Factors Associated with Levels of Future Orientation among Vocational Students in Bangkok

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ABSTRACT

In Thailand, vocational students frequently have social problems such as violence in the community compared to other groups of students. This research aimed to study the future orientation among vocational students in a vocational school in Bangkok. Three hundred and fifteen students from a vocational college were recruited during March 2016. Self-administered questionnaires which included three aspects of future orientation i.e. in continuing education, in future occupation and in family forming were used to collect data. Statistical analysis of association between factors and levels of future orientation was done by t- test and ANOVA with multiple comparisons by LSD. Statistical significant level was set at 0.05. The results showed that overall future orientation of vocational students was at a fair level. The factors that were significantly associated with the level of future orientation were age, parenting style and achievement motivation. Vocational students aged 15-18 years old significantly had the highest score of future orientation. High achievement motivation and strict parenting style had also significant association with highest future orientation. This findings would help set policies and management to improve future orientation among vocational students.

Introduction

Adolescent violence is one of key social problems in Thailand. Recent study identified reasons for such violence among vocational students in Bangkok were revenge form previous fights and different response to threats of violence such as concealing weapons (Wongtongkam, Ward, Day, & Winefield 2015). There are several explanation of why such violent behaviors commonly occur among vocation students in Bangkok. It may be due to the rearing pattern, peer pressure, effects of environment condition, personality, poor result in education. All of which may result in low level of future orientation.

Future orientation has had its deep roots in psychological thinking, and called attention to the long standing interest in two fundamental issues: the motivation power of constructing future images and their development across age. The importance of future thinking for influencing presents behavior tendencies, and the ability to think about the future and realizes the "scope of time ahead" which increase with age, reach a special development significance in adolescence (Seginer, 2009). Capacity for self-direction becomes more pronounce in adolescence, as transition-to-adulthood and adult roles become more tangible and getting ready for them a normative expectation. Future orientation is related to adolescence more than to any other developmental periods. As early as the 1960s several other developmental psychologists considered future orientation an essential adolescent developmental mechanism (Seginer, 2009). Many of young adults often suffer with the uncertainty of their future in career. Many of them still do not have much clues about their future occupation or even the points of their current study. Future orientation will motivate them to think about the future and be aware of issues that might soon be arisen.

The person who contains of this orientation will turn themselves into a creative person that can handle their own problems and be able to manage the problems of their society (Tengnaritsiri, 2004). Vocational students in Bangkok Thailand may have less or deficit of future orientation. Success in life consists of many factors including both external and internal factors. The external factor is one of the factors that affects the success and individual's expectation such as parenting and parents' child rearing that can influence the child's thought, decision and behavior expressions. With the caring of parents that provides some guidance for the child and supports that they need, this will give their child a better chance of success life. Generally students who have been logically and reasonably taken care of will have a greater attitude towards study and achievement motivation. Other factors found to be significantly associated with future orientation were age, gender, grade

point average (GPA) (Tengnaritsiri, 2004), socioeconomic status, race, urban habitat, parental status (Samblanet, 2014), personality, child rearing pattern, learning environment and achievement motivation (Rungthanasak, 2009). Self-efficacy, reasonableness and strict discipline were also found to be significant factors (Vorachet, 2005).

Thai adolescents in vocational schools are very crucial for national development and have high risk in behavioral problems. Their problems mainly concerned with social values, information technology, violent behavior, gambling and drugs. These problems were elicited by several factors such as the adolescents themselves, the influences of the environment, families, and society.

This study aimed to examine the level of future orientation among vocational students in Bangkok, Thailand and its associated factors. Factors included in this study were age, class year, field of study, grade point average (GPA), family status, parenting style and achievement motivation.

