

# The Role of Recreation Leaders and The Operating of Recreational Activities in educational institutions New Normal era

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**Abstract.** At present, the behavior modification is completely changed especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Human being was confined to spent some time in solitude, as well as being forced to stay more on the online platform. Human relationships have been declined and causes many problems. Meanwhile, the educational institutions also have particularly in changing the way for students' development. Various educational institutions have to adjust from normal learning management through a new normal learning management. As result, it affects students' development in many areas, specially using recreational activities in school. This article aims to explain the importance of recreational activities in educational institution, as well as the major role and the challenge of recreation leaders under social changing. The result from this article can use for the guidelines in driving recreational activities in educational institutions to be effective, and develop youth in society to have more quality in the future.

**Keywords:** Recreation, Recreation Leaders, Recreations Activities.

## 1 Introduction

While the global community is facing the pandemic of COVID-19. It is more affective with all people in the society than other crisis that ever happened before. This pandemic is not only affected with the illness or death, but also included with people well-being widely. Human beings are inevitably turned in their lifestyles. All of them were solitarily confined to a private area, and also being forced to stay with online platform. Such situations above cause a serious with human health in term of physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. It causes to deteriorate in human health.[1]

The group of youths and students in various educational institutions are clearly affected by this situation. Their learning behavior must be adopted in a new way. Educational institutions also have to change their teaching management from onsite to online during COVID-19 pandemic. On this period, it caused a huge impact on youth and students. Many youths and students are

limited in learning due to lack of educational equipment, lack of internet connection, which causing to inequality in education. As a result, youths and students have faced with stress that affect their mental health. In addition, those youths and students were not developed in various skills that occurred in school for instance they will lack of interaction in the classroom, lack of interpersonal interaction, as well as lack of organizing recreational activities in educational institutions. For these reasons, the quality of life of those youths and students is also reduced since an educational institution is not only just a place to provide education, but it is also a place to provide other welfares or services related to the quality of life and well-being of those youths and students.[2] Therefore, when faced with the situation of COVID-19 pandemic, the resulting damage will be affected with the quality of life for those youths and students.

When the COVID-19 pandemic being ease up, “New Normal” are apparent from many sectors which shown different lifestyle from the past, and people are also normally familiar with it.[3] Educational institutions are one of the important roles to coach both of youths and students in terms of developing thinking skills, knowledge, and educating social values. Besides, educational institutions also help to create learning experiences in various fields for students who study in educational institutions. Therefore, it is necessary to find new ways to develop many skills in various fields, especially by using recreational activities. The examples are included with sports activities, health promotion activities, social service activities, save environments activities, and morals and ethics activities. These activities all have the goal for developing students to be physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually, and mentally.[6] All mentioned activities must be performed or driven by the recreational leaders in schools for youths and students in educational institutions.

Hence, finding a guideline and model for driving recreational activities in education institutions is a great challenge for the leaders to be a guideline to drive recreational activities to be effective, and also develop youths in our society to have a good quality of life.

## **2 How is recreation in educational institutions importance?**

Recreational activities are very important for students and youths in various educational institutions. It is not only helping to develop all students and youths to have a good quality of life, but all students and youths will also have various skills and essential experiences for their future life. In each educational institution must be found the way to encourage students in educational institutions to engage with recreational activities during their study. Therefore, students and youths can meet the criteria that educational institutions was set.[4] The conducting of recreational activities in the educational institutions is such an important case because the youths and students can learn new skills and experiences to adapt and keep up with rapidly changing in today’s global society. Obviously seen that the conducting of recreational activities affects life balance in the modern society, especially youths and students who are studying at the schools. All of them are human resources to sustainably develop our country in the future. Therefore, conducting the recreational activities in educational institutions is extremely essential and important to promote a good quality of students and youths’ life in educational institution.[5]

At present, various forms of recreational activities are used in many educational institutions, so that the students and youths can participate followed by their own interests. For example, in

form of congregate, clubs, groups or associations where students gathered for conducting the activities during their studies. These recreational activities will be organized to enhance skills for both youths and students in the educational institutions. There are many forms of the activities for instance sports activities, volunteer activities, environment conservation activities, the activity to enhance morals and ethics, and the activities to promote arts and culture.[6] The aims of all activities are to develop students to be intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and mentally. Moreover, it is also an activity that enhances experiences and skills of youths and students in various ways to meet the needs of students in term of exercise and enjoyment.[7] This is consistent with the benefits and values of recreational activities. When comparing such other activities, it can be seen that student activities are all recreational activities.

