Congruence of Nursing Research and Health Policies in Thailand: A Scoping Review

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Abstract: It is critical that nursing research focuses on the health needs and health policies of a country. However, it was not known to what extent the Faculty of Nursing, comprising 30 colleges with Praboromarajchanok Institute, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Health, had conducted research congruent with Thailand health policy. A scoping review is valuable for identifying forms of research that address health policy. We reviewed current nursing research conducted by this faculty to guide future nursing research in Thailand. The aim of this scoping review was to investigate the research setting, research design, study participants, and research topics of nursing research conducted by this faculty. We focused on the relevance of nursing research to national strategies and policies. We systematically searched for articles published from January 2019 to December 2020 using the internal research database of Praboromarajchanok Institute. We also searched for additional information using the following databases: Scopus, CINAHL, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and ThaiJO.

The search yielded 804 articles. Only 6.84% of the articles were published in international peer-reviewed journals. One-third of the studies (32.71%) were conducted in the community. The most commonly used research design was a descriptive one. Almost half of the study participants (44.65%) were health personnel. The majority of included papers were not in accordance with Thailand's national strategy, Praboromarajchanok Institute's policy, or the service plans of the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand. We found a paucity of research that linked to essential policies or strategies. These findings can inspire our Faculty and other nursing schools worldwide to improve nursing research to support health policy development.

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Introduction

Thailand has used the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a developmental framework to achieve a better and more sustainable future for the Thai people. In 2015, the UN General Assembly set up the SDGs to be achieved by 2030.[1] A previous study reported that Thailand ranked at a medium level of development for health-related SDGs in a group of 47 Asian countries.[2]

In the past, Thailand has set a development strategy for the country under the National Economic and Social Development Board. Each plan spanned five years. However, a major challenge to the 5-year plans was the political upheavals in Thailand. With each change of the government, some economic or social policies were altered, and other projects were discontinued. Therefore, the current government in Thailand established a long-term national goal or strategy called "The Twenty-Year National Strategy." The Thai Ministry of Public Health has also developed the twenty-year national strategic plan for public health (2017-2036) to correspond with the twenty-year national strategy.[3]

Nowadays, Thailand is an aging society. Many older Thai people live alone and are suffering from chronic diseases. The leading causes of traumatic death in Thailand are road accidents, followed by fatal injuries, drowning, physical assaults, and falls. The leading causes of death due to chronic diseases are cancer, cerebrovascular diseases, pneumonia, ischemic heart disease, and diabetes.[3] Therefore, monitoring and evaluating systems and planning are needed to address these emerging public health issues.

To do so, using research or evidence-based practice is beneficial. Since nurses are key healthcare team members, nursing research is critical to solving current health problems.[4] Researchers and research funders worldwide emphasize supporting research that meets a real-world need.[5] They also desire research to help solve challenges faced by policy-makers, practitioners, communities, and other social actors working in health areas.[5]

Reasons why nurses should conduct research congruent with health policy include 1) they closely work with patients, 2) all health policies directly affect nurses' lives, and 3) nurses are vital persons who can contribute appropriate information to health policy.[6]

Nurses play an important role in all healthcare settings, namely primary, secondary, and tertiary care.[7] In addition, since all health policy indicators are deployed at all levels, a scoping review of nursing research will identify gaps between policy and practice leading to actions to ensure that the health policy indicators meet the specified criteria. Furthermore, educational institutions should conduct research and disseminate the results to policymakers and the general public.[8] Consideration should be given to the research studies that elucidate, characterize, explain, or test hypotheses to inform the formulation of health policies to improve a nation's health care system.[9] Descriptive correlation, quasi-and actual experimental, mixed-methods, comparative effectiveness, systematic reviews, meta-analysis, and cost-benefit designs are research methods that drive health policies.[9] In addition, a mixed-methods design is becoming increasingly popular in practice for real-world research.[10]

In Thailand, there are three nursing education systems: 1) the institutes under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, 2) the institutes under other ministries, such as the Ministry of Defence, the National Police Office, and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, and 3) the institutes under the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand.[11] Historically, the nursing schools under the Ministry of Public Health have been recognized as the most prominent nursing education institutions in Thailand. There are 30 nursing colleges under the Praboromarajchanok Institute, under Thailand's Ministry of Public Health. The aim of these colleges is to train and develop a workforce to address the shortage of nurses in the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand.[12]

In 2019, Praboromarajchanok Institute was approved as an official higher education institute by the Praboromarajchanok Institute Act B.E. 2019.[12] There are two faculties in this institute: 1) the Faculty of Public Health, which consists of 9 colleges of Public Health, and 2) the Faculty of Nursing, which includes 30 colleges of nursing.[12] The Faculty of Nursing of Praboromarajchanok Institute is the only nursing education institution in the world that includes 30 colleges throughout the country and covers such a broad geographic area. Faculty members of the Institute perform various roles as educators, including teaching, providing social services, promoting arts and culture, and conducting research.[12] The Praboromarajchanok Institute Act B.E. 2019 stipulates that the Institute's duties include conducting research to develop a body of knowledge and apply that knowledge to social and national development. Therefore, rigorous research conducted by this tremendous faculty would benefit the development of health services for the Thai people.

