

Applied Humanities and Youth Development Potential in Temple Schools

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Abstract: This academic article aims to study and present the application of applied humanities in developing youth potential in the context of temple schools, using the Bavorn concept (Home, Temple, School) as an analytical framework. This study demonstrates that applied humanities can be an essential tool in enhancing 21st-century skills for youth through the integration of humanities knowledge with real-life practice. Temple schools, as educational institutions with deep cultural and religious foundations in Thai society, play a crucial role in developing youth to be knowledgeable and virtuous. Applying the Bavorn concept helps connect learning among home, temple, and school in a systematic integration, resulting in comprehensive youth development across intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. This article proposes a youth potential development model through applied humanities consisting of four main dimensions: cognitive dimension, moral and ethical dimension, life skills dimension, and community engagement dimension. This model can be applied in temple schools and other educational institutions to develop youth to be ready to face 21st-century challenges effectively.

Keywords: Applied Humanities, Youth Potential Development, Temple Schools, Bavorn Concept, 21st Century Skills

1. Introduction

Education in the 21st century faces increasingly diverse and complex challenges in terms of technological, social, economic, and cultural changes (Office of the Education Council, 2024). Developing youth to be prepared to face these challenges is therefore a crucial mission of the education system. Applied Humanities is one approach that can be effectively used in developing youth potential (National Endowment for the Humanities, 2024), particularly in the context of temple schools, which are educational institutions closely connected to communities with strong cultural foundations.

Temple schools in Thailand have a history spanning over 100 years, dating back to the reign of King Rama V, who initiated the establishment of schools in temples throughout the country. Temple schools have thus become important learning centers for communities and spaces that connect education with religion and local culture. Currently, temple schools continue to play a vital role in educating youth, especially in rural and remote areas (Nantiko, 2023). Using applied humanities in developing youth in temple schools will help strengthen cultural foundations, morality, and essential life skills for the 21st century.

The Bavorn concept (Home, Temple, School) is a development philosophy initiated by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej (King Rama IX) for use in community development

(Phra Chaikang Aphinyo, 2021), emphasizing the integration of cooperation among three main social institutions: home (family), temple (religion and spirituality), and school (education). Applying this concept to youth potential development will help make development holistic and sustainable, as youth will receive care and development from all dimensions of life, from family and community to educational institutions (Working Group for Strengthening Health and Wellness Networks, 2024).

This article aims to present a conceptual framework and approaches for applying applied humanities in developing youth potential in temple schools, using the Bavorn concept as the main integration principle, to enable youth to have skills and readiness to be good and quality citizens in the 21st century.

2. Applied Humanities Concepts in Education

2.1 Definition of Applied Humanities

Applied humanities is an educational approach that applies humanities knowledge and principles to solve problems and improve human quality of life in society (National Endowment for the Humanities, 2024). Unlike traditional humanities that emphasize theoretical study and academic concepts, applied humanities focuses on practical application of knowledge to benefit society. Humanities disciplines that can be applied in education include linguistics, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and arts and culture.

In the educational context, applied humanities plays a crucial role in developing analytical thinking skills, critical thinking, communication, and understanding of cultural diversity (Thammasat University, 2021). It also helps build morality, ethics, and appropriate values for learners. Integrating humanities knowledge into teaching and learning helps learners understand themselves, others, and the surrounding society better, which is an essential foundation for developing into quality citizens.

Applying applied humanities in education must consider the social and cultural context of learners (USAID, 2024), as well as the needs and interests of individual learners. Learning should emphasize process over content, giving learners opportunities to explore, discover, and create meaning from their learning experiences. Teachers play the role of learning facilitators rather than mere knowledge transmitters.

2.2 Importance of Applied Humanities for Youth Development

Applied humanities is important for youth development in multiple dimensions. First, it helps develop thinking and problem-solving skills. Humanities education trains youth to think analytically, ask questions, and evaluate information critically (Thammasat University, 2021). These skills are essential foundations for problem-solving and decision-making in daily life. Second, it promotes understanding of diversity and respect for differences. Studying culture, history, and social sciences helps youth understand and appreciate cultural, ethnic, and belief diversity (British Council Thailand, 2024), which is a crucial skill in a globalized society.

Third, applied humanities helps build morality and ethics. Studying philosophy, religion, and ethics helps youth develop values and principles for good living (Yuvabodhan Foundation, 2020), distinguishing between right and wrong, good and evil, and having responsibility toward themselves and society. Fourth, it develops communication skills and working with others. Learning languages, literature, and arts helps youth communicate thoughts and feelings effectively (TruePlookpanya, 2024), and work creatively with others.

Finally, applied humanities helps build pride in identity and local culture. Studying local history, language, and culture helps youth take pride in their roots and have responsibility for conserving and transmitting cultural heritage to future generations (Nantiko, 2023), which is an essential foundation for developing a strong and sustainable society.

