

The power of ambition in achieving a vocational education

Soontornpathai Chantara^{1,a*}, Sittichai Keawkuekool^{2,b} and Ravinder Koul^{3,c}

¹ Ph.D Candidate, Faculty of Industrial Education and Technology,

² Dean of Faculty of Industrial Education and Technology,
King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand

³ Great Valley School of Graduate Professional Studies, Penn State University, USA.

^{a*} soontorn.chantara@gmail.com, ^bsittichai.kae@kmutt.ac.th, ^cramankoul@yahoo.com

Abstract

Much is written about the origins of motivation and ambition, but little is known about personal goals and the influence of physical well-being, religious belief and materialism and its relationship with the desire of Vocational students to be mastery goal oriented. This paper to examine the factors in achieving higher efficiency from students' aspiration, materialism and religious outlook predict students multiple goal orientation. The data were collected from 1670 students in Vocational colleges in Thailand. Analysis of the results and utilising regression analyses indicated that the reasons for wanting good grades differed depending upon aspiration, Ideal of life and religion. Mastery goal orientation was forecasted by religious belief and physical well-being. In other way Performance approach goal orientation and Performance avoidance goal orientation was significantly predicted by materialism, image and religious outlook. Please note that gender had not significance. This compliments Maslow's findings in his hierarchy of needs self-growth, impression management and social comparison were discussed to understand all relationships. This research leads to the conclusion that, if an educator provides a moral and intellectual environment for learning that students will be more likely to be self-motivated and want to improve themselves.

Keywords

Vocational education, ambition, achievement goal orientations, Life and religion, Materialism

1. Introduction

Attitude of students is very important to drive them to focus on their studies and future life goal. It drives them to focus on their career path as well as students' personal needs or their own personal aspirations and ambitions [1]. Thus; Sterling [2] was point out the rising of diverging interests and values that willing to be sustainability education in future.

In developing a country's competitiveness, development of the middle-level manpower is one of the main issues to be considered. Life and career skills become very important to prepare student for post-secondary education and workforce [3]. Eventually, Thailand realizes the importance of this matter and emphasizes the need to increase vocational and training which is going to be in force in the very near future. There was requiring administrative system that should promote unity in policy guidelines and variety in Thailand human resources management [4], [5]. As an illustration, labour market demanding these day, Vocational Education Commission in Thailand is one of the most important organization to produce and develop vocational manpower at all levels for the general public (National Statistics Organization of Thailand [6]. The current strength situation of vocational education in Thailand has more than 800 vocational education institutions (public and private). There are currently over one million students enrolled in the various vocational study pathways [7]. Despite that, the

reflections of employer which state the graduates have weaknesses in both theory and practice from labour market showing lack of quality of Vocational education in Thailand. Under these assumptions, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) recommended that the government may provide Vocational Education Commission in Thailand in order to prevent students from dropping out by offering them a curriculum that is both more suitable for early labour market entry and less demanding in the purely academic subjects. This may also encourage students to stick to one discipline rather than changing during the academic year [8]. As has been said, we generally perceived that how important of vocational education need to develop, but there are infrequently research which encouraging vocational student neither motivation nor aspiration, as previous only to particularly at the elementary school, high school or university [3].

2. Research conceptual framework

From the numbers of review literature, we found that Achievement goal theory is a specific theory, which developed to understand achievement behavior in academic tasks and school setting [9], Expectancy-value theory of motivation and can describe a person's reflection on their motivation, Self-determination theory is about experiencing freedom to make choices [10] which has required the apprehension of innate psychological needs for competence,

autonomy, and relatedness according to humanistic and existential theory by Fromm, Maslow and Rogers [11]. The Aspiration Index by Kasser & Ryan [12] refers to people's intrinsic aspirations that contain life goals like relationships generally and personal development versus extrinsic aspirations.

Certainly, there are various approaches to understanding human characteristics which are complex and extremely important [13]. Naturally, human beings are individual differences in culture and material growth by nation, also higher and transcendent nature and unpredictable emotions and their attitude [14], [15]. Evidence of the significant understanding of motivation has been set out in Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs' followed by many alternative sub-theories that influence motivational approaches, such as expectations of achievement and value outcome [10].