Purposes

1. To study levels of future orientation among Thai vocational students.

2. To study factors significantly associated with levels of future orientation among Thai vocational students which included age, class year, field of study, grade point average (GPA), family status, parenting style and achievement motivation.
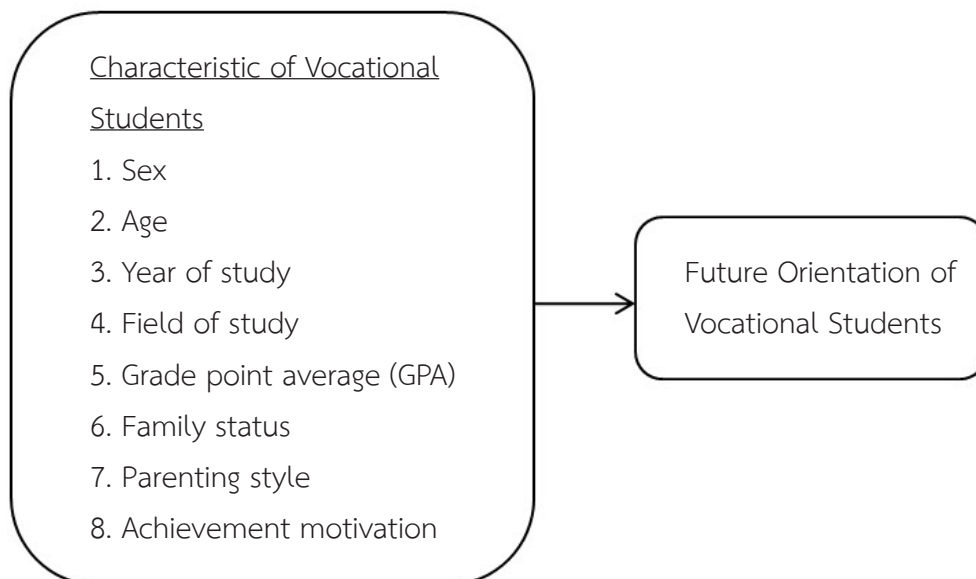
Conceptual framework and Hypothesis

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Hypothesis

Significant factors associated with level of future orientation among Thai vocational students were sex, age, class year, field of study, GPA, family status, parenting style and achievement motivation.

Benefit of Research

Knowledge of factors associated with future orientation among Thai vocational students and application of this knowledge will help improve and stimulate proper policy and management to increase future orientation among Thai vocational students.

Research Process

This research has been approved by the Committee on Human Right Related to Research Involving Human Subject Faculty of Medicine Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University on March 10, 2016 (ID 01-59-81). Three hundreds and fifteen vocational students at Bangkok College of Technology were recruited into the study. Self administrated questionnaires were used to collect data and were distributed to vocational students during March 2016. Questionnaires related to issues of future orientation and associated factors were constructed according to knowledge and information from literature reviews. Three experts examined and approved the content coverage and validity.

Population and Sample

The populations in this study were 315 vocational students in 2nd-3rd level at Bangkok College of Technology in the academic year of 2015. Sample size calculation in this research used formula (Daniel, 1999) as follow

$$n = \frac{Z^2\alpha/2\ PQ}{d^2}$$

P = Proportion of the high level future orientation population among Thai students = 58% (Kajonsombat, 2010). Variation of d was set at 10% of P. Z^2 equaled to 1.96 for type one error of 5%. The desired sample size for this study was at least 275 students. However, data collection was done in groups of students. Totally 315 students were recruited to answer the questionnaires.

Instruments

The questionnaires consisted of 4 parts as follow:

Part 1 General information included sex, age, class year, field of study and GPA.

Part 2 Future orientation consisted of 15 questions which were include all 3 aspects of continuing education, future occupation and family forming. Summation of scores of all aspects was done to get level of future orientation. Scoring of future orientation from the answers of vocational student were scores for positive questions were as follow.