A previous scoping review assessed the published studies from 2007 to 2016 conducted by the faculty of all nursing and public health colleges under Praboromarajchanok Institute, Thailand.[13] The study results showed that most studies focused on learning and teaching methods and were conducted in community settings. Most studies used a quantitative research design and most study participants were nursing students. The authors pointed out that many of the research studies included in the review covered health policy. However, the authors stated that a supportive system to encourage clinical research in nursing by faculty was warranted. In addition, a previous scoping review did not exclusively focus on nursing research but instead included studies conducted by faculty from both colleges of nursing and public health under the Praboromarajchanok Institute from 2007 to 2016.[13] In addition, the nursing research published after 2016 was not included. Thus, conclusions from this previous scoping review may not be specifically applicable to nursing research conducted by the Faculty of Nursing. More importantly, this previous scoping review did not address whether the research topics aligned with key strategies, such as the SDGs, the Thailand's national strategy, or the Thai Ministry of Public Health strategy. Therefore, based on a previous scoping review, it remains unclear whether the nursing research conducted by the Faculty of Nursing is consistent with the relevant nursing research policies.[13] For these reasons, this scoping review was conducted to systematically capture the research conducted and identify existing knowledge gaps in the nursing research conducted by the Faculty of Nursing of the Praboromarajchanok Institute, Thailand, published from 2019 to 2020. We selected this period because 2019 was the first year that these 30 nursing colleges were recognized by the Thai government as a Faculty of Nursing under the Praboromarajchanok Institute.

In our study, we started with a broad research question: What is the extent of nursing research undertaken by the Faculty of Nursing, the Praboromarajchanok Institute? Then, in a team discussion, the following precise research topics were identified: Which research areas were focused on during this time period? What was the target population studied? Was the nursing research conducted by the Faculty of Nursing aligned with the related research policies, such as the SDGs, the Thai national strategy, the Thai Ministry of Public Health strategy, or the policy of the Praboromarajchanok Institute itself? To answer these research questions, we conducted a scoping review of the literature.

Review of the Literature

The Health-Related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Among the 17 goals of the United SDGs, the third goal is good health and well-being.[1] This goal is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for people of all ages. There are 13 sub-goals in health-related sustainable goals, including 1) reducing maternal mortality ratio; 2) reducing preventable neonatal and

child deaths; 3) ending epidemics of communicable diseases, such as AIDS, tuberculosis, or malaria;4) reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases; 5) strengthening substance abuse prevention and treatment; 6) reducing deaths and injuries from traffic accidents; 7) ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services; 8) achieving universal health coverage; 9) reducing deaths and illnesses from chemical, air, water, and soil pollution; 10) strengthening tobacco control; 11) supporting the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases; 12) scaling up, training, and retaining health workforce in developing countries; and 13) strengthening the capacity of all countries.[14]

Following this framework, Thailand has set itself the goal of being among the top third of Asian countries in terms of healthy development. This would mean that life expectancy at birth and healthy life expectancy at birth in 2036 would be no less than 85 and 75 years, respectively.[2]

The Twenty-Year National Strategy (2017-2036)

This Strategy was designed to ensure that all governments coming to power would be committed to the goals that have already been set. The Strategy contained two strategies related to the health system: 1) developing and supporting the capacity of Thai people to be healthy, and 2) creating equality and equity for health services.[15]

The Twenty-Year National Strategic Plan for Public Health (2017-2036)

This Strategy aims to achieve healthier people, happier health care workers, and a sustainable health system and has four excellence strategies 1) excellence in promotion, prevention, and protection, 2) excellence in service, 3) excellence in people, and 4) excellence in governance.[3] In addition, the Twenty-Year National Strategic Plan for Public Health (2017-2036) also developed the following 19 service plans (or areas), including 1) non-communicable diseases, 2) maternal and child health, 3) mental health and psychiatry, 4) primary health care and district health care, 5) medicine, 6) cancer, 7) accidents and emergency, 8) surgery, 9) kidney diseases, 10) rational drug use, 11) intermediate care and palliative care, 12) heart, 13) newborns, 14) pharmaceuticals, 15) orthopedics, 16) eye, 17) Thai traditional medicine and complementary medicine, 18) oral health, and 19) organ donation and transplant.[16]

