**

While, the World and regions are developing, integrating and competing of socioeconomic development in globalisation; the HEIs are not the exception to be adversely affected by the intervention of technology. Actually, it has also seen many appropriate changes that have brought a totally new look to the concept of education in the modern times but human resource development in universities in Lao PDR is not really meet the rapidly sciences and technology developments that have affected to the teaching and learning in the HEIs in Lao PDR and other countries as well. As some lecturers and students said:

There are some lecturers could not use or apply technologies to their teaching, research and other works, and in addition, there are some students did not pay much attention to study because of playing on applications and alcohol consumption, and under today's situation and conditions of socioeconomic change, in generally Marxist philosophy, is not really interested in students due to most of them are preferred economic and other courses or curriculums.

On the other hand, according to political context of regions and the world that is difficult to create international cooperation in political and Marxist fields with other organisations excepting some socialist states, due to in the world today, even socialism and capitalism tended to integration of socioeconomic development, but in deep context, there are serious conflicts and struggles between workers and capitalists, and socialism and capitalism. Also, today's society, there are both valuable and invaluable aspects of news and information, interest groups, and conflicts; according to the interview of Deans said:

Sometimes teachers, students or people received information without identification of consumptions of news, Medias, propaganda of some group of people that led to a misunderstanding of the government policies and its implementation and has

challenged to teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy and Marxism in the HEIs in Lao PDR.

On other hands, the plan, mechanism, and implementation of personnel development and promotion of the Ministry of Education and Sports are not clear and not meet the needs because sometimes it seems lack of plan and mechanism to develop, promote and support lecturers to this Marxist field. Thus, scholarships of Marxist philosophy or Marxism are limited.

According to the SWOT analysis that to analyze the teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR regarding curriculum that concentrate on the mechanism of teaching and learning, resources, and facilities. Internal factors cause the strengths (S) and weaknesses (W), and the opportunities (O) and threats (T) are influenced by external factors. Therefore, after completion of the SWOT analysis, the researcher forms appropriate strategies and considerations that are to gain strengths and opportunities (SOs) and to address and obstruct the weaknesses and threats (WTs) of the teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR, as following.

- 1) The majority of the SOs of the curriculum of Marxist philosophy is available only in the NAPPA, but for other HEIs, the Marxist philosophy is only subjected or as a part of the political subject as well. However, the minority of the WTs should be improved and reformed by the HEIs themselves, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Sports.
- 2) The majority of the WTs of the mechanism of teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy are still faced that the old method is implementing as the teachers/lecturers are the main keys of speaking, lacking CIT equipment and facilities, lacking discussion and participation from students. However, several WTs of the method of teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs should be improved and developed by the HEIs themselves and relevant sectors.
- 3) Most of the SOs of resources that the teachers are qualified, skillful and experienced, and buildings, classrooms, library, and dormitories are comfortable and sufficient. However, the majority of the WTs of resources should be enhanced and developed with the qualification of the Marxist field and sufficient provision for the HEIS that should be addressed by the HEIs themselves and Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Sports.
- 4) The minority of the SOs of facilities are available, but some major facilities should be improved and developed by the HEIs and Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Sports, such as CIT equipment, Marxist textbooks, documentaries, and other educational equipment.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The results of study showed that most of teachers are active and highly responsible, they have tried to improve their capacities in pursuance of studies, researches, textbook editions, and teaching and learning has kept pace currently situations; the organisational structures have improved into strengthening and efficiency that to integrate with international cooperation to support and promote development of the HEIs, as Ramaley (2014) stated that “Higher education’s role is changing due to the world itself is changing, there also will be consequences for how we approach scholarship, teaching, and learning, and how occupations