Values, beliefs, perceptions, interests and actions are essential component of motivation that are intimately related [3]. Moreover, culture also serves as a structure of the thoughts, actions, practices and creativity that lead to build a system of values which guides people's 'generalized plan' or a 'cognitive blueprint'.

Religio-psychical orientation among Thai community is characterized by their religious beliefs in illogical fatalistic and super natural attitudes. Komin had found that The Buddhist Thai significance indicate of the values rankings and cognitive humanity of Thai people [16].

Materialism is need for wealth, fame and Image that influences various aspects of people life [17]. There an evident of Thai appearance in social status pressure to materialistic behavior and attitudes [18]. Moreover, Materialism oriented in Thai education and society behavior research still has very few. The different definitions of "good life" (i.e. a life of luxury) and "necessities of life" (everyday expenses such as food, cloth and housing) needed to be expanded.

Namely, Thai are very ego oriented [19]. Ego oriented values tend to make Thai student rarely criticism and express their ideas and then affecting to their learning manner. Please note that, even the differences of Thai values from other nation especially from western had been studied, but there are a small number of researchers who examined a culture of larger power distances and strong social relations as Thai [16, 19].

To summarize, we found that past research had been studied on only between two variables, there are certain link between motivation goal orientation and aspirations, aspiration and materialism (life), but not between three of them which can identify important factor influence to motivation goal orientation of students. Lack of numbers which studies in Thai socio-culture context must be concern [20-21]. Moreover, vocational student are rarely investigated comparing with high school and university students, even there are one of the most important manpower to developing country as Thailand [3].

This paper reports the results of an investigation into Vocational students' aspiration, goal orientation and life and Religion. Data for this survey study was collected from students enrolled in six main majors in Vocational Education Commission in Thailand. Our investigation was designed to answer the following research questions: First, What are the relationships of Aspirations and Materialism and

Achievement Goal Orientations? Second, do they have intra relationship between each other? Third, what factor of Aspiration Influence on Achievement Goal Orientations? And finally, what factor of Life and Religiosity Influence on Achievement Goal Orientations? The findings from this study contribute to the literature on previous circumstances of Aspiration.

3. Research Method

3.1 Participants

This survey research analyzed data, we collected data with efficient way by large number of respondents (N = 1,670) refer to Technical and Vocational Education and Training students in Thailand (TVET) in year 2010

3.2 Measure

The theoretical framework summarized to three important categories of survey questionnaires: Aspirations, Goal orientation and Life and religion.

3.2.1 Aspirations

Aspirations; the 35-item adapted and translates to Thai from the validated Kasser and Ryan (1996) questionnaire, which it matured Aspiration Importance, Aspiration likelihood and Guiding Principle according to Self-determination Theory. Participants responded to each entry on a 7-point Likert scale [12].

3.2.2 Goal orientations

The 18-item Thai questionnaire was based on motivational achievement goal theory which had been studied [22]. The surveys measure how students perceived mastery orientation, performance approach orientation and performance avoidance orientation. The 5-point Likert scale had been used in this section

3.2.3 Life and religion

The 31-item in last categories we were survey about Life and religion. The Life and religion Thai questionnaire was adapted from past research [23]; we selected sections that can answer that how students feel about their religion and life is that related with their aspiration index. The 13-item Attitude towards religion and 18-item Three categories of Materialism was used: Success, Centrally, Happiness. The participants were required to response 5-point Likert scale.

3.3 Analysis

3.3.1 Factor analyses by the exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation.

3.3.2 Pearson's Correlation Analysis of Aspiration and materialism on achievement goal orientations.

- (1) Intra-correlations between variables
- (2) Aspiration and Goal orientation
- (3) Aspiration and Life and Religion
- (4) Life and Religion and Goal orientation

4. Results

4.1 Factor analyses

4.1.1 Aspirations scales factor analysis

The exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation of 35 items of 'Aspirations scales' shown only factors "Image" (e.g., to have my name appear frequently in the media) and factors "Physical well-being" (e.g., to have a physically healthy life style.), cumulative percentage of variance accounted for 60.86% of the total variance. Cronbach's

alphas values were .800 and .819. Note that, Factor loading < .4 are suppressed.