As mentioned above, it can be seen that the recreational activities in the educational institutions is important unavoidably. Since recreation is a science that humans use as a solution to promote quality of life to meet the body need. These recreational activities can help to relieve tiredness, physical and mental fatigue of the person who participate voluntarily.[8] Recreational activities are thus contributing to youths and students who are in each educational institution to have a good quality of life. This will lead to emotional, social as well as intellectual development. As an educational institution should find the ways to encourage youths in to participate in recreational activities. Whether it is student activities in school or extracurricular activities in order to develop youths and students in society to be a quality population in the future.

What are the important roles of recreational leaders in schools?

Recreational leaders have duties and roles to manage and drive the recreational activities in order to achieve the objectives and goals efficiently. The recreational activities consist of the purpose of activities, selection of activities, place arrangement, method of operation, health and safety in carrying out activities, as well as summarizing and evaluating the results of that activity.[9] Besides, recreational leaders should have knowledgeable and understanding the principles and theory of recreation. Moreover, they have the ability to transfer the knowledge, advise and assist participants in all activities, and have management skills in various fields for example, a variety of techniques to lead the activities and have a good relationship with the participants in recreational activities. It can be seen that the recreation leaders are very important in various organizations, which will be able to drive the recreational work of that organization to achieve the goals effectively.

Therefore, recreational leaders in educational institutions are the personnel that are important for the operation in the field of recreational activities. They will play an important role in driving recreational activities to achieve their objectives, as well as effectively lead to the goal of developing youths and students in the educational institutions. In addition, student leaders are required to act as moderators for student activities or recreational activities whether the role of student council, or leaders of student club. [10] All of them play an important role in driving student activities or recreational activities in educational institutions to benefit the students in the institution. These student leaders are necessary to have knowledge, skills, and positive attitude about recreational activities. They also must understand the roles and duties of the work not only training and self-development or seeking knowledge, but it is also included with integrating various of knowledge to keep up with current situations and social changes at all times.[11]

How has recreation in educational institutions in the New Normal era changed?

It has been almost two years for COVID-19 pandemic, causing youths and students cannot go to schools or any educational institutions. In the meantime, bad effects with all school closures are occurred in terms of learning, emotional, mental, and future opportunities. Together with the bad effect with the quality of life and well-being of youths and students. This phenomenon of COVID-19 pandemic prevents youths and students from going to school. Educational institutions, teachers, and lecturers cannot manage their teaching as in the past. Hence, they have to turn to online teaching method, which causing many problems affected youths and students. Whether it is stress, deteriorating physical and mental health, decreasing interpersonal interaction, as well as the deteriorating the quality of life of youths and students. When the COVID-19 pandemic is decreasing, "New Normal" was mentioned from many sectors. This is a result of adjusting to normal life in a new way with the problem of COVID-19 pandemic that is not the end. However, learning of youths and students must be continued. As a result, educational institutions have to adjust and learn to conduct teaching and learning in new way to develop youths and students. Therefore, distance education and the use of technology for learning has become the new way of Thai education. Causing teachers and lecturers become aware of new knowledge which is truly important and necessary for the learning of youth and students in the midst of this change.

Because of the various problems and limitations related to the COVID-19 pandemic, it affected with student development in the field of recreational activities in educational institutions. For instance, school closure through the government policy, limiting the number of people for organizing an event, public health restrictions on preventing the spread of COVID-19, as well as the paranoia that may arise with youths and students. Such directly impact affecting the implementation of recreational activities in educational institutions. Therefore, there must be a change in form. This is a very challenging and important problems that educational institutions and recreational leaders have to deal with and must find the ways and methods to develop youths and students in their own educational institutions.

