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## **THE DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF GRADUATES OF BACHELOR OF EDUCATION PROGRAM IN SOCIAL STUDIES AT RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY**

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### **Abstract**

*The objectives of this research were 1) to study the level of opinions about the desirable characteristics of graduate students of the faculty of education, and 2) to explore opinions about the desirable characteristics of graduate students from graduate producers, graduate users, and academics. The researchers used a questionnaire to collect data from students of Bachelor of Education in social studies and interviewed with graduate users, graduate producers, and academics. The statistics used for data analysis were percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The results of the research revealed that the overall opinion level was at a high level. The highest*

*score is in the area of being a good person with morals and ethics and the teaching profession. The aspect with the least level of opinions was to be an innovator. Therefore, graduate producers should promote the characteristics of the graduates to heighten their innovation capability through well-planned instruction and extra activities followed by the Thailand qualification framework and professional standards of the Teachers Council of Thailand.*

### **Keywords**

Desirable Characteristics of Graduates, Professional Standards, Social Studies, Rajabhat University

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## **1. Introduction**

Dynamic global change and technological advancements affect the 21st-century knowledge acquisition process involving the integrative development of new cross-cultural techniques. Educational Sciences, hence, must be developed in order to keep up with and respond to the national development strategies and digital learning. There are six characteristics of the desired graduates, including: 1) embracing shared values, realizing and bearing student-centered approaches in mind, continuing self-development to become a professional teacher with a service mind for the community, 2) being a moral and ethical person who insists on being a high-spirited and professional teacher with love, faith, honesty, and responsibility to the profession; this also includes self-consecration in creating inspiration and developing the learning process which benefits the students; being self-sufficient and being a role model both academically and professionally are essential as well, 3) being a learner who is wise and knowledgeable about finance, health care, arts appreciation, cultural diversity, social and global changes, professionalism and quality of life of one's self, family, and society, and ability to continue lifelong learning and adapt to changes overtime, 4) being a part of creating innovations by acquiring skills required in the 21st century such as analytical skills, higher-order thinking skills, digital skills, teamwork, cross-cultural skills, and modern information technology skills; this also includes engagement in the development of teaching professionalism, knowledge acquisition and development, and innovation/creation for maximizing self-development and differentiated instruction, 5) being an expert in managing subject contents, activities, study progress, inspiration, satisfaction, and student enhancement by using teaching skills and other techniques to manage the study progress, various activities, community-based learning and local wisdom to support the diversity of students. Moreover, the ability to integrate knowledge from different disciplines, cultures, and studies in order to apply to the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK) for the development of one's self, students, and the society as a whole and 6) being an active citizen who pays attention to the society, loves the nation and locality, has both Thai and global consciousness, values and engages in the preservation

of environment, cultures, Thai wisdom and local wisdom. A good educator shall have a service mind, comply with democracy, have justice and ethics, know what is right and wrong, and be bold enough to say “no” or resist the wrongdoing. This also involves other qualities such as respecting the freedom and honor of a human being and other characteristics suggested in the Thai professional standards for teachers implemented by the Teachers’ Council of Thailand (Ministry of Education, 2019).

Educational development for both teachers and students must follow the same direction to make effective learning progress which also conforms to the governmental policies. Thus, students who study educational sciences must acquire enhanced knowledge and skills of the 21st century as well as strengthening their teaching professionalism as suggested by the Teachers’ Council of Thailand. To conform to the changes in direction of the national education, educational sciences students must possess the six desirable qualities of a good teacher that respond to the national ideology to become a social role model. According to the Teachers’ Council of Thailand, the six characteristics consist of 1) having love, mercy, and good wishes for the students, 2) being patient and responsible, 3) being an educated and lifelong learning person, 4) having the vision, 5) having faith in teaching professionalism, and 6) complying to the professional ethics for teachers. Therefore, the researchers recognize the importance of examining the opinions regarding the desirable qualities of the educational sciences students (major in social studies), Rajabhat University. The results of the study will be analyzed and used for planning instructions and activities as well as developing teaching techniques. It will help the educational sciences students to develop the capacity and desirable characteristics that suit the bachelor’s degree standards and Thai professional standards for teachers.

