

University students' sense of political efficacy In bangkok and its vicinity

Wanlop Ratchatranon¹, Vacharin Chansilp²

¹Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences Kasetsart University

²Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences. Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

¹wanlop.l@ku.th, ²vacharin2502@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to study the level of university students' sense of political efficacy, compare university students' sense of political efficacy by personal factors and examine an association between personal factors, political interest and sense of political efficacy of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity. The samples were 305 university students from 5 universities in Bangkok and its vicinity. The results of this research found that university students' sense of political efficacy level in Bangkok and its vicinity was medium. From the comparison of sense of political efficacy classified by personal factors, it found that different gender and fathers' occupation had different sense of political efficacy. Whereas, different religion, family income and mothers' occupation had not different sense of political efficacy. Political interest had an association with sense of political efficacy

Keywords

Political, Efficacy, Students, University

Article Received: 10 August 2020, Revised: 25 October 2020, Accepted: 18 November 2020

Introduction

Most western developed countries are ruled by embedded democracy. There are no constitution amendments. Societies of these developed countries facilitates an economic development and a cultural development. Democratic pyramid consists of political freedom, freedom of citizens, elections or acquisitions of accountable and autonomous elite, and wide political participation. Contrary to western developed countries, Thailand has confronted discontinuous development of democracy because of vicious circle. There are military interventions and coups. Coups' leaders abolishes old constitutions. This circle causes state instability and low level of political institutionalization. The shortage of political freedom. The reasons why democratization in Thailand is slowly developed, may be explained by the following causes. Firstly, Thai people lack of self-confident that they clearly comprehend democratic regime and also perceive that politics is a duty of elite. This perception results in people's misunderstanding about their political behavior. They don't think their political demands will strongly stimulate political institution to have a policy implementation for responding their demands. According to political psychology, we call this perception "a sense of political efficacy". Secondly, the role of Thai elite (including military) does not allow Thai people to have autonomous self-government. The elite monopolize their political power to take advantages by using democratic rule for legitimacy (Anasakulchareng, 2015:9). Thirdly, most Thai people don't know about their political duties and rights as civilized citizen who realize a sense of social owner and behave by participating in politics.

Literature Review

Researchers were interested in studying sense of political efficacy as a dependent variable. Campbell and his colleagues studied Americans' sense of political efficacy. They created a measure of sense of political efficacy (Campbell, 1954). Schulz did a research concerning political efficacy and applied Campbell's measure of sense of political efficacy. Six questions of the measure consisted of following items (Schulz, 2005). 1. When political issues or problems are being discussed, I usually have something to say. 2. I know more about following politics than most people my age. 3. I am able to understand most political issues easily. 4. The government cares a lot about what all of us think. 5. The government is doing its best to find out what people want. 6. When people get together to demand change, the leaders in government listen. Regarding to personal factors, Yuthaong studied undergraduate students' sense of political efficacy at department of political science and public administration, Kasetsart University Bangkok. His results of study showed that students who had different gender, age, father's occupation and mother' occupation had different sense of political efficacy (Yauwana, 2006). As same as Yuthapong, Vacharin did a dissertation concerning students' sense of political efficacy of four Thai high schools. He examined an association between independent variables (gender, age, level of education, family income) and a dependent variable (sense of political efficacy). He found that these independent variables had an association with the dependent variables (Chansilp, 1994). Regarding to political interest, Ley studied political efficacy. From his research" An empirical exploration of factors related to

adolescents' political efficacy" (2013), he examined an association between political interest, political trust and sense of political efficacy. The research result showed that political interest was a crucial variable to predict sense of political efficacy (Ley, 2013).

From these above literature review, Schulz's measure of political efficacy was applied to examine the sense of political efficacy of this research. Variables from the study of Yuthapong and Vacharin were used as independent variables of this research. University students are chosen as sample of this research because these students became new voters and new generation of Thai politics for the election in 2019 A.D (Meetaem, 2019; Chaiwat, 2018). These voters are 18-26 years old and have diversities in terms of gender, religion, family income and other factors. Research hypotheses of this study can be set.

H1: Gender has an association with sense of political efficacy.

H2: Faculty has an association with sense of political efficacy.

H3: Education level has an association with sense of political efficacy.

H4: Region has an association with sense of political efficacy.

H5: Family income has an association with sense of political efficacy.

H6: Father occupation has an association with sense of political efficacy.

H7: Mother occupation has an association with sense of political efficacy.