Among these 19 service plans, the service plans of primary and holistic health care aim to provide family care teams, establish long-term community-based care, and deliver health promotion for the elderly, disabled, and vulnerable. Examples of essential care services, which are parts of the service plan of primary and holistic health care, include 1) treatment for general illnesses, 2) emergency medical services, 3) health promotion services, 4) preventive services, 5) continuous care for chronic diseases, and 6) rehabilitative services.[17]

Nursing research

Currently, the scope of nursing research is likely broad, as nursing researchers collaborate with researchers from other disciplines to conduct studies with the same goal: to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.[18] Nurse scientists may conduct research to advance knowledge in the nursing discipline. In addition, their research can provide evidence that can shape health policy to improve the health outcomes of society.[9] Although nursing research has been progressing, more development is still needed to strengthen research production and increase the use of research in practice to transform health issues and the health system. Many interesting issues, such as health promotion and prevention, symptom management, palliative, and end-of-life care, innovation, and strengthening new nursing researchers, are challenging for nursing researchers.[4]

Nursing research and health policy

The use of research to drive health policy is in various patterns, such as using research findings to formulate health policy, using research frameworks or theories to shape health policy, and using research

to support health policy.[19] Nurses can conduct research consistent with health policy by considering an appropriate type of research at each stage of the policy process. For example, in the problem identification stage nurses may conduct a descriptive study to identify and define a problem. In the agenda-setting stage, nurses may apply a study design as in the first stage but need to focus more on current and future health issues. In stage three, policy formation, nurses may apply research designs that can provide health policy-makers with evidence about effective interventions, such as experimental and quasi-experimental designs, systematic literature reviews, meta-analysis, and comparative effectiveness designs. Research in the legitimation stage of policy can be qualitative and mixed-methods designs as this will contribute to understanding the government institutions' processes and behaviors. Research at the implementation stage of the policy process can be conducted qualitatively, quantitatively, and use mixed-method designs to determine how laws work. Research at the policy evaluation stage can be experimental or mixed-methods to examine the outcomes of a law after it has been implemented.[9]

The evolution of nursing research in Thailand

In 1990, the Ministry of Public Health and universities set the national nursing research plan to improve Thai nursing practice. In 1991, the National Board of Nursing research analyzed nursing research and found that about 80% of nursing research in Thailand was conducted by professors in universities, lacked research direction and could not be utilized in a clinical setting. Therefore, nursing research policy and guidelines for ten years (1992-2002) were established and published in 1994 for nursing educational institutions in Thailand. In 1996, the National Board of Nursing Research held the first national nursing research conference, which became an integral part of the nursing profession. In addition, in 1996, the Thai Nursing Research Journal was established and in 2010 renamed the Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research. In 2006, the Thailand Nursing and Midwifery Council established a roadmap for nursing research covering system research, health policy research, clinical research, and educational research. Over the past 20 years, Thailand has achieved the goal of nursing research development, including the training of researchers at the doctoral level, increasing research published in journals, and most of the research directions identified by the Thailand Nursing and Midwifery Council. However, the utilization of nursing research in practice and policy-making should be continually developed.[20]

A recent scoping review showed that, based on research conducted by Thai nursing researchers from July 2018 to June 2021, most studies were published in Thai journals. Only 20.2% were published in international journals. Almost half of the research (49.5%) was conducted by nursing students in master or doctoral degrees. Most of the studies (71.7%) were quantitative research. Most studies (80%) were congruent to the 20-year strategy in public health but the quality of most studies (55.5%) was at a moderate level.[21]

Nurse educators and nursing research

Teaching, service, and scholarship are the three main roles of nurse educators.[22] An essential role of nurse educators is to teach students to apply evidence-based practices,[23] as well as apply research findings in education practice. Therefore, in addition to competency in teaching and clinical practice, conducting research is a critical component for nurse educators.[24] To inform health policy, nurse educators should focus their research on current health issues and collaborate with a multidisciplinary team to synthesize and widely disseminate study findings.[9]

Based on our review, we can conclude that nurse educators are essential persons who can influence health policy by conducting relevant nursing research for each stage of the health policy process. In addition, since the Faculty of Nursing at Praboromarajchanok Institute covers such a broad geographical area in Thailand, it was essential to review the state of nursing research so this scoping review was conducted to investigate this issue.