Simsek, Turan, & Simsek (2017) studies about the social studies teachers’ and teacher candidates’ perceptions of prompt feedback and communicate high expectations. This study aims to investigate the perception of social studies teachers and teacher candidates on the implication of two of the seven principles of good practice in education developed by Chickering and Gamson (1987) at middle school social studies classrooms. To this extend a survey instrument was used to collect data and address the research questions. The total internal reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.68. The sample of the study consists of 31 Social Studies teachers, 50-second grade, and 49 fourth grade Social Studies teacher candidates. The result of the study shows that for principle 4 (prompt feedback) second and fourth-grade teacher candidates have more affirmative statements than the teachers, while for principle 6 (communicate high expectations) social studies teachers have more positive statements than 2nd and 4th-grade students.

From research studies related to desirable characteristics of the students of the Faculty of Education Rajabhat University in Thailand found that it consisted of 6 groups: 1) academic leadership qualities, 2) virtue of virtue. Outstanding ethical behavior 3) Outstanding practicum traits 4) Good attitude and professional love traits 5) Vision and creative use of technology and 6) Good leadership qualities Commitment to community and local development (Jaisaad, 2016) and education student characteristics of professional teaching experience in social studies. Faculty of Education Silpakorn University found that the teachers were satisfied with the knowledge and ability to work at the highest level. It has an average of 4.50, a standard deviation of 0.56, and there are comments and suggestions that students practice teaching professional experiences should be developed to have diverse experiences such as the ability to manage to learn English language usage, the use of modern technology, Morality, Ethics, and Teamwork (Puangpae, Samachat, and Thianwong, 2019).

The present study is based on the importance of characteristics to describe an effective teacher. The studies (Darling-Hammond, 2000) showed that there is a positive relationship between teacher quality as “enthusiasm, creativity, flexibility and adaptability and school success of its students”. Therefore, the researchers recognize the importance of examining the opinions regarding the desirable qualities of the educational sciences students (major in social studies), Rajabhat University. The results of the study will be analyzed and used for planning instructions and activities as well as developing teaching techniques. It will help the educational sciences students to develop the capacity and desirable characteristics that suit the bachelor’s degree standards and Thai professional standards for teachers.

## **2. Research Objectives**

- 2.1 To explore the opinions of Social Studies Education students regarding the desirable characteristics of graduates.
- 2.2 To examine the opinions of the graduate producers, graduate users, and experts in the field of desirable characteristics of Social Studies Education graduates.

## **3. Research Methodology**

The researchers applied the mixed methods to study and analyze the basic data regarding the educational policies, bachelor’s degree standards for Social Studies Education students, standards and regulations for teachers by the Teachers’ Council of Thailand, and previous studies on graduates’ desirable characteristics. The researchers also collected the data regarding the educational sciences student enrollment of the academic year 2019. The researchers additionally

surveyed and interviewed other stakeholders about the graduates' desirable characteristics, including the graduate producers, graduate users, and experts in the field of graduates' desirable characteristics.

### **3.1 Population and Sample**

In this study, the populations consisted of 1) Social Studies Education freshmen (Class of 2019, Semester 1) from Rajabhat University 2) 30 graduate users (including school directors, deputy directors for academic affairs, heads of department, and teachers), 3) 18 graduate producers (including the universities' top management, chancellors or vice-chancellors, and deans or associate deans of educational sciences department, and 4) 3 scholars.

**Samples** are selected from Phetchaburi Rajabhat University, Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University, and Suan Dusit University based on the purposive sampling method, including 1) 90 Social Studies Education students, 2) 10 graduate users, 3) 9 graduate producers, and 4) 3 scholars.

### **3.2 Research Tools**

1) The researchers used questionnaires to survey the students' opinions on the desirable characteristics of educational sciences students. The language and the contents used in the questionnaires were adjusted to suit the respondents' contexts. The survey consisted of three main sections which are 1) general information about the respondents, 2) opinions on the desired characteristics include having shared values, being a moral, ethical and professional teacher, being an active citizen who pays attention to the society, being an intelligent and wise learner, being able to manage the learning progress and taking part in creating innovations and 3) recommendations. Likert Rating Scales are used for measuring each item in the questionnaires. Then, the survey draft went through the content validity process to check the language and the consistency of the questions based on the research objectives. The set of five-point-scale questions was evaluated by 5 experts. The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was done by analyzing the mean and the standard deviation. The results of the IOC showed that the mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) was 4.33 and the standard deviation was 0.31, meaning the consistency level of the questionnaires was high.