3. Context and Role of Temple Schools in Youth Development

3.1 History and Importance of Temple Schools

Temple schools are educational institutions rooted in Thailand's traditional education system, with temples serving as learning centers. Before the establishment of modern schools, temples functioned as places to study both secular and religious knowledge, with monks as teachers (Phra Chaikang Aphinyo, 2021). During the reign of King Rama V, recognizing the importance of education, he initiated the establishment of schools in temples throughout the country. The first temple school was Wat Mahathat Pharam School, later renamed Wat Mahathat School.

Temple schools have been important to Thai education in several ways. First, they are accessible learning sources for the general public, especially in rural areas without government schools (Nantiko, 2023). Second, they are institutions that connect education with religion and local culture, making education meaningful and relevant to learners' lives. Third, they serve as community centers for social and cultural activities, making temple schools more than just learning places but lifelong learning spaces for communities.

Currently, although the education system has changed and government schools have increased, temple schools continue to play an important role in educating Thai youth, especially in cultivating morality, ethics, and good values, as well as conserving and transmitting local culture. Additionally, temple schools are spaces where religious principles can be harmoniously integrated with modern education, which is a unique advantage that regular schools may find difficult to achieve.

3.2 Strengths and Potential of Temple Schools in Youth Development

Temple schools have several strengths and potentials that can be utilized in developing youth potential (Nantiko, 2023). First, they have environments conducive to spiritual learning. The peaceful and quiet atmosphere of temples helps youth concentrate and focus on learning. Moreover, being close to religious sites helps cultivate respect and faith in religion from a young age. Second, they have monks as good role models. Monks in temples serve as moral and ethical exemplars for youth (Phra Chaikang Aphinyo, 2021). Seeing and learning from monks' lifestyles helps youth understand and practice dhamma principles in daily life more easily.

Third, they have strong connections with communities. Temple schools are typically located in communities and have close relationships with local residents (Working Group for Strengthening Health and Wellness Networks, 2024), enabling effective use of community resources and wisdom in teaching and learning. Youth also learn from real experiences in the community and participate in social and cultural activities. Fourth, they have facilities that can be shared with temples, including sermon halls, libraries, and other temple spaces that can be used as additional learning resources for youth.

Fifth, they have flexibility in organizing education according to local contexts. Temple schools can adapt curricula and teaching methods to suit community needs and lifestyles more than typical government schools (Nantiko, 2023), making education more meaningful and relevant to learners' lives. Additionally, integrating local wisdom and culture into curricula helps conserve and transmit cultural heritage to future generations.

4. Application of the Bavorn Concept (Home, Temple, School) in Youth Development

4.1 Meaning and Principles of the Bavorn Concept

The Bavorn concept refers to Home, Temple, and School, which are three main institutions in Thai society that play crucial roles in developing people and communities. This

concept is rooted in the sufficiency economy philosophy initiated by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej (King Rama IX) (Phra Chaikang Aphinyo, 2021), emphasizing the integration of cooperation among the three institutions to sustainably develop people's quality of life. The key principle of the Bavorn concept is strengthening each institution and creating collaboration among institutions to generate collective power for development.

Home or family is the first institution where children learn values, attitudes, and basic behaviors. Families have roles in caring, nurturing, teaching, and being good examples for children (USAID, 2024). Temples are religious institutions that care for the mind, teach religious doctrines, and serve as spiritual refuges for communities. Schools are educational institutions that systematically organize teaching and learning, develop knowledge and skills, and prepare youth to enter society. Collaboration among all three institutions helps youth development become comprehensive and effective (Working Group for Strengthening Health and Wellness Networks, 2024).

Applying the Bavorn concept to youth development must consider the roles and strengths of each institution, as well as creating mechanisms for coordinating cooperation among institutions. This must also give importance to the context and needs of local communities. Implementation should begin by creating understanding and awareness of the importance of collaboration among home, temple, and school (Nantiko, 2023), then jointly planning and determining appropriate activities.

4.2 Mechanisms for Collaboration Among Home, Temple, and School

Collaboration among home, temple, and school in youth development requires clear and effective mechanisms (Nantiko, 2023) presenting interesting conceptual frameworks for enhancing student potential in temple schools through the Bavorn concept, emphasizing participation of all three institutions in every development stage, from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation (Working Group for Strengthening Health and Wellness Networks, 2024). Key mechanisms for working together include regular meetings and communication among representatives from home, temple, and school to exchange information, ideas, and suggestions for youth development.

Clearly defining roles and responsibilities of each institution (Phra Chaikang Aphinyo, 2021): homes are responsible for basic well-being and cultivating morality and ethics in families; temples organize religious activities and develop youth's minds; schools organize teaching and learning and develop learners' knowledge and skills. Regularly organizing joint activities among the three institutions, such as religious important day activities, community service activities, local culture conservation activities, and community development activities. Establishing committees or Bavorn networks at school or community levels to serve as mechanisms for coordinating and driving collaboration.