Methods

Protocol and registration: The Joanna Briggs Institute Guideline for Scoping Review was utilized to conduct this study.[25,26] Our protocol was drafted using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR). The area of interest for this scoping review is nursing research conducted by the Faculty of Nursing, Praboromarajchanok Institute, congruent with health policy in Thailand. The scoping review approach was chosen because it can identify the evidence on the topic of interest and the research gaps to be filled. Our research team revised this protocol. Unfortunately, the final protocol was not registered and is not publicly available because the area of interest is predominantly local, and the scoping review is not eligible for inclusion in PROSPERO.[27] However, details of the protocol are available on request from the corresponding author.

Eligibility criteria: Literature was included in our review if it met all of the following criteria: 1) peer-reviewed, full journal articles published from January 2019 to December 2020, 2) publications had at least one researcher from the Faculty of Nursing, Praboromarajchanok Institute (first author, corresponding author, or co-author), 3) written in English and Thai, 4) full-text of the article was available, and 5) focused on nursing research. Excluded documents included conference abstracts, letters, and articles without available full text.

Information sources: To identify potentially relevant documents, researchers searched articles published from January 2019 to December 2020 utilizing the internal research database of the PBRI. This database included all research conducted by faculty members of the PBRI Institute. However, when some data were unclear, we consulted the various bibliographic databases (Scopus, CINAHL, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and ThaiJO) or directly contacted authors. We also performed hand searches of key journals and reviewed reference lists of included or relevant sources of evidence. The search strategies were drafted and further refined through team discussions. The final search results were exported to the computer program, developed by the researchers using PHP Data Object (PDO) Class Function Crud from the Mysql Library Database for collecting research from the Praboromarajchanok Institute. Duplicates were removed by the researchers.

Selection of sources of evidence: Before starting the screening for this review, all nine reviewers screened the same three articles and reviewed the results. After discussion, we modified the screening and data extraction manual. During this pilot review session, the coefficient of agreement among the reviewers was 0.88. All reviewers examined the titles, abstracts, and full texts of all articles discovered by our search for possibly relevant publications. The data were extracted using the computer program mentioned earlier. A single researcher combined all selected articles that nine reviewers had reviewed to validate the process. Any discrepancies were resolved through discussion. Disagreements in study selection and data extraction were resolved by consensus and, if necessary, discussion with other reviewers. All study variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Data charting process: To decide which variables to extract, all reviewers created a data-charting form. Each reviewer independently charted the data prior to team discussion. Then, all reviewers discussed the findings and modified the data-charting form together. Data from eligible studies were charted using the PHP PDO program designed for this study. The tool was used to gather the required data on key research features and detailed information. Any disputes within the study team were resolved through discussion.

Data items: We collected data on article characteristics (e.g., research title, year of publication, type of publication, funder, and role of the researcher), types of research (e.g., survey, descriptive, qualitative, research and development, action research, and experimental research), characteristics of the target population

(e.g., vulnerable group, healthy people, health care providers), target population classified by age group (e.g., school-age children, adolescents, older people). We also determined if the research addressed the UN Sustainable Development Goals (e.g., no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being), Thai national policy (e.g., employing digital and information technology and artificial industry, promoting human capital development-friendly surroundings, preparing for a quality aging society), the Thai Ministry of Public Health research agenda (e.g., people excellence, service excellence, governance excellence), or Praboromarajchanok Institute policy (e.g., community health development, service mind, development of community health executives competency). We also examined whether the research addressed any of the 19 service plans (e.g., heart, cancer, renal) or one of the essential care services (e.g., prevention and promotion, maternal and child health, chronic disease, psychiatric diseases & mental health) established by the Thai Ministry of Public Health. We also examined whether the research provided recommendations for research utilization (e.g., nursing education, nursing practice, or nursing policy).

Synthesis of results: We categorized the studies into different research categories, participant demographics, and study designs to meet the scoping review's objectives. We also described whether the different types of research addressed goals, priorities, or topic areas mentioned in associated research policies.