The challenges of recreational leaders in educational institutions for the New Normal Era

There are various challenges of recreational leaders in educational institutions under the New Normal. Closure of school and transform to online teaching and learning during COVID-19 pandemic are a huge impact on youths, students, parents, teachers, and other accessories. Many youths and students have limited access to the online platform, maybe it is because of the lack or equipment, internet signal which bring about to disparity in education, causing youths and students to lose concentration in their learning as well as affecting their health. In addition, there are many be other additional problems that affect youths and students from learning online, for example, they do not want to turn on the camera during online classes because they were ashamed of their own living conditions. It is not only making people less interact to each other, but the social relationships are also decreased correspondingly.

As mentioned problems above, it is a challenge for recreational leaders in the new normal era to find a way for implement the recreational activities to meet the needs of youths and students as well as develop their skills in various fields. By the challenges of such problems, there are many things that recreational leaders need to focus on either mental rehabilitation or building confidence among youths and students. Organizing the activities have to in accordance with their needs by focusing on health and mind. Being online for a long time, it causes youths and

students need for regular recreational activities. As recreational leaders have to seek new approaches in organizing activities to meet their needs under the spread of COVID-19 measurement. The government policy may be a one of the conditions for conducting activities in the present and future situations. In order to protect and build the confidence for the participants, this is therefore an important issue that recreational leaders in schools should avoid. In addition, the conducting of various activities will also need to focus on the promotion and development of health and mental. Due to youths and students have been affected by physical and mental health regarding the spread of COVID-19 for a long time. Hence, recreational leaders must be aware of the health problems of those youths and students.

Another challenge that recreational leaders in educational institution have to deal with is creating recreational activities related with online and hybrid platforms. Although the spread of COVID-19 will be declined, the prevention and countermeasures of many sectors still continue to recognize. When the epidemic will again intensify, we have to turn to online platforms, or there may be other options. As recreational leaders have to deal with the situation that may arise in the future, which may not be only COVID-19 pandemic.

### **3 The guidelines for driving recreational activities in educational institutions in the New Normal era**

From various problems that affect youths and students during COVID-19 pandemic, and the challenges of recreational leaders in educational institutions as mentioned above. Many sectors must urgently find the ways to prevent problems that may arise again as well as driving recreational work in educational institutions in the new normal era effectively continue. Therefore, the author will propose a guideline for driving recreational activities in the new normal era to benefit with recreational leaders in educational institutions, as well as being alternative ways to develop youths and students to have a good quality of life, and also be a good person in the society as followed:

Survey the needs of recreational participants among social change.

Of course, survey the needs of recreational participants is the thing that recreational leaders must do firstly. Because of conducting recreational activities, recreational leaders must organize the activities to meet the needs of participants. In which participants will choose to participate in activities that meet their own needs to develop their emotions and create new experiences in their life. However, in such a changing the conditions, the needs of recreational participants will also change. With the conditions of preventive measures against the spread of COVID-19, and changing people lifestyle are resulted with changing format and method for some activities. Besides, the worry about the spread of COVID-19 is one of the reasons that participants may choose a new type of activities. Therefore, as a recreational leader in the educational institutions, it is essential to explore the needs of recreational of youths and students in schools in order to know their desire to participate in recreational activities in the midst of social change.

Give a priority with health learning activities along with academic learning.

The implementation of recreational activities in educational institutions during new normal era is another important aspect for developing youths and students, which recreational leaders must focus on. From problems that affect youths and students during the pandemic of COVID-19 or

online learning, it greatly affects the health of youths and students in terms of physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. These things affect the quality of life of those youths and students a lot. Therefore, in terms of recreational activities in the educational institutions, it is important to focus on health learning activities along with academic learning. It included with organizing activities that improve physical or physical fitness for instance sport activities, health promoting exercise, and so on. Moreover, organizing activities that enhance social and emotional skills is very important because it can express youths and students' emotion. For example, singing, acting, music, and drama. In addition, the activities that enhance interpersonal skills like speech, language, communication, literature, and social activities should be added to enhance the well-being of youths and students.

Take the advantages from technology and digital trends in activities and learning processes.