Creating continuous monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress and obstacles, and using data to improve and develop operations (Working Group for Strengthening Health and Wellness Networks, 2024). Preparing agreements or memoranda of understanding among the three institutions to demonstrate commitment and dedication to serious collaboration. Additionally, building networks and exchanging learning with other temple schools and communities (Nantiko, 2023) helps gain good ideas and experiences for further work development.

4.3 Examples of Bavorn Concept Application in Temple Schools

The Bavorn concept can be applied in temple schools in various forms (Working Group for Strengthening Health and Wellness Networks, 2024). Examples include model temple school projects for reducing vices in communities, with youth as the main drivers working with

monks and parents to campaign and create community awareness to stay away from vices. Skills and vocational development projects for youth using local wisdom and community resources as learning bases (Nantiko, 2023), such as local handicrafts, organic farming, and traditional food preparation. Projects for conserving and transmitting local culture, involving youth in studying and documenting local wisdom, and organizing cultural activities to disseminate to new generations.

Morality and ethics development projects through religious activities (Phra Chaikang Aphinyo, 2021), such as almsgiving, listening to dharma talks, practicing meditation, and community service, with monks as advisors and guides. Community development projects with temple schools as centers, such as recycling bank projects, organic farming in communities, and community learning resource development projects, with youth, parents, and monks collaborating in operations. Projects for developing thinking and learning skills in the 21st century by integrating classroom learning with real-life learning experiences in communities and temples, emphasizing development of analytical thinking, problem-solving, and working with others skills.

5. Developing Youth Potential in the 21st Century Through Applied Humanities

5.1 21st Century Skills Youth Need

In the 21st century, the world is changing rapidly and becoming more complex. Youth need diverse skills to live and work effectively (Cubic Creative, 2025; Office of the Education Council, 2024). 21st century skills can be categorized into three main groups: learning and innovation skills, comprising critical thinking and problem-solving skills, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration with others (British Council Thailand, 2024); information, media, and technology skills, comprising information literacy, media literacy, and information and communication technology literacy; and life and career skills, comprising flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility (TruePlookpanya, 2024).

Developing these skills must begin from an early age and continue throughout life (Office of Knowledge Management and Development, 2024). Educational institutions play a crucial role in organizing teaching and learning that emphasizes 21st century skill development by integrating with various subject content, organizing learner-centered learning activities that give learners opportunities to explore, research, experiment, and create knowledge independently (Yuvabadhan Foundation, 2020), using technology as learning tools, and arranging environments conducive to learning and skill development. Additionally, teachers must have knowledge and understanding of 21st century skills and be able to design teaching and learning that effectively promotes development of these skills (Thammasat University, 2021).

5.2 Integrating Applied Humanities with 21st Century Skills Development

Applied humanities plays a crucial role in developing 21st century skills for youth (USAID, 2024). Integrating humanities knowledge and methods into teaching and learning helps develop analytical thinking and problem-solving skills. Studying literature, history, and philosophy helps youth learn to analyze data, evaluate evidence, and draw reasonable conclusions (Thammasat University, 2021). Studying case studies and historical events helps youth understand problem patterns and diverse problem-solving methods that can be applied to current situations.

Creative thinking and innovation skills: learning arts, music, literature, and performance stimulates youth imagination and creativity (British Council Thailand, 2024).

Giving learners opportunities to express themselves and create works in various forms helps develop abilities to think outside the box and find new ways to solve problems. Studying the history of various discoveries and innovations (TruePlookpanya, 2024) also inspires youth to dare to invent and create new things. Communication and collaboration skills: learning languages, writing, and presentation develops effective communication abilities. Organizing group activities and projects requiring cooperation helps youth learn teamwork, listening to others' opinions, and compromising to achieve common goals.

Social and cross-cultural skills: studying cultures, traditions, and beliefs of different groups helps youth understand and respect differences (British Council Thailand, 2024). Having opportunities to interact and work with people from diverse cultures helps develop adaptability and working in diverse environments. Responsibility and leadership skills: studying ethics and case studies on social responsibility helps youth understand the importance of responsibility toward themselves and society (Yuvabhadhan Foundation, 2020). Giving learners opportunities to lead in various activities helps develop confidence and management skills.