Results

Selection of journal articles in scoping review

The initial search yielded 819 articles reviewed by title, abstract, and text. After removing 15 duplicate studies, reviewed articles yielded 804 citations. No article was disqualified based on the title or abstract. Thus, 804 full-text articles were obtained and evaluated for inclusion in the study. All 804 studies were deemed appropriate for inclusion in this review. (**Figure 1.**)

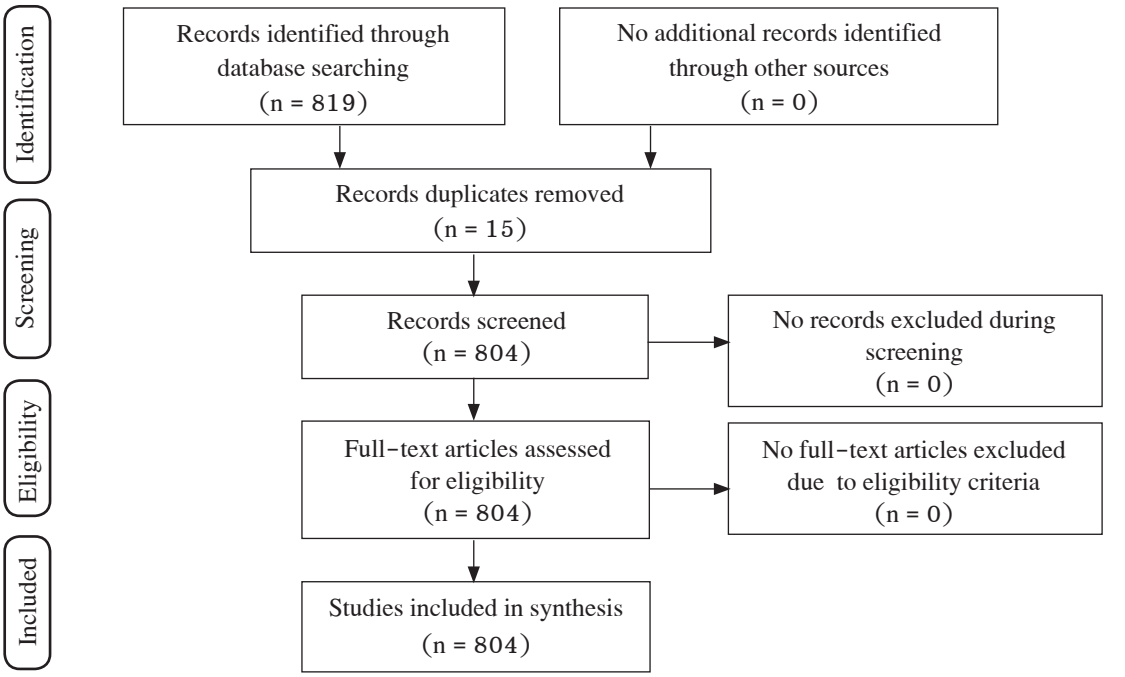


Figure 1. Flow diagram for the scoping review

Characteristics of journal articles included in the review

The general characteristics of the research articles are described in **Table 1**, including the year of publication, characteristics of the work, track of publication, and funding type. Most included studies were published in 2020 (57.7%). Most articles did not contain research conducted by authors who were studying in a master's or doctoral degree (92.8%). Almost half (48.38%) of the papers were published in Thai peer-reviewed journals in Tier 1 of the Thai Journal Citation Index Centre (TCI), followed by 44.78% of papers being published in peer-reviewed Thai journals in Tier 2 of the Thai Citation Index Centre (TCI). Only 6.84% were published peer-reviewed in international journals. Most of the authors received research funding from the PBRI (36.07%), followed by external funding from Thai sources (6.22%) and funding from external institutions outside Thailand (1.99%). However, we were unable to verify the funding sources for slightly more than half of the papers (55.72%) (**Table 1**).

Table 1. General characteristics of research articles included in scoping review (N = 804)

General characteristics	Number	Percentage
Year of publication		
B.E. 2563 (2020)	464	57.7
B.E. 2562 (2019)	340	42.3
The context that study was conducted in		
Not part of the author's graduate studies	746	92.8
Part of the author's thesis	37	4.6
Part of the author's dissertation	21	2.6
Track of publication		
Thai peer-reviewed journals, Tier 1, Thai Journal Citation Index Centre (TCI)	389	48.38
Thai peer-reviewed journals, Tier 2, Thai Journal Citation Index Centre	360	44.78
International peer-reviewed journals	55	6.84
Funding		
The Praboromarajchanok Institute (PBRI)	290	36.07
External funding sources in Thailand	50	6.22
External funding sources from outside of Thailand	16	1.99
Not specified	448	55.72

Results

Research setting, research design, and study participants

One-third of the studies were conducted in communities (32.71%), followed by classrooms (i.e., teaching/curriculum research, 28.11%) and clinics (22.64%). A quarter of the studies used a descriptive study design (27.36%), followed by quasi-experimental research (17.66%) and correlational design (10.95%). When examining the personal characteristics of the study participants, we found that most of the participants were health personnel (44.65%), followed by healthy people (26.00%), and persons with health problems (22.39%) (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Types of the research setting, research design, and study participants in articles included in scoping review (N = 804)