Due to the recent of COVID-19 pandemic, youths and students have been forced to stay in online platform for a long time. Although the epidemic situation has been declined, we cannot predict whether the situation will escalate again or not. Maybe there are other problems that we cannot predict will happen again in the future. Therefore, we are inevitably forced to live in the technological and digital trend, it makes us have to learn how to benefit from using technology in digital trend. As recreational leaders must have plan and find the new patterns and methods of recreational activities by using existing technology in the activities. Computer, smartphone, tablet, computer program, and online media are examples of technological equipment which benefit in recreational activities.

Create the hybrid activities.

Once recreational leaders have skills to use, understand, create, and access digital technology. The recreational leaders must do next is finding patterns and guideline for recreational activities in educational institutions by taking advantages from modern and digital technology to conduct the recreation activities in a mix or hybrid form. Because of in conducting activities, recreational leaders must not only focus on the general participants, but recreational leaders must also focus on patients infected with COVID-19 pandemic or those who are in the quarantine. All of them will need to be developed in various fields as well. This also includes those who are not comfortable participating in onsite activities. Participating in online recreational activities by using technology is another option that recreational leaders must focus on. Hence, creating hybrid or mixed activities between onsite and online format is another approach to conduct recreational activities in educational institutions.

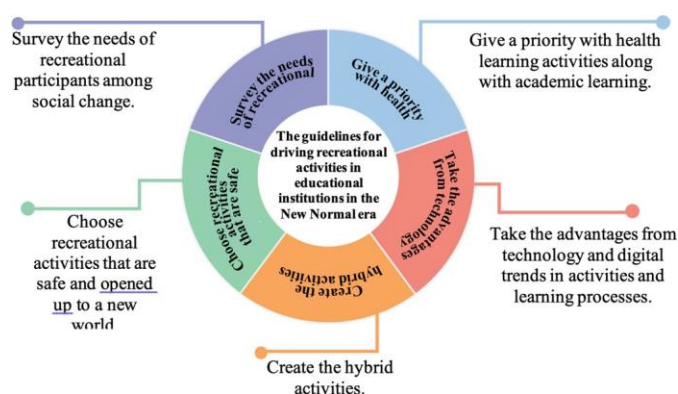
#### **4 Choose recreational activities that are safe and opened up to a new world.**

With this rapidly changing social situation, recreational leaders must focus on various forms and methods in conducting recreational activities in educational institutions. Recreational leaders must be open-minded, find new ways and new methods in carrying out recreational activities to keep up with safety of the participants. It is not only the safety of the epidemic, but recreational leaders must also consider other safety concerns related to the activity. Whether it is the safety of life and property, safety of mental and emotional, or even the safety of the privacy and lifestyles of the participants. As recreational leaders must understand the social change context, and also understand the laws and privacy policies of the participants. These are all small

factors that educational leaders may have overlooked. Therefore, in conducting the recreational activities in educational institutions, recreational leaders need to focus on these things in the face of social change in this new normal era.

## 5 Conclusion

Recreational leaders in educational institutions are very important personnel in the implementations of recreational activities. Due to they are the key player in driving recreational activities in educational institutions. The goal is to develop youths and students in educational institutions to become quality citizens in the future. From the problems of epidemic of COVID-19 in the past, it has greatly affected youths and students in various educational institutions. They should be developed and rehabilitated in terms of health and well-being, and learning loss for not doing recreational activities in the past. It causes many problems for examples, problem of stress, problem of deteriorating physical and mental health, and problems of reduced interpersonal relationship of youths and students. Therefore, the recreational leaders in educational institutions is necessary to prepare and find new ways to support recreational activities, as well as must be prepared to deal with the challenges that may occur. In addition, as recreational leaders should find the ways to drive recreational activities in educational institutions amid social change in the new normal era.



**Figure 1** The guidelines for driving recreational activities in educational institutions in the New Normal era

The examples are survey the needs of recreational participants in the mist of social change, focus on health learning activities along with academic learning, take advantages of technology and digital trends in recreational activities, and learn processes by applying digital technology in their learning, and so on. Moreover, educational institutions and recreational leaders need to accelerate the learning process with recreational activities in the new normal era. Besides, recreational leaders have to create values for youths and students to choose new forms of recreational activities, and have to build their confidence when they have to face with different problems. Finally, as recreational leaders have to promote and support recreational activities in the educational institutions as a tool for development of youths and students. All of them will be a good quality and be good personnel for the society in the near future.

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