5.3 Appropriate Learning Activities and Methods

Organizing learning to develop youth potential through applied humanities should emphasize diverse learning processes consistent with 21st century skills (Cubic Creative, 2025). Appropriate activities and methods include Project-Based Learning, having learners do projects related to social, cultural, or community issues (USAID, 2024), such as local history study projects, local wisdom conservation projects, and community development projects. Inquiry-Based Learning stimulates learners to ask questions, search for answers, and create knowledge independently, with teachers acting as facilitators (Thammasat University, 2021). Experiential Learning organizes activities that allow learners to learn from hands-on experience (Nantiko, 2023), such as study visits, internships, community service, and field trips to historical and cultural learning sites. Collaborative Learning organizes group activities that allow learners to work together, exchange opinions, and learn from each other (TruePlookpanya, 2024), such as group discussions and creating collaborative works. Learning through arts and culture uses arts, music, drama, and performance as media for learning and expression (British Council Thailand, 2024), such as historical drama performances, creating artworks reflecting social issues, and performing traditional music and dance.

Service Learning allows learners to participate in community service activities connected to learning (USAID, 2024; Nantiko, 2023), such as teaching children in communities, helping the elderly, and environmental conservation activities. Integrated Learning integrates content and skills from multiple disciplines for joint learning, such as learning about local arts and culture that integrates history, linguistics, arts, and social sciences.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Summary of Key Points

Using applied humanities in developing youth potential in temple schools through the Bavorn concept (Home, Temple, School) is a highly potential approach for developing youth to have skills and readiness in the 21st century (Cubic Creative, 2025; USAID, 2024).

Applied humanities helps develop thinking, communication, collaboration, and understanding of cultural diversity skills (British Council Thailand, 2024), while building morality, ethics, and pride in local identity. Temple schools, with their strengths in spiritual environments, community connections, and educational flexibility, are suitable spaces for applying applied humanities concepts (Nantiko, 2023).

The Bavorn concept emphasizing integrated cooperation among home, temple, and

school helps youth development become comprehensive and sustainable (Phra Chaikang Aphinyo, 2021; Nantiko, 2023). Collaboration among all three institutions requires clear mechanisms, appropriate role and responsibility definitions, and regular monitoring and evaluation (Working Group for Strengthening Health and Wellness Networks, 2024). Learning organization should emphasize diverse processes, such as project-based learning, experiential learning, collaborative learning, and learning through arts and culture (Thammasat University, 2021; TruePlookpanya, 2024) to develop necessary 21st century skills for youth.

6.2 Youth Potential Development Model Through Applied Humanities

Based on study and analysis, the author proposes a "4-Dimension Model" for developing youth potential through applied humanities in temple schools, using the Bavorn concept as an integration framework:

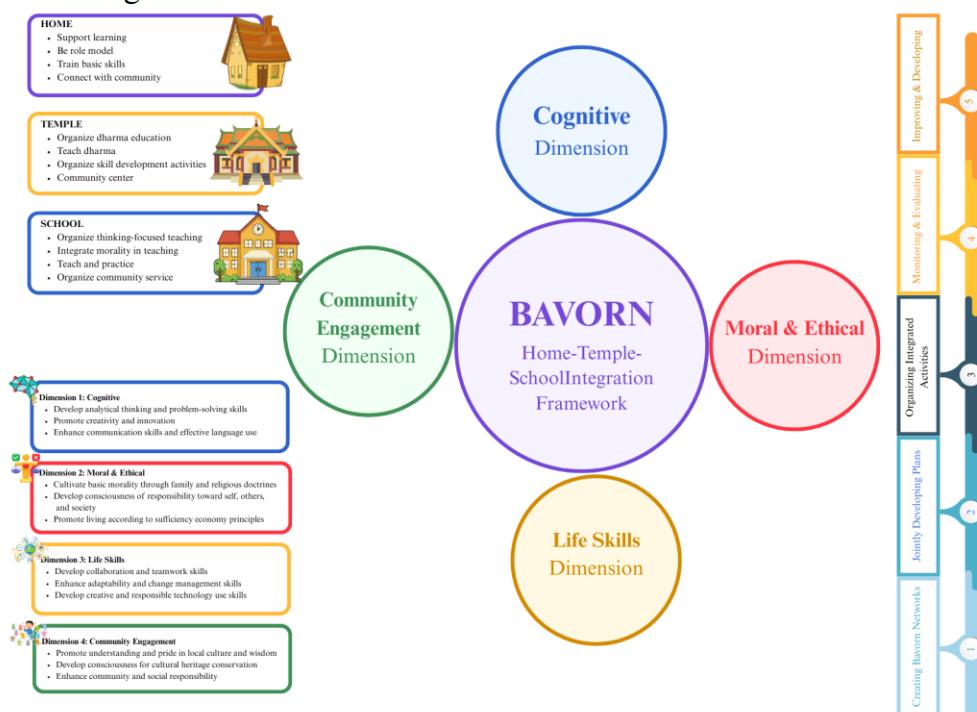


Figure 1: Youth Potential Development Model: 4 Dimensions Through Applied Humanities in Temple Schools Using the "Bavorn" Concept as Integration Framework

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