of our faculty revealed, the responsibilities and roles of staffs, our institutions' structure, and how our mission will be supported", like Yang, Schneller, and Roche (2015) also affirmed "The role of higher education in lifelong learning", and Seidel (1991) also pointed out, "There are five main functions on above which a society expects its institutions of higher education to fulfill". In Laotian context, besides of the teaching and learning task, the research is a core function of the HEIs, but it is not all the HEIs that be engaged in actually researching due to the limitation of funding and scholarships and it is still limited to the political or Marxist field. Actually, a good developmental system of research and knowledge generation of the HEIs should increase importance of research and knowledge with both socioeconomic and political developments for country development not only to generate new knowledge of socioeconomic development but that is also together engagement with political development that the HEIs should generate and develop scholars in political field as political teachers, professors, and politicians to link with other nations, regions and the world as well. According to this study, the author think that it is an important role of academic services that universities can generate knowledge of socioeconomic and political developments to provide for relevant solutions and development of the society and solve problems in the grassroots levels as currently Lao government's policy of "Three builds", and contribute to poverty alleviation due to it is still less in practice of the HEIs in Lao PDR. Therefore, strengthening of political research and others output and relevance requires the first is qualified staff, but the HEIs have very low ratios of teachers and staffs holding master and doctoral degrees in Marxist and political fields as well in both university level and other higher educational institutions; the second is to spread up research' results and their roles to strengthen relationship between teaching and learning, and research are necessary for the HEIs, especially universities but some HEIs without a research function, particularly in political research. Thus, research and Marxist philosophy or Marxism should be expected to exist in their curriculums; the third is availability of sufficient infrastructure, and supportive budgeting is a prerequisite to increasing research, and teaching and learning outputs of Marxist or political field; and the fourth is building and strengthening universities – political linkage should be a prerequisite for political relevant research. Political linkage and development are also required to contribute both research output and funding in the HEIs, especially at the university level. However, teachers and professors should be qualified and at least understanding and appreciation of political theory, Marxist philosophy or Marxism. Therefore, the most important is the prior policy and mechanisms of Lao government to promote and develop lecturers with major in politics and Marxism in the HEIs in Lao PDR.

As Tremblay, Lalancette and Roseveare (2012) stated that "Today, higher education is broader adoption and more integrated use of communications and technologies, greater internationalisation, competition and signaling mechanisms, growth pressures on costs and new forms, modes and roles of governance, which includes increasing emphasis on performance, quality and accountability", and the World Bank (1994) also stated that "In all countries, higher education is heavily dependent on the governmental budgeting in an age of widespread fiscal limitations, even industrial, as well as developing countries, are struggling with challenges of preservation or improvement on the quality of higher education". As in Lao PDR, education, as well as human resource development is main task and responsibility of the government, on one results of this study found that the government holds and paid much attention to growth, develop, improve and promote education, as well as the HEIs, is regarding as a central development of country's development. Hence, the government has ratified international agreements on and related to education, specifically, it has committed to Education for All, etc. The Lao government has sought to achieve economic growth and

social development with poverty reduction to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 and to meet the developed country status in 202, and to continue development to modernisation with enhancement of knowledge and technology based on socioeconomic and political developments to improve and expand the higher educational system in Lao PDR., as Thomson (2008) pointed out, “The UN views higher education as integral to all aspects of development such as environmental awareness and sustainability, post-conflict resolution, poverty alleviation, cultivating values such as human rights, health care issues, and cultural preservation or change”, as in other results of the study showed that the vision, strategies, policies, and roadmap of the higher education system are still not really clear to link with regional and international standards in quantity, quality, and competition. Although, Lao PDR has made quantitative and qualitative progress in the HEIs over the past decades. However, the HEIs remain many weaknesses and threats. To solve these problems, the Lao government has asked helps and supports from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank (WB), and other international governments and organizations to help and support the improvement and development of the higher educational system to meet the needs of educated population and skills of workforce, and preparation for regional and international economic integration and cooperation.

According to the regulation of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party (2011) provided that “The party holds Marxism-Leninism is the basis notion, direction, performance and implementation and Vongsa (2008) also stated that “To enhance political notion affair and concentrate to improve theory and practice affairs, Lao PDR continue to stand for Marxism-Leninism, proletariats and socialism, and Marxism-Leninism’s application and innovation, and Lao PDR has to hurry up to improve curriculums, course syllabus, textbooks of political subject in each educational level and political subject is a compulsory subject in each course in Lao national education system, particularly in higher educational institutions”, but the results of this study found that the curriculum of Marxist philosophy is not really appropriate because there are not any bachelor and master’s degrees’ curriculums of Marxist philosophy in universities in Lao PDR. Marxist philosophy is only provided as subjects or as a part of the political subject, and some new universities removed Marxist philosophy out of their curriculums; they lack qualified teacher in particular Marxist philosophy or Marxism, and scholarships are still limited. Therefore, based on the results, the author thinks that the reform curriculum of national higher education should be planned Marxist philosophy or Marxism in connection with National Education System Reform Strategy (NESRS) implementation. All public and private universities, colleges and institutions should be provided a common course as “foundation studies” curriculum of all the HEIs as the National University of Laos and Souphanouvong University due to other public universities and private colleges have dissolved Marxism from their curriculums. Those creates inconsistencies, and it will affect students to deeply recognition and understand with Marxist philosophy or Marxism and the policy of the LPRP as a whole. Therefore, to improve, enhance and strengthen the effectiveness of Marxist philosophical curriculum and textbooks that have to introduce the fundamental curriculum of Marxist philosophy or Marxism for the first year of the HEIs with both public and private sectors in Lao PDR. However, the higher education system still lacks planning, monitoring and management due to the capacity management of Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and sports (MOE) is not adequate to meet its responsibilities. Thus, the MOE should establish standardized system for the higher education system for cooperation, coordinated collection, utilisation and plan developments of the HEIs.