H8: Political interest has an association with sense of political efficacy.

Methodology

3.1 Population and Sample

This research populations are university students in Bangkok and its vicinity. The sample size is 305 university students from 5 faculties including Thammasat University, Ramkhamhaeng University, Srinakharinwirot University, University of the Chamber of Commerce and Bangkok University.

3.2 Data Collection

Research tool of this research is a questionnaire. It was created for data collection by basing on concept, theory, document and related research.

Data Analyses

In this research, the researcher applies various statistical tools for data analysis including Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, T-Test, one-way ANOVA and Canonical Correlation.

4.1 Hypotheses Testing

From an overall view, it finds that both university students' sense of political efficacy level and level of political interest are medium. The result of hypotheses testing shows that political interest has an association with sense of political efficacy. The difference of gender and father's occupation has different sense of political efficacy. Whereas, the difference of educational level, religion, mother's occupation, family income level has not different sense of political efficacy.

Discussions and Conclusion

Thai political situation may be used to explain why Thai university students have both medium level of sense of political efficacy and political interest. Thai political regime is not democratic but authoritarian. The political communication through social media is controlled and checked by the government. Therefore, university students are moderately interested in many political interest such as political campaign, social responsibility, political discussion and political communication. As the result, the level of sense of political efficacy of university students tends to be medium. The result of hypotheses testing shows that gender of university students has a positive association with sense of political efficacy. Male university students tend to have higher sense of political efficacy than female university students. Patriarchy concept of Thai society can be explained this research finding. Concerning political socialization by family, female students are socialized that politics is business of man (Greenstein, 1976). When male students attend school, they have opportunities to attend higher education and participate in many political activities than female students. The research result also shows that university students whose their fathers are governmental officers tend to have higher sense of political efficacy than other occupations. It can explain that fathers who are governmental officers, will implement policies to respond needs of people. As a result, they may feel more sense of political efficacy than the other occupations. In conclusion, Thai university students have medium sense of political efficacy and political interest. The sense of political efficacy of university students may be improved by socialization through various agents of political socialization such as family, school [Pasek (2008), Sohl (2015)], social medias [Moeller (2014), Lee (2006)]. Political interest has a positive association with sense of political efficacy. Gender and father occupation have an association with sense of political efficacy.

5.1 Implications of the Study

The current research contributes useful knowledge concerning sense of political efficacy and political interest to other researches. Firstly, the result of this research can be used as data for comparing the sense of political efficacy of Thai university students with other university students around the world. Secondly, the result of this research regarding a positive association between political interest and sense of political efficacy strongly supports the theory of political efficacy. According to Maurissen, sense of

political efficacy and political interest are independent variables or mediators which are applied to predict the level of political participation (Maurissen, 2020).

5.2 Limitations and Future Research Direction

Due to limit time and research funds, this research focuses to examine sense of political efficacy of Thai university students in specific area especially in the central region of Thailand. The future research should enlarge the study area to cover other regions of Thailand.