Strongly agreed	5
Agreed	4
Uncertain	3
Disagreed	2
Strongly disagreed	1

For negative question the scoring was reversed. Levels of future orientation were categorized into 3 levels (low, fair, high) by using mean ± 1 standard deviation (S.D.). If the score were less than mean - 1 S.D., future orientation was categorized to be low. If the scores were higher than mean + 1 S.D., the future orientation was categorized as high. Fair future orientation had the score between low and high.

Part 3 Achievement motivation consisted of 10 questions. Scoring of achievement motivation from the answers of vocation students was done in the same way as future orientation. Levels of achievement motivation were categorized into 3 levels (low, fair, high) using mean and standard deviation in the same way as future orientation categorization.

Part 4 Parenting Styles consisted of 15 questions about details of 3 patterns of parenting styles (5 questions in each pattern).

1) Reasonable parenting style (Authoritative)

2) Free parenting style (Permissive)

3) Strict parenting style (Authoritarian)

In the questionnaires the students were asked how much they agree with the statement of how they were raised by parents. The scores were given to the level of agreement of the statements in the same way as future orientation. The type of parenting style of a student was the style that got most scores. There were 35 students whose responses were categorized into more than one type of parenting styles. Because of these inconclusive responses, they were excluded from analysis. Thus there were 280 students who were classified by their parenting style.

Future orientation questionnaire consisted of 15 items (e.g. ability and interest in continuing education, choosing career path, working to form a prosperous family) with Cronbach's alpha coefficient = 0.846. Parenting style questionnaires consisted of 15 items (e.g. parents were consulted before decision, staying overnight with friends without permission, surveillance by parents or relatives) with Cronbach's alpha coefficient = 0.751. Achievement motivation questionnaires consisted of 10 items (e.g. trying to succeed in study and work to satisfy parents, competing with friends in study) with Cronbach's alpha coefficient = 0.751.

Data analysis included descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Student t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the association between variables. Multiple comparisons, LSD was applied following significant main effects to identify pairwise differences. Level of statistical significance was set at 0.05.

Result

1. Scores of future orientation

Mean and standard deviation of scores of future orientation was 18.5 ± 3.5 (Range 15-75). Levels of future orientation were categorized as follow.

Low level   score less than 16

Fair level   score 16-22

High level   score more than 22

Most vocational students (228 students, 72.40%), had future orientation at fair level. Thirty eight students (12.00 %) had future orientation at low level and 49 students (15.60%) had high level of future orientation.

2. Achievement motivation

Total score of achievement motivation was 50. Mean and standard deviation was 39.7 ± 4.8 (Range 27-50). Levels of achievement motivation were categorized into 3 levels as follow.

Low level   score less than 35

Fair level   score 35-44

High level   score more than 44

Most vocational students (221 students, 70.20%), had achievement motivation at fair level. Fifty two students (16.50%) had achievement motivation at low level and 42 students (13.30%) had achievement motivation at high level.

3. Parenting Style

Most vocational students (210 students, 75.00%) were raised in reasonable style. Thirty eight students (13.60%) were raised in free style and 32 students (11.40%) were raised in strict style.

Association between characteristics of vocational students and level of overall future orientation.

Most of vocational students (46.00%) were 19-20 years old. Most of them (96.20%) were male. Only 12 students of them (3.80%) were female. Most students (54.90%) had GPA 2.5-3.0 and 81.30% were in 3rd year class. Fifty three percent of them studied in field of automobile. Seventy two percent had their parents staying together. By univariate analysis, characteristics significantly associated with level of overall future orientation were age, parenting style and achievement motivation (table 1).

Future orientation among students aged 15-18 years old were significantly higher than among students aged 19-20 years old but not significantly higher than students aged >20 years old. No significant difference in future orientation between students aged 19-20 years old and aged >20 years old (table 2).

Strict parenting style had the highest future orientation scores compared to other parenting styles. There were significant differences between future orientation among students with strict parenting style and reasonable style but no significant difference between strict and free parenting styles. Students with free parenting style had significantly higher future orientation scores

when compared to students with reasonable parenting style (table 3).