4.1.2 Goal orientations scales factor analysis

The 18 items of 'Goal orientations scales' exposed tree factors, accounted for 56.96% of the total variance. Cronbach's alphas values of the factors "Performance avoidance goal" (e.g., I don't want my teacher to evaluate me because she may find me incapable), "Mastery goal orientation" (e.g., I feel satisfied when I learn new things in my class) and "Performance approach goal" (e.g., I feel good when I do better than other students) were .841, .809 and .740. Note that, Factor loading < .4 are suppressed.

4.1.3 Life and religion scales factor analysis

Last of all, the varimax rotation factor analysis of 31 items of 'Life and religion scales' shown two factors, "Materialism" (e.g., I like a lot of luxury in my life) and "Religiosity" (e.g. my religion calms my emotions when I am upset or hurt) accounted for 55.13% of the total variance. Cronbach's alphas values of Materialism and Religiosity were .841, .809 and .740, Note that, Factor loading < .4 are suppressed.

4.2 Pearson's Correlation Analysis

The Aspiration and materialism on achievement goal orientations Correlation analysis are shown in Table 1

Table: 1 Correlation of Aspirations, Achievement Goal Orientations and Life and Religion

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Aspirations							
1. Image		.286**	.091**	.359**	.279**	.377**	.125**
2. Physical well-being			.309**	.028	-.114**	-.149**	.230**
Goal orientation							
3. Mastery				.316**	.079**	.036	.375**
4. Performance approach					.485**	.450**	.212**
5. Performance avoidance						.544**	.176**
Life and Religion							
6. Materialism							.107**
7. Religiosity							

Note. ** p < .01

4.1 Intra-correlations between variables

Correlation analysis shown that relationship within Aspiration and Life and Religion were positive related. Furthermore, Goal orientation shown that Mastery goal orientation were high related with Performance approach goal orientation (r = .316, p < .01) than performance avoidance goal orientation (r = .079, p < .01).

4.2 Aspiration and Goal orientation

We found positive related of 'Image; more on Performance approach goal orientation (r = .359, p < .01) and Performance avoidance goal orientation (r = .279, p < .01), but very low positive related with Mastery goal orientation (r = .091, p < .01). Moreover, 'physical well being' positive related only with Mastery goal orientation (r

= .309, p < .01), but negatively related with performance avoidance goal orientation (r = -.114, p < .01).

4.3 Aspiration and Life and Religion

Interesting point that 'Image' high positively related with 'Materialism' (r = .377, p < .01), but very low positive related with 'Religiously' (r = .125, p < .01). Thus, 'physical well being' shown small positive related with 'Religiously' (r = .230, p < .01), but negatively related with 'Materialism' (r = -.149, p < .01).

4.4 Life and Religion and Goal orientation

We found that, 'Materialism' was significant positive correlated to Performance avoidance goal orientation (r = .544, p < 0.01) correspondingly with Performance approach goal orientation (r = .450, p < .01), but no related with Mastery goal orientation. In addition, 'Religiosity' positively related with Mastery goal orientation (r = .375, p < .01) more than performance avoidance goal orientation (r = .112, p < .01) and Performance approach goal orientation (r = .076, p < .01)

5. Conclusion

The aim of this survey study was investigated influenced factor and relationship between motivational goal orientation, intrinsic aspiration and extrinsic aspiration and religiosity of vocational students. Data for this survey study was collected from students enrolled in only main majors in Vocational Education Commission in Thailand which may have differences characters of students.

Our findings verify intra relation between goal orientation, strongly positive relation between Mastery goal orientation and religion outlook. In the other hand, Materialism and Image positive related to Performance goal orientation as well. This respects Maslow's hierarchy of needs: self-growth, impression management and social comparison were discussed to understand all relationships. These results contribute to the literature on previous circumstances of Aspiration.

Student's motivational achievement behavior is caused by many senses according to Maslow; Brophy, Eccles and Wigfield; Locke and Latham; Covington; Atkinson and Raynor [13]. Aspirations be a great capable of describe a person's reflection on their motivation which very important to predict student's future choices of behavior, engagement, persistence and actual achievement. Moreover, materialism and religion orientation was considered that related with identity, personality, self-expression and image which linked to aspirations and vocational student motivation goal orientation.