2) The interviews with the graduate producers, graduate users, and scholars regarding the desirable characteristics consisted of open-ended questions which covered the objectives of this study. The draft of the interview questions composed of 3 main parts, including 1) general information about the respondents (name, position, workplace, and working experience), 2) four questions regarding the desirable characteristics consist of issues and questions in the interview form 1. Do you think that the 4 aspects of the teaching professional standards, namely knowledge, professional experience, work practice, and personal practice, cover the desirable characteristics or not? According to the 4 aspects of the teaching professional standard, will the graduate teachers

have desirable characteristics or not? 2. What do you think the teaching professional standards will cause the graduate characteristics? And 4. Do you think that the sub-topics in the standards of each area? Is it suitable or not? and 3) recommendations. Then, the survey draft went through the content validity process to check the language and the consistency of the questions based on the research objectives. The set of five-point-scale questions was evaluated by 5 experts. The Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was done by analyzing the mean and the standard deviation. By analyzing the mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and the standard deviation, the results of IOC revealed that the consistency had a mean of 4.61 and the standard deviation of 0.56, showing that the interview questions had the highest consistency level.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The researchers conducted documentary research to collect data from educational policy-related documents, concepts, theories, and previous studies with regards to the desirable characteristics of graduates and professional standards for teachers. The data was also collecting by surveying the opinions of educational sciences students and interviewing the graduate producers, graduate users, and experts. Finally, the data's comprehensiveness was rechecked for further analysis.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

3.4.1 The data collected from the survey was used to calculate the mean and the standard deviation. The meanings of each level of mean scores are listed below.

The mean of 4.50 - 5.00	refers to the highest level
The mean of 3.50 - 4.49	refers to a high level
The mean of 2.50 - 3.49	refers to medium level
The mean of 1.50 - 2.49	refers to a low level
The mean of 1.00 - 1.49	refers to the lowest level

3.4.2 The data collected from the interviews was narrative analyzed and synthesized.

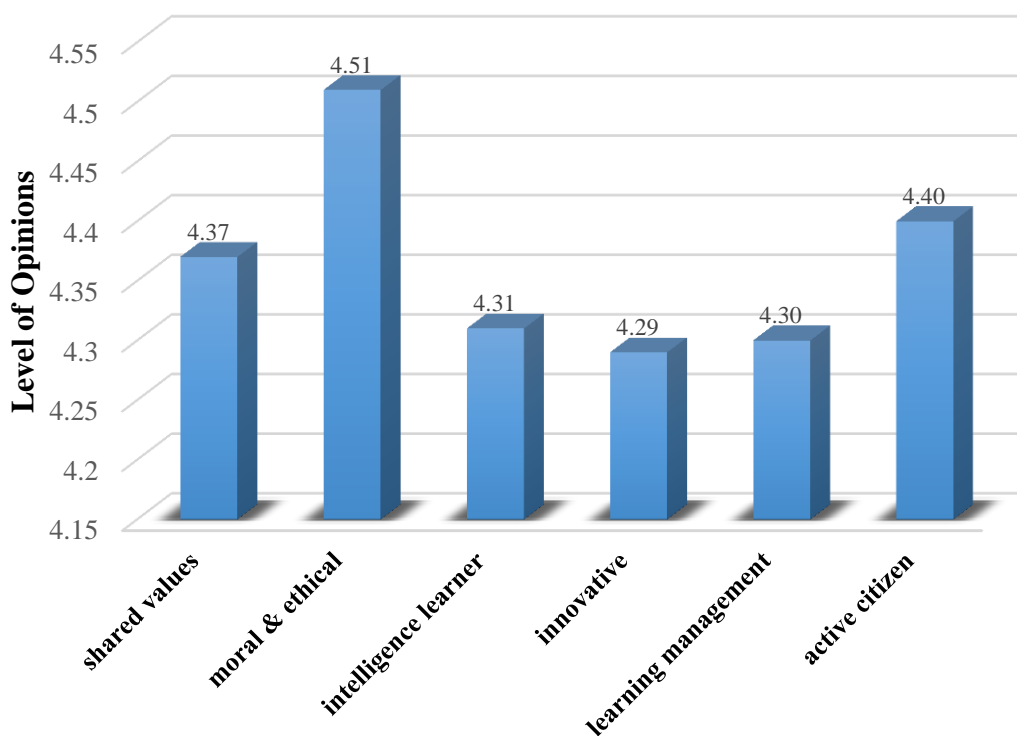
### **3.5 Statistical Tools**

The research team used SPSS for Windows to analyze the data. Then, the results were further analyzed, discussed, and described narrative by using percentage (%), mean value ( $\bar{X}$ ), and standard deviation (S.D.).