Achievement motivation had significant association with future orientation scores. Higher level of achievement motivation had significantly higher score of future orientation in every level (table 4).

Table 1 Characteristics of vocational students and scores of overall future orientation

characteristic	Scores of overall future orientation						
	No. (%)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	t	F	df	p-Value
Age (n = 315)							
15-18	102 (32.40)	57.13	7.852		4.074	2	0.018*
19-20	145 (46.00)	54.16	8.487				
>20	68 (21.60)	55.57	7.414				
Sex (n = 315)							
Male	303 (96.20)	55.41	8.206	-0.172		313	0.866
Female	12 (3.80)	55.75	6.580				
GPA (n = 315)							
<2.5	79 (25.10)	54.67	8.312		1.150	2	0.318
2.5-3.0	173 (54.90)	55.30	7.979				
>3.0	63 (20.00)	56.71	8.348				
Class (year) (n = 315)							
2nd	59 (18.70)	56.78	8.712	1.420		313	0.182
3rd	256 (81.30)	55.11	7.990				
Field of study (n = 315)							
Automobile	166 (52.70)	56.27	8.509		1.791	3	0.149
Mechanics	65 (20.60)	54.82	7.872				
Electricity	39 (12.40)	53.10	7.355				
Electronics	45 (14.30)	55.22	7.525				
Parental status (n = 315)							
Staying together	228 (72.40)	55.90	7.920	1.614		313	0.109
Separated	87 (27.60)	54.18	8.619				
Parenting style (n = 280)							
Reasonable	210 (75.00)	54.29	7.441		6.882	2	0.001*
Free	38 (13.60)	57.76	6.700				
Strict	32 (11.40)	58.31	7.096				
Achievement Motivation (n = 315)							
Low	52 (16.50)	49.9	5.265		48.101	2	0.000*
Fair	221 (70.20)	55.04	7.530				
High	42 (13.30)	64.29	7.017				

Note: *p<0.05, t = student t-test, F = ANOVA, df = degree of freedom

Table 2 Multiple comparisons by least significant difference (LSD) between age and future orientation

Dependent Variable: Future orientation

(I) age	(J) age	Mean Difference (I-J)	p-value
15-18 year	19-20 year	2.851*	0.005
19-20 year	20 up	-1.132	0.334
20 up	15-18 year	-1.719	0.169

Note: The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3 Multiple comparisons by least significant difference (LSD) between parenting style and future orientation

Dependent Variable: Future orientation

(I) Parenting style	(J) Parenting style	Mean Difference (I-J)	p-value
Reasonable	Free	-3.477*	0.007
Free	Strict	-0.549	0.754
Strict	Reasonable	4.027*	0.004

Note: The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4 Multiple comparisons by least significant difference (LSD) between achievement motivation and future orientation

Dependent Variable: Future orientation

(I) Achievement motivation	(J) Achievement motivation	Mean Difference (I-J)	p-value
Low	Fair	-4.786*	0.000
Fair	High	-8.207*	0.000
High	Low	12.992*	0.000

Note: The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Disscussion

In this study most of vocational students had fair level of future orientation. The result is similar with the study of Tengnaritsiri (2004) who found that the majority of high school students in Nan province have future orientation in the moderate level. The study of Khemdee (2007) on the relationship between emotional quotient and future orientation of middle adolescences (16-18 years old) in school in Trat province, also found that most adolescent 53.60% had fair level of future orientation and 45.30% had high level of future orientation. She also found that only 0.28% had low level of future orientation. But these findings were different from the study of Vorachet (2005) who found that most of Mathayomsuksa 3

students in Buriram province had high level future orientation. The study of Siriwipat (1998) also found that future orientation in students in secondary schools was at high level. All these studies as well as ours used similar questions to assess future orientation. The difference may be due to different in ages and education of the study groups. As show in our study, younger students had significantly higher future orientation. Why future orientation decreased when students are older is one of an interesting question to be verified and explored especially among adolescences in Thailand.