Item (able to answer more than one item)	Number	Percentage
Research setting		
Community	263	32.71
Classroom	226	28.11
Clinic	182	22.64
College	143	17.8
Research design		
Descriptive study	220	27.36
Quasi-experimental study	142	17.66
Correlational study	88	10.95
Qualitative research	86	10.70
Research and development	85	10.57
Survey	43	5.35
Systematic review/scoping review/meta-analysis	39	4.85
Mixed methods research	23	2.86
Action research	22	2.74
PAR: Participatory action research	16	1.99
Evaluation research	11	1.37
Tool development	11	1.37
Experimental study	8	1.00
Comparative study	8	1.00
Case study	2	0.25
Study participant type		
Health personnel	359	44.65
Healthy people	209	26.00
Patients	180	22.39
Vulnerable group	138	17.16
Children and adolescents	78	9.70
Pregnant mothers	47	5.85
Patients with mental health problems	7	0.87
Handicapped	6	0.75
Documents (Meta-analysis/Systematic review)	39	4.85

Research topics relevant to strategies/policies

We analyzed the relevance of the research topics in the studies from our review with respect to Thailand's crucial strategies or policies, including the SDGs, the Thai Twenty-Year National Strategy (2018-2037), the Thai Twenty-Year National Strategic Plan for Public Health (2018-2037), and the policy of the Praboromarajchanok Institute. As shown in **Table 3**, the most common research topics congruent with the UN SDGs included health and well-being (56.84%), followed by quality of education (19.28%). However, about 20.52% of the research did not align with the UN SDGs. Regarding the Thai Twenty-Year National Strategy, the study results showed that about 34.1% of the included research

articles align with this strategy (including 18.53% for social and human research and 15.55% for healthy aging), meaning about 66.0% of the research topics were not aligned with the national strategy. For the Thai Ministry of Public Health's strategy, the study results showed that most of the research topics focused on the excellence in promotion, prevention, and protection (53.11%), followed by people excellence (33.83%), service excellence (16.04%), and governance excellence (1.62%). Finally, we found that slightly more than half of the studies (53.73%) were not congruent with the strategy of the Praboromarajchanok Institute. We identified that some research was congruent with the strategy of the Praboromarajchanok Institute, including constructing a healthy community (24.63%), followed by the development of nursing graduates' identity, which entails "services with humanized care" (17.91%), and competency development for community health executives (3.73%) (**Table 3**).

Table 3. Description of research topics aligned with UN and Thai national strategies/policies in scoping review (N = 804)

Research topics aligned to strategies/policies	Number	Percentage
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)		
Good health and well-being	457	56.84
Quality education (accessibility and affordability to quality education for all children)	155	19.28
Other	27	3.36
Not relevant	165	20.52
Thai twenty-year national strategy		
Social and human research	149	18.53
Healthy aging	125	15.55
Other	214	26.62
Not relevant	316	39.30
Thai twenty-year national strategic plan for public health		
Promotion, prevention, & protection excellence	427	53.11
Improvement of health-related quality of life of Thai population in all age groups	288	35.82
Disease prevention and control and reduction of health risk factors	129	16.04
Improvement of quality of life at a district level	6	0.75
Environmental management	4	0.50
Service excellence	129	16.04
Development of health care system	93	11.57
Development of primary care cluster	28	3.48
Development of emergency medical services and referral system	8	1.00
People excellence	235	29.22
Development of health workforce	233	28.98
Development of health workforce network	25	3.11
Developing the efficiency of the health workforce management system	14	1.74
Governance Excellence	13	1.62
Development of health research study and innovation	7	0.87
Development of a sound governance system and quality organization	2	0.25
Development of health informatics system	2	0.25
Health finance management	1	0.12
Restructuring and development of health legislation	1	0.12
The policy of the Praboromarajchanok Institute (PBRI)		
Constructing healthy community	198	24.63
Development of the identity for graduates (humanized care)	144	17.91
Development of competency of health community executives	30	3.73

Research topics relevant to service plans and essential care

We found that most studies were not congruent with the 19 service plans established by the Thai Ministry of Public Health (55.35%). The most common research topics that were congruent included non-communicable diseases (12.06%), followed by maternal and child health (10.32%), and mental health and psychiatry (9.08%). Additionally, the most common research topics that matched the essential care services established by the Thai Ministry of Public Health included essential care services for older people (18.91%), followed by prevention and health promotion (18.28%), and chronic diseases (14.05%) **(Table 4).**

Table 4. Description of research issues corresponding to service plans and essential care services established by the Thai Ministry of Public Health (N = 804)