## **4. Findings**

The study found that, based on the survey on the students' opinions regarding the desired characteristics, 13.4% of the respondents were male and 86.6% of the respondent were female.

57.5% of the respondents were Phetchaburi Rajabhat University students, 36.3% of them came from Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University, and 5.2% were from Suan Dusit University. In terms of the social studies education students' opinions on the desirable characteristics of graduates, the overall image of the desirable characteristics was rated at a high level ( $\bar{x}= 4.36$ , S.D.= 0.74). For each aspect of the desired characteristics, "being a moral, ethical, and professional teacher" was rated at the highest level ( $\bar{x}=4.51$ , S.D.=0.69). Following, "being an active citizen who pays attention to the society" was rated at a high level ( $\bar{x}=4.40$ , S.D.= 0.72). As for the other aspects, arranged from high to low levels, "shared values" was rated with ( $\bar{x}=4.37$ , S.D.=0.74), "being an intelligent and wise learner" was rated with ( $\bar{x}=4.31$ , S.D.=0.75), "being able to manage the learning progress" was rated with ( $\bar{x}=4.30$ , S.D.=0.76), and "taking part in creating innovations" was rated with ( $\bar{x}=4.29$ , S.D.=0.76). The levels of opinions on the desired characteristics of graduates among social studies education students (4-year program) are illustrated in Fig.1.



**The Desirable Characteristics of Educational Sciences Graduates (4-year Program)**

**Figure 1:** *The Levels of Social Studies Education Students' Opinions on the Desired Characteristics of Graduates*

Details of the study results and opinions on the desirable characteristics of the graduate students of the Bachelor of Education (4-year program) of the students of the Social Studies program are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *The Opinion Level of Desired Characteristics of Social Studies Education Student*

Desired Characteristics	Opinion Level		
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	level
<b>Shared value</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>High</b>
1. Realized and adherent Learning is at the center of the teacher's work	4.31	0.76	High
2. Developing a sense of identity as a teacher	4.37	0.73	High
3. Having a strong attitude towards the teaching profession	4.40	0.77	High
4. Having service mind to the teaching profession and community	4.41	0.70	High
<b>Being a good person with morals and ethics adherence to the teaching profession</b>	<b>4.51</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>Highest</b>
5. Have a teacher spirit and adhere to teaching professional ethics	4.55	0.66	Highest
6. Perform ideological duties with love, faith, integrity, a responsibility to the profession	4.51	0.71	Highest
7. Dedication and dedication to empathy	4.51	0.70	Highest
8. Inspire development Learn and in the best interests of learners	4.54	0.71	Highest
9. Be self-sufficient and behave exemplary both academically and professionally	4.44	0.68	High
<b>Be a smart, knowledgeable, and intellectual learner</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>High</b>
10. Knowledge of high-level analytical thinking	4.25	0.75	High
11. Good knowledge of finance, health, aesthetics, and culture	4.16	0.78	High
12. Be aware of changes in society and the world	4.38	0.73	High
13. Establishment of livelihoods and Stability in the quality of life of oneself, family, community, and society	4.35	0.73	High
14. Perseverance, determination, the pursuit of learning	4.37	0.75	High



Desired Characteristics	Opinion Level		
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	level
15. Have lifelong learning skills and develop oneself to be knowledgeable and well-informed individuals, modern and constantly changing	4.37	0.75	High
<b>Being a co-creator of innovation</b>	<b>4.29</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>High</b>
16. Skilled in the 21st century	4.28	0.78	High
17. Digital ingenuity	4.22	0.78	High
18. Teamwork skills	4.23	0.77	High
19. Skill across innovation	4.19	0.79	High
20. Keep up with the media, modern information technology, social and global change	4.34	0.74	High
21. Participate in the advancement of the teaching profession	4.33	0.72	High
22. Seek knowledge, develop knowledge, research and create innovations for the full development of learners	4.41	0.72	High
<b>Being a highly competent person in learning management</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>High</b>
23. Ability to provide content, design activities, plan and manage to learn, transfer knowledge	4.34	0.76	High
24. Inspire and Encourage learners to learn and enjoy learning using pedagogical science, including methods of using learning management techniques, various learning activities, media, community learning resources, wisdom in the community that are suitable for the subject matter	4.38	0.73	High
25. Subjects and learners able to integrate cross-science, cross-cultural knowledge and research	4.20	0.79	High
26. Be able to apply integrated learning management, teaching science, knowledge, content, and technology to develop learners' learning as well as apply for problem-solving, self-improvement,	4.29	0.77	High