There were other several factors found to be significantly associated with future orientation. In USA, the study of Samblanet (2014) on future orientation among urban youths found that being African American consistently predicted lower future orientation. Having primary caregiver who was married or cohabiting increased future orientation. Two counter-intuitive findings also emerged. Greater household income actually reduced future orientation but social disorder increased future orientation.

In our study, only students in vocation school were included. It seemed to be common belief that these students in such institutes were those who failed to prepare to further their studies in university. This lower grade of study may also related to lower level of future orientation. In our study, age, parenting style and achievement motivation were found to be significant associated with future orientation. Tengnaritsiri (2004) found that among high school students in Nan, gender, age, academic grades and GPA had statistically significant association with future orientation. In addition, Rungthanasak (2009) who studied characteristics of Matthayomsuksa 6 students attending schools in the Si Sa Ket Educational Service Office (Zone 4) found that child-rearing pattern, personality, learning environment, teacher's role, and learning attitude were significantly associated with future orientation. Also Sudsanae (2005) who studied Mathayomsuksa 6 students in the Office of Mahasarakam Education Service area (Zone 1) found that different child-rearing practice, achievement motivation and personalities could affect the future orientation and self-concepts. Vorachet (2005) found that, among of Mathayomsuksa 3 students in Buriram province the variable with the highest total influence was self-control. The other ranks were attitude towards learning, self-efficacy, achievement motivation, reasonableness, mass media usage, parental education encouragement, A-type personality and strict discipline respectively.

The earliest study on the effect of parent-adolescent relationship on future orientation was carried out by Trommsdorff (1983) and her associates. Drawing on social learning theory they predicted that in adolescence parental support and

encouragement prompt two personality inclinations that lead to positive attitudes toward the future and willingness to pursue future goals: sense of internal control and optimism about the outcomes of one's behavior. These hypotheses have been confirmed that adolescents who perceive their parents as supportive and encouraging express greater optimism toward the future and construct more extended and differentiated future orientation (Seginer, 2009).

Adolescent-parent relationship is only one aspect of parenting (Collins & Laursen, 2004). Often when researchers refer to parenting they in fact describe adolescent-parent relationships and use positive parenting as an umbrella term subsuming constructs like authoritative, autonomous-accepting, enabling (vs restrictive), child centered parenting, and individuation and connectedness facilitating parenting. The observation that behavior indicating positive parenting changes with age of child (Maccoby, 1992) suggests that parenting is affected not only by parents' personality, values, beliefs and cultural practices but also by children's age-dependent characteristics and behavior and by parents' appraisal of those characteristics and behavior as normative (Collins & Laursen, 2004). Specific to the effect of positive parenting on future orientation, it

was suggested that adolescents will invest in the construction of the future to the extent they appraise their families as supporting (rather than hampering) an independent search of a future course.

In our study, strict parenting style had a significant positive effect on future orientation. Parenting styles may be different in different context of society. The role of parental limit setting is to contain exploration and experimentation by reiterating age-appropriate Dos and Don'ts and setting external limits against what adults regard as unsafe risky adventures. This may help adolescent to had high future orientation in Thai society especially in Bangkok.

Vocational students in Bangkok were found to have fair level of future orientation. Younger students had higher future orientation. Strict parenting style and higher achievement motivation were significantly associated with high future orientation.

Recommendation for Application

1. Motivation of students to achieve in life should be applied and emphasized among students of every classes.

2. Younger adolescents should be taught and advised to maintain their future orientation.

3. Strict parenting style should be studied and advocated in the society.

Recommend for Further Research

1. Cohort study of level of future orientation among students when they were older and in higher classes.

2. Controlled study on effects of different parenting styles on future orientation of students.

Acknowledgements

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