Thai social characteristic [19], social-values, social hierarchy [20], religious-orientation and materialism in Thai peoples [18] are one of significant factors that possibly influence Thai ways in education and future life goal which it contrast with western or event other Asian culture[19]. Self -actualization by Maslow [14] and self-growth in Thai-Buddhism wisdom [24] possibly comparing to explain Thai life and aspirations. Collectivism thinking style of Thai student may relate with materialism and image [25].

Relevantly, our the understanding of motivational goal orientations, aspirations and religiosity oriented in vocational education student context be able to lead educator to

encourage student to be self-motivated and achieving in their self-aspiration.

6. References

- [1] Pimpa, N. (2007). Reference groups and choices of vocational education: Case of Thailand. International Education Research Conference. Fremantle: University of Notre Dame Australia.
- [2] Sterling, S. (2004). Higher Education and the Challenge of Sustainability : Problematics, Promise, and Practice. New York, Boston, Dordrecht, London, Moscow: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- [3] Lai, E. R. (2011). Motivation : A Literature Review . Pearson Education, Inc.
- [4] Atagi, R. (2002). The Thailand Educational Reform Project School Reform Policy. Bangkok: Education Sector Reform.
- [5] Bhumirat, C. (2005). Education Reform. Retrieved January 30, 2010, from Office of the National Education Commission: <http://www.edthai.com/reform/apr18a.htm>
- [6] National Statistics Organization of Thailand. (2008). The Labor Demand of Establishment. Retrieved October 5, 2009, from http://service.nso.go.th/nso/nsopublish/themes/theme_4-6-2.html
- [7] Vocational Education Commission of Thailand. (n.d.). Retrieved February 5, 2010, from Vocational Education Commission of Thailand: http://www.vec.go.th/doc/DirectorStr/college_th.php
- [8] (UIS), U. I. (2006). Partiipation in formal Technical and Vocational Education and Traning Programmes Worldwide. Bonn: UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
- [9] Midgley, C., Kaplan, A., Middleton, M., Maehr, M. L., Urdan, T., Anderman, L. H., et al. (1998). The Development and Validation of Scales Assessing Students' Achievement Goal Orientations. *Contemporary Educational Psychology* , 113–131.
- [10] Schunk, D. H. (2008). Learning Theories and educational perspectives. New Jersey: Pearson
- [11] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). publications. Retrieved January 22, 2010, from Self-DeterminationTheory: <http://www.psych.rochester.edu>
- [12] Kaser, T., & Ryan, R. M. (1996). Further Examining the American Dream ; Differential Correlats of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Goals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* , 280-287.
- [13] Dornyei, Z. (2005). Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom. Cambridge: The University Press.
- [14] Maslow, A. H. (1976). Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences. Westminster, London: Penguin Books Limited.
- [15] O'Leary, Z. (2010). The essential guide to Doing your research project. Great Britain: SAGE publications.
- [16] Komin, S. (1990). Culture and work-related values in Thai organizations. *International Journal of Psychology* , 681-704.
- [17] King, D. H., & Mitchell, A. M. (2010). Do materialism, intrinsic aspirations, and meaning in life predict students' meanings of education. *Social Psychology in Education* .
- [18] Larry, S. p. (2008). The Anatomy of Thai face. *journal of humanities* , 53-75.
- [19] Komin, S. (1991). Psychology of the Thai people. Bangkok: Magenta Co., .
- [20] Textor, R. B. (1992). The middle path for the future of Thailand: Technology in Harmony with culture and Enverionment. Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Press Co.,Ltd. .
- [21] Persons, L. S. (2008). The Anatomy of Thai face. *Journal of Humanities* , 53-75.
- [22] Alisa, S., Koul, R., & Kongsuwan, S. (2010). Achievement Goal Orientation and Differences in Self-Reported Copying Behaviour across Academic Programmes. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* , 419-430.
- [23] Ontakharai, S., Koul, R., & Nuan, J. (2008). Religious outlook and students' attitudes toward the environment . *Journal of Beliefs & Values: Studies in Religion & Education* , 305 - 311 .
- [24] Klausner, W. J. (1993). Reflections on Thai culture. bangkok: Amarin Printing Group Co.,Ltd.
- [25] Hallinger, P. (2004). Meeting the Challenges of Cultural Leadership: The changing role of principals in Thailand. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education* , 61-73.