Desired Characteristics	Opinion Level		
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	level
learner and society			
27. Measurement and Evaluation of Learning Management and Research for Solving Problems and Developing Learners	4.22	0.76	High
28. Design and Implementation of Educational Quality Assurance Work	4.27	0.74	High
<b>Very strong and socially conscious Citizen</b>	<b>4.40</b>	<b>0.72</b>	High
29. National love, local love, Thai and social consciousness	4.38	0.74	High
30. Know the value and participate in the development of environment, culture, and wisdom Thailand and local people	4.37	0.70	High
31. Volunteer and live the way of democracy Fairness and ethical courage Adhere to accuracy	4.37	0.72	High
32. Consciousness as Thai and global citizens	4.47	0.71	High

According to the results of interviews on the opinions concerning desirable characteristics of the social studies education graduates among graduate producers, graduate users, and experts, the interviewees agreed that the three aspects of professional standards for teachers (including knowledge and professional experience, professional practices, and behavior) covered most of the desirable characteristics. However, there were some suggestions as follows.

**1. Knowledge:** the graduates should be enhanced with skills to fully understand the contents they are supposed to teach, including critical thinking skills, innovation development skills, digital skills, and other skills needed in the 21st century such as self-learning skill, life skills, and innovative skills that support students' development. There were many minors available in the faculty of social science such as history, geography, economics, religion, and civics duty; therefore, students might not be able to comprehensively understand the contents of each minor. The balanced integration of sets of knowledge from the major subjects and vocational training is needed for the graduates to teach their students effectively. This might also affect the 5<sup>th</sup> aspect of the desirable characteristics which is "to have the ability to plan and manage the learning progress, develop contents, design activities, and teach each learner properly.

**2. Professional Experience:** the graduates need to pass the internship to obtain the skills and abilities to manage the learning progress.

**3. Professional Practices:** the graduates must follow the professional standards for teachers, possess the ability to manage the learning progress, and foster a healthy relationship with parents and society. Also, graduates must have the ability to conduct research and adapt to different cultures; these skills are highly significant in modern society. All of these standards conform to the desired characteristics of graduates.

**4. Behavior:** the graduates must have the self-awareness, professional and social ethics, which conform to the professional standards.

Furthermore, the program responsible for producing newly graduated teachers must strictly comply with the professional standards in all aspects to help the graduates to gain the aforementioned desirable characteristics. Hence, there must be cooperation from all stakeholders both in the program and in the internship places who help the graduates to gain teaching experiences. One of the most important skills for educational sciences graduates is learning progress management skills. Graduates must also have a genuine will and faith in teaching. These desirable characteristics can be evaluated and followed up during the graduates' internship periods, while the professional standards for teachers are the basic principle that the graduates must comply to. If the program can produce graduates according to the professional standards for teachers and the graduates have the readiness and hold on to the standards at all times, it would help them to succeed in the learning progress management and their students would be fully benefited as well. Nevertheless, there should be an evaluation for those graduates who are new to their teaching careers to ensure that the graduates behave according to the standards and possess the desired characteristics. This also includes the fact they should be professional teachers who keep up with the present world, create innovations, possess skills to create and manage learning activities with digital technology, and truly have professional ethics. These sub-indicators of the standards must be taken into account when implementing regulations and guidelines related to teacher professionalism. All graduates from every educational institution or every program should comply with the same standards. Additionally, if the curriculum is designed to train the students in every aspect of the standards, effectively evaluate the students' deficiencies and constantly continue developing them, it would be guaranteed that the graduates may have acquired desired characteristics. Apart from that, professional standards for teachers can also develop the graduates' desired characteristics which conform to the skills of the 21st century.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