Research issues (able to answer more than one item)	Number	Percentage
Service plans		
Non-communicable diseases	97	12.06
Maternal and child health	83	10.32
Mental health and psychiatry	73	9.08
Primary health care and district health	37	4.60
Medicine	30	3.73
Cancer	26	3.23
Accident and emergency	17	2.11
Surgery	17	2.11
Renal	11	1.37
Rational drug use	10	1.24
Intermediate care and palliative care	9	1.12
Heart	9	1.12
Newborn	9	1.12
Drugs	8	1.00
Orthopedics	3	0.37
Eye	2	0.25
Thai traditional medicine and complementary medicine	2	0.25
Oral health	1	0.12
Organ donation and transplant	1	0.12
Not relevant	445	55.35
Essential care services		
Older people	152	18.91
Prevention and promotion	147	18.28
Chronic disease	113	14.05
Maternal and child health	86	10.70
Psychiatric diseases and mental health	70	8.71
Adolescents	46	5.72
Emergency medical system	21	2.61
Pre-school	12	1.49
End-of-life	11	1.37
Disability	10	1.24
COVID- 19	3	0.37
Acute minor disease	2	0.25
Dental health	1	0.12
Not relevant	130	16.17

Discussion

Our findings indicate a paucity of research published in peer-reviewed international journals and research that received funding from external sources, particularly from international funders. Worldwide, the publication of research papers in international journals has become a requirement for educational institutes. Often, research publications are one of the most visible and easily measurable indicators of competitiveness among universities worldwide.[28] However, publishing in international journals can be difficult for Thais due to a lack of English writing skills and the difficulty of learning English as a second language.[28] In addition, a previous study reported that the most common obstacle among Thai academic scholars in publishing their English papers was their lack of English language skills.[29] Therefore, establishing an institutional policy to promote research publications in international journals by improving the faculty's English proficiency may be helpful.

When evaluating whether or not to fund a research proposal, research funders often examine whether researchers can build their collaborative network for conducting research. In addition, funders often look at what publications researchers have produced and whether those publications have been cited in other work.[30] Thus, we urge the PBRI's administrators to improve the support for and enhance the competencies of faculty members to prepare manuscripts for peer-reviewed international journals and write proposals for consideration by international funders.

In this scoping review, we identified that a quarter of the studies were descriptive designs. We also observed that most of the study participants were health personnel in working-age groups. However, this type of research may not be sufficient to address real-world problems. For instance, Thailand has an aging society. As a result, more research focusing on healthy aging, not just working-age people, is needed. Real-world research refers to applied research that examines personal experiences, social lives and social systems, and related policies and initiatives to understand the real lives of people in society and their consequences.[10] Real-world research can shape the world and help us understand many situations. Most real-world research has been conducted in educational institutes in applied fields such as education and health-related fields such as nursing, social policy, or social work.[10] Since most previous studies of the Faculty of Nursing, the PBRI were descriptive studies, more advanced research designs such as randomized controlled trials should be conducted as this design is the best way to demonstrate causality.[10] In addition, mixed methods should be conducted in combination with qualitative and quantitative designs for real-world research.[10]

Our study findings may not be congruent with a recent scoping review because the review scope is different. While our scoping review included research conducted by the Faculty of Nursing, PBRI, from January 2019 to December 2020, a recent review included research conducted by all Thai nursing researchers from July 2018 to June 2021.[21]

The studies included in our review display an increased effort to conduct research in line with the United Nations SDGs. However, we found that research topics aligned with key strategies or Thai national policies were scarce. For example, about 66% of the included papers were not congruent with the Thai national strategy, 53% were not in line with the Praboromarajchanok Institute's policy, and 55% did not align with the service plans established by the Thai Ministry of Public Health, Thailand. The results from this study are not unique to Thailand. In many other countries, a lot of nursing research is conducted that is not aligned with the strategic health priorities of a country or does not address policy implications.[31,32,33] A previous study reported that to successfully incorporate research findings into policies, researchers should engage stakeholders throughout the project process.[34] Researchers should start with research topics that

meet stakeholders' needs, agree with stakeholders on research design and disseminate new research findings into policy-making.[34] While many scholars want to influence policy-making with their research findings, they may not know how and where to start.[35] Researchers can conduct research that influences policies by 1) conducting high-quality research, 2) making research relevant and readable, 3) understanding policy processes, 4) being accessible to policy-makers, 5) making a decision as researchers to be an issue advocate or honest broker, 6) building relationships with policy-makers, 7) being entrepreneurial, and 8) reflecting continuously.[35] To improve nursing research in the Faculty of Nursing at the PBRI, we recommend that administrators further analyze gaps in research and strengthen the support system for developing the nursing faculty's competencies. Thus, in the future, research findings from the Faculty of Nursing of the Praboromarajchanok Institute can be disseminated and ultimately have a greater impact on Thai health policy.