According to Ramaley (2014) stated that “There also will be changes in our interactions with both internal and external communities that make up the world, which the future open up to us is both challenging and exciting”, as other findings of this study showed that the Lao government has started to reform higher education with both public and private sectors since 1995 by the decree of Prime Minister on establishment of the HEIs, which to improve and develop the HEIs as the main key of socioeconomic development and to be developed country in 2020 and for regional and international integration, political security and peace. The HEIs are called for strengthening to move forward regional and international standards, and country’s development, but in its implementation, there are still many HEIs lack of capacities to link with regional and international HEIs, those requirements are the qualification, budgets, academic services, curriculum, English skills, and technologies. Thus, the role enhancement of Marxist philosophy that related to poses challenges for the HEIs in Lao PDR should be followed (i) the need of curriculum updating to reflect the need of the LPRP’s policy and socioeconomic development. Curriculum of Marxist philosophy should be updated and formed new method of teaching and learning aim to train professional skills and attitudes for teachers and students; (ii) the need of maintaining of Marxist philosophy curriculum to reflect currently development of the HEIs in theoretical and practice; (iii) the government needs to have prior policy to promote, develop and the attitude to paying attention to curriculum and professors of Marxism and Marxist philosophy; (iv) academic staff needs to learn Marxism or Marxist philosophy, and use new method of teaching and learning, and new technology and information; (v) management, governance and finance; (vi) relevance, quality, and efficiency; (vii) qualified professors with specific major and skills; and (viii) scholarship contribution and access. Thus, it related with concepts of Tremblay, Lalancette and Roseveare (2012) said that “Higher education represents a critical factor in innovation and human capital development and plays a central role in the success and sustainability of the knowledge economy. Hence, it has become increasingly important on national agendas and has undergone profound mutations and reforms worldwide over the past decades”.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The assessment on teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR found that the strengths are the higher educational institutions have much improved and developed in over two past decades ago, especially is infrastructures and the organisational structures have improved into strengthening and efficiency, and the most of teachers are active and highly responsible due to awareness, understanding, and willingness of teachers to develop themselves and their institutions; weaknesses are the curriculums of Marxist philosophy are not really appropriate due to there is not any bachelor and master’s degrees’ curriculum of Marxist philosophy in universities in Lao PDR. Marxist philosophy is only provided as subjects and as a part of political subject; some universities removed Marxist philosophy out of their curriculums; universities lack qualified teacher in particular Marxist philosophy or Marxism, and most of textbooks, documents are very old, lack of technology access and teaching’s types of equipment, and old method of teaching is used, all of those due to unclear strategy and mechanism of development for the HEIs and lacking of scholarship and funding of the MOE; opportunities are the government pays attention to promote and develop education that has proved strategic framework and priorities and through that international cooperation projects aims to develop human resources both in academic and

administrative fields that is good opportunity to develop, cooperate, exchange skills and experiences of teachers in the HEIs. Marxist philosophy are required by government officers for their positions in Lao PDR due to Marxist philosophy is foundations of the LPRP, and threats are the regions, and the World that is developing, integrating and competing of socioeconomic development, some teachers and students could not keep pace of technologies and without identification of consumptions and innovation of information and technologies, and according to political context of regions and the World, which is a sensitiveness and challenge due to in the world today, even socialism and capitalism tended to integration of socioeconomic development, but in deep context, there are serious conflicts and struggles between socialism and capitalism. Thus, the expectations of society on teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR, which society expects should be concluded as following 1) the new goal and method of teaching and learning should be formed that including new curriculum of Marxist philosophy and relationship of the HEIs; 2) research and community service, especially university development and linkages, enhancement of professor's participation in political research with grass root level or local governments; 3) quality assurance such as policies, mechanism, structures and procedures to achieve and maintain the national and international quality and standards; 4) human resource management should be developed and paid much attention to performance to support and train more and better-qualified teachers and academic services in Marxism; 5) infrastructure and facilities should be improved such as lecture rooms, libraries, textbooks of Marxist philosophy and Marxism, ICT-infrastructure; 6) Finance should be more and better supplied and increased such as salary, research fund, tutorial fee and academic budgeting; 7) the governance and management should provide policies, mechanisms, structures, and projects of development for teaching and learning of Marxist philosophy in the HEIs in Lao PDR.

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