This research explores the opinions of the social studies education student on the desired characteristics of graduates. The findings revealed that the overall image of the desirable characteristics was rated at a high level ( $\bar{x}=4.36$ , S.D.=0.74), and the desired characteristic of being a moral, ethical, and professional teacher was rated at the highest level ( $\bar{x}=4.51$ , S.D.=0.69). In terms of other aspects, most of them were rated at a high level. Ranging from high to low levels of opinions, these aspects included 1)“being an active citizen who pays attention to the society”( $\bar{x}=4.40$ ,S.D.=0.72), 2)“having shared values”( $\bar{x}=4.37$ ,S.D.=0.74), 3)“being an intelligent and wise learner”( $\bar{x}=4.31$ ,S.D.=0.75), 4)“being able to manage the learning progress” ( $\bar{x}=4.30$ ,S.D.=0.76), and 5)“engaging in creating innovations”( $\bar{x}=4.29$ ,S.D.=0.76). To summarize, the study found out that the overall social studies education students have a high level of opinions regarding the desired characteristics of graduates, and “being a moral, ethical, and professional teacher” was rated at the highest level. The results also conform to music education students’ desirable characteristics who also had the highest level of morality and ethics(Attapaiboon and Bongsittiporn, 2017). The indicator with the lowest level of opinions is “engaging in creating innovations which is a significant skill in the 21st century”. This conforms to the second national education management strategic plan in that human capital production and development as well as research and innovation are required for the enhancement of the country’s competitiveness. The plan aims to enhance people with skills and capacity that suits the needs and demands of the labor market and economic and social developments of the country. Educational institutions and agencies, therefore, must produce graduates with excellent skills, especially in the field of research and development to create innovations and new knowledge to add value to the economy (National Education Plan 2017-2036, 2018). Furthermore, teachers should shift their role from teaching to facilitating the knowledge transfer to their students towards student-centered activities which allow the students to think, practice, seek, and discover knowledge by themselves. According to Dachakupt (2015), students should participate more in the learning process towards critical thinking, speaking, and practicing so that they could acquire the knowledge by themselves. From this point in this view, it shows that the graduates have been expected more in terms of management skills in the instructional process. Thus, graduate producers shall focus more on planning the curriculum and extra activities to equip 4-year program educational sciences graduates with the ability to create or engage in innovation creation. As educators, we need to find ways of discovering what our students know that is relevant to the high-level intellectual studies of the university. One of the most significant changes and impacts on teaching and learning has been the universal availability of a range of information and communication technologies (ICT). This impacts on the

approaches adopted by teachers and the use of technology to enhance learning (Kitching, 2015). According to the interviews with the experts, graduate users, and the top management of the universities who produced the graduates with regards to the desirable characteristics of social studies education graduates, it was found out that most of the interviewees believed that the three aspects of the professional standards for teachers, including knowledge and professional experiences, professional practices, and behavior, responded to and covered the desirable characteristics of graduates. In other words, if the curriculum is designed based on these aspects of the professional standards for teachers, the newly graduated teachers are expected to possess the desired characteristics. In order to make this happen, every agency under the universities must cooperate and improve the curriculum altogether by focusing on producing graduates who are needed in the market. To secure job positions for the graduates, the graduates themselves would also need to comply with the same standards accordingly. After the 4-year program students have been enhanced with the three aspects of the professional standards for teachers, another significant process is the evaluation of the newly graduated teachers' desired characteristics. This process includes using the feedback to improve the curriculum which could ensure the desired characteristics of graduates. Because, in some classes, the educational sciences students must learn in a real environment such as schools, the students must observe, conduct research, and sometimes perform as a teacher assistant. By this, they will gain help, suggestion, and evaluation from the experienced teachers throughout the entire period. This is a strong point of the 4-year program in producing high-quality graduated teachers. Moreover, if the program management team analyzes students' deficiencies and organize activities to enhance those parts accordingly and continually, it is highly possible to produce students from the 4-year program with the desired characteristics of graduates. The results of the study will be analyzed and used for planning instructions and activities as well as developing teaching techniques. It will help the educational sciences students to develop the capacity and desirable characteristics that suit the bachelor's degree standards and Thai professional standards for teachers.

From the results of the study of desirable characteristics of the graduates in Social Studies, it can be seen that the level of the opinion of being good, virtuous, ethical, and adherence to the teaching profession were at the 1st level. Having a teacher spirit and adherence to professional ethics is the desirable trait that learners value the most, thus producing graduates should focus on the development and fostering of teacher spirit and adherence. Teaching professional ethics is extremely. And this includes being a strong and socially conscious citizen, having inclusive values, being a learned and intelligent, and co-innovator respectively.

In this research, the focus of the survey on the desirable characteristics of the graduates of the Rajabhat University teachers' students is only. This may represent only a part of the students. Therefore, the research team has suggested for further research that comments on the desired graduate characteristics of the student-teacher from other teacher production institutions should be further studied because the teachers producing institutes have different contexts from the Rajabhat University. And the desirable characteristics of education students should be studied in all disciplines such as Thai, English, Mathematics, and Science that all the information obtained can be used as a basis for the country's teacher production.

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