References

- [1] Anasakulcharaeng, Jittima. (2015). Social Class and Era of Thai Politics. *Journal of Nakhon Phanom: Humanity and social sciences*, 1(5) retrieved from <https://www.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/npuj/article/view/43919/36320>.
- [2] Campbell, Angus; Gurin ,Gerald ; and Miller,Warren E..(1954). *The voter decided Evanston: Illinois: Row and Petyerson and company.*
- [3] Caprera, GV. Vecchione, M., Capana, C. (2009). Perceived political self-efficacy: theory, assessment, and application. *European Journal of social Psychology*, 39(6), 1002-20.
- [4] Chaiwat, Prasit. (2017). *New Generation Role and Transitional Democracy: Hope or Dream.*
- [5] Chanraket, Chonticha. (2013). *Sense of Political Efficacy of Officers of the Secretariat of the Senate Bangkok: Kasetsart University.*
- [6] Chanruebg, Chamnan. (2016). *Thai Political Culture* retrieved from <https://www.bangkokbignews.com/blog/detail/637713> .
- [7] Chansilp, Vacharin. (1994). *Participation in student Government and students' sense of political efficacy of four thai high schools. Dissertation. University of southern California.*
- [8] Dyck, JJ., Lascher, El. (2009). *Direct Democracy and Political efficacy. Political Behavior*, 31, 401 - 427.
- [9] Greenstein, Fred. (1970). *Children and Politics* New Haven Yale University.
- [10] from <https://www.the101.world/new-voters-election-2019>
- [11] Kaewkoksaba, Arithad. (2016). *Democratic political culture. Search* October 10, 2562 from https://library2.parliament.go.th/ejournal/content_af/2559/sep2559-1.pdf
- [12] Kahne, J., Westheimer, J. (2000). *The Limits of political efficacy: educating citizens for democratic study. Political science and political*, 39(2), 289-296
- [13] Khantikul ,Phusit. (2010). *Concept, theory, literature and related research project. Retrieved from https://eresearch.ssrui.ac.th/bitstream/123456789/30/6/ird_G47_53/20/285/29pdf.*
- [14] Koetkaeo, Soraphongand, Ratchartranon, Wanlop. (2015). *Democratic political Attitude of secondary school students of sliprachan school. Supan buri province journal of political science Kasetsart University* 2(1) retrieved from <https://tcithaijo.org/index.php/kupsrj/artical/view/120290/91880>
- [15] Lee, KM. (2006). *Effect of internet use on college students' political efficacy. Cyberpsychology& Behavior*, 9(4), 415-22
- [16] Ley, BLM. (2013). *An empirical exploration of factors related to adolescents' political efficacy. Education Psychology*, 33(3), 357-390.
- [17] Maurissen,Lies. (2018). *Political Efficacy and interest as mediators of expected political participation among Belgian adolescents Applied Developmental Science* volume 24, 2020 issues4

- [19] Meetam, Thiti. (2019). Taking “new voter” among political storm of uncle, aunt. retrieved
- [20] Moeller, J., Devreese, C., Esser, F. (2014). Pathway to political participation: the influence of online and offline news media on internal efficacy and turnout of first time voter. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 58(5), 689-700
- [21] Pasek, J., Fedleman, L., Romer, D. (2008). Schools as incubators of democratic participation: guiding long-term political efficacy with civic education. *Applied Developmental Science*, 12, 26-37
- [22] Pongsiri, Massiri, Payomyont, Phayub. (2016). people’s political participation in nontaburi municipality. *Journal of graduate students saundusit University*. 12(3). Retrieved from <https://www.Graduate.dusit.ac.th/journal/index.php/sdujournal/article/view/160/137>
- [23] Portan, Wisut. (2007). Basic concept of Democracy nontaburi: king prajadhipok’s institute.
- [24] Promkert, Porammarin. (2015). Stop over Trap of thai Democratic Development with Democratic Political Culture Development: to new more sustainable war. *Journal of humanity and Retrieved from* <https://prachathai.com/journal/2018/10/79102>
- [25] Sohl, s., Arensmeier, C. (2015). The school’s role in youths’ political efficacy: can school provide a compensatory boots to students’s political efficacy. *Research Papers in Education*. 30(2), 1-31.
- [26] Sriyakul, T. & Jermsittiparsert, K. (2019). The Mediating Role of Entrepreneurial Passion in the Relationship between Entrepreneur Education and Entrepreneurial Intention among University Students in Thailand. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 6(10), 193-212.
- [27] Sriyakul, T. & Jermsittiparsert, K. (2019). The Role of Entrepreneur Education in Shaping Student’s Views on Self-Employment: A Study of University Students in Thailand. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 6(10), 233-257.
- [28] Tanatut, Chanatip. (2016). Affecting Factors on Political Participation of Undergraduate Students Kasetsart University, Kampangsang campus. Nakhonpathom, Faculty of Art and Thanasatit, Urawin. (2009). Democratic political culture. retrieved from
- [29] https://poi.ac.th/madia/pdf/M7_158.pdf.
- [30] Therawaykin, Likit people’s political participation from constitution retrieved from
- [31] https://www.kpi.ac.th/media/pdf/M7_85.pdf
- [32] Wiset, Samran. (2018). Democratic citizenship of public Administration student of Faculty of art and science Nakhonpanom university *Journal of humanity and social sciences rajchapatsurin university*, 20(1) retrieved from
- [33] <https://www.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jhssrru/artical/view/133370>
- [34] Wolfram.Schulz. (2005). Political efficacy and expected political participation among lower and upper secondary school students: a comparative analysis with data from the IEA civic education study: Washington DC : ERIC clearing housing.
- [35] Yauwana, Yuthapong. (2006). Sense of political efficacy of undergraduate students of Faculty of Social Sciences, Kasetsart University. Independent study. Kasetsart University.