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**THE RESEARCH CULTURE IN AN
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
THAILAND UNIVERSITY CONTEXT**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the research culture of lecturers teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Thai higher education. In particular it explores how EFL lecturers get involved in the research process within their institutions. This investigation involved 19 lecturers from two different university settings in Thailand.

This study employed a qualitative case study approach and was conducted in four phases. In the first phase, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 13 EFL lecturers from one university. In the second phase, four case studies were selected from the original sample of 13 EFL lecturers. This focused on each lecturer's research knowledge, details of research experience, and factors influencing their research involvement. In the third phase, a focus group was held with six EFL lecturers from a second university. This looked at factors influencing their research involvement in that context. In addition, document analysis was employed in phases two and three to provide a profile of each university setting. The final phase utilised document analysis to broaden insights into the university research contexts of EFL lecturers.

The findings from this study revealed that the EFL lecturers' research involvement was influenced by a dynamic interaction between internal and external factors. The EFL lecturers each valued research differently. Time constraints, limited research funding and support were major factors affecting their research involvement. The study identified that the EFL research culture was not well developed and the EFL lecturers produced low research outcomes in terms of quantity and quality. The study also revealed that the status of the Thai EFL research culture was negatively impacted by priorities in the wider global research context.

The study suggests that the EFL lecturers need more encouragement and support to conduct research as a means of improving their teaching practice in order to enhance students' English proficiency. Enhancing the research culture may also increase EFL lecturers' professional status as well as maintaining and increasing the international reputation of the university. In addition, EFL lecturers, universities, the government, and policy makers need to take more responsibility in developing an effective research culture in this area due to its significance in the global economy.

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