Limitations

Our scoping review has some limitations. To make our review simpler and more practical, we accessed papers from the internal database of the Praboromarajchanok Institute instead of searching for papers in bibliographic databases (Scopus, CINAHL, PubMed, ScienceDirect, or ThaiJO). The PBRI database, although not as comprehensive as the online bibliographic databases, contains all research papers conducted by the PBRI faculty members. Furthermore, because this scoping review was an enormous undertaking, our results are only current through December 2020. Finally, this scoping review focused on research conducted by the Faculty of Nursing under the Praboromarajchanok Institute. Consequently, our review does not cover all studies conducted by nurse instructors in other universities in Thailand. Further research is needed to better understand the full scope of nursing research in Thailand.

Conclusions

This scoping review aimed to identify gaps in previous research papers conducted by the Faculty of Nursing, the Praboromarajchanok Institute. The study findings showed that a few studies were published in peer-review international journals. However, most of the studies were not in line with the Thai national strategy, the Praboromarajchanok Institute's policy, and the service plans of the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand. The lack of research studies that align with many essential policies or strategies presents a challenge to administrators of the PBRI. Furthermore, aligning research topics with the related national policies should be a vital component of future research policy. Therefore, we suggest that the Faculty of Nursing members of the PBRI consider how to more closely align their future research with the themes outlined in the fundamental policies.

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ความสอดคล้องของการวิจัยทางการพยาบาลกับนโยบายทางสุขภาพในประเทศไทย: การทบทวนขอบเขตการวิจัย

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บทคัดย่อ: ยังไม่เป็นที่ทราบแน่ชัดว่าคณะพยาบาลศาสตร์ สถาบันพระบรมราชชนก สังกัดกระทรวงสาธารณสุขผลิตผลงานวิจัยที่สอดคล้องกับนโยบายทางสุขภาพอย่างไร การทบทวนขอบเขตการวิจัยเป็นวิธีการที่มีประโยชน์ในการค้นหารูปแบบการวิจัยที่เกี่ยวข้องกับนโยบายทางสุขภาพ ผู้เขียนจึงศึกษาสถานะของการวิจัยทางการพยาบาลที่ผลิตโดยคณะพยาบาลศาสตร์ สถาบันพระบรมราชชนก ที่จะสามารถเป็นแนวทางการวิจัยทางการพยาบาลในประเทศไทยในอนาคตต่อไป วัตถุประสงค์ของการทบทวนขอบเขตการวิจัยครั้งนี้เพื่อศึกษาสถานที่การทำวิจัย ระเบียบวิธีวิจัย กลุ่มตัวอย่างและประเด็นการวิจัยที่ดำเนินการโดยคณะพยาบาลศาสตร์ สถาบันพระบรมราชชนก ผู้วิจัยมุ่งประเด็นของความเกี่ยวข้องของการวิจัยทางการพยาบาลกับนโยบายและยุทธศาสตร์ระดับชาติ ผู้วิจัยสืบค้นบทความอย่างเป็นระบบที่ตีพิมพ์จากมกราคม 2562 ถึง ธันวาคม 2563 โดยใช้ฐานข้อมูลภายในของสถาบันพระบรมราชชนก นอกจากนี้ผู้วิจัยยังสืบค้นข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมจากฐานข้อมูลต่อไปนี้ คือ Scopus, CINAHL, PubMed, ScienceDirect, และ ThaiJO การสืบค้นพบงานวิจัยทั้งหมด 804 เรื่อง ร้อยละ 6.84 ได้รับการตีพิมพ์ในวารสารระดับนานาชาติ งานวิจัยส่วนใหญ่อยู่ในชุมชนและกลุ่มตัวอย่างส่วนใหญ่เป็นบุคลากรทางสุขภาพ งานวิจัยส่วนใหญ่ไม่สอดคล้องกับยุทธศาสตร์ชาติ นโยบายของสถาบันพระบรมราชชนก หรือระบบบริการสุขภาพของกระทรวงสาธารณสุข มีงานวิจัยที่สอดคล้องกับนโยบายหรือกลยุทธ์ที่จำเป็นค่อนข้างน้อย ผลการวิจัยครั้งนี้อาจจุดประเด็นให้โรงเรียนพยาบาลทั่วโลกผลิตงานวิจัยทางการพยาบาลที่สอดคล้องกับนโยบายทางสุขภาพต่อไป

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