

Political Intelligence of University Students in Bangkok and its Vicinity

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Key words: Political socialization, political interest, political intelligence, classification analysis, equation model

Abstract: The objectives of this research were: To study the level of political socialization, political interest and political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity. To examine the influence between personal factors and political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity. To examine the Structural Equation model that influences political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity. The sample group was 350 students of Srinakharinwirot University (Prasarnmit), Ramkhamhaeng University, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Thammasat University (Rangsit) and Bangkok University (Rangsit). The instrument used to collect data was a questionnaire. The statistics used in the data analysis were percentage, mean, standard deviation, multiple classification analysis and structural equation model. The statistical significance was set at the 0.05 level. The results of the research revealed that the level of political socialization and political interest were moderate. Whereas, the level of political intelligence was high. From the hypothesis testing, it was found that mother's occupation influenced political intelligence. Whereas, gender, domicile, income, class year, father's occupation and religion did not influence political intelligence. Regarding the structural equation model testing, it found that political interest had a greater influence on political intelligence of university students than political socialization.

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INTRODUCTION

From the Thai political database after the change of political regime on 24 June 1932 to the present, it was found that Thailand has faced with the problem of continuity toward democratic development. There were many problems such as political crises and frequent

political interventions by the military. The constitutions were overturned by a coup junta and then a new one was created. These problems were caused by the instability of the state. As a result, political institutions were inferior and the development of democracy was inconsistent^[1]. Thai political database also showed that developed Western countries were governed by a democratic

system that had been rooted for a long time. Most of these countries had no constitutional amendments.

In terms of the political elements that make democracy as sustainable and survivable as developed countries from Somkiat Wantana's book "Comparative Democracy", he summarizes the democratic pyramid should consist of civil liberties and political liberties^[2]. Election or acquisition of a highly effective government leader is an evidence of purity that results in people's political trust. They can participate widely in politics through political freedom. This is to develop the survival of democracy more as well. It can be seen from the foregoing that Thailand still lacks political liberties and civil liberties that make Thailand has no stable democracy like developed countries. This in stable democracy results from, firstly, most Thai people are unaware of their political rights and duties as civilized citizen to have a sense of collective ownership of the society and express it through political participation^[3]. Secondly, most Thai people lack of knowledge and understanding about the problems of the country and are ignorant of politicians. Thirdly, Thai people do not hold on democratic ideology and vote without rational basis which is the lack of "political intelligence". Consequently, power is monopolized and occupied by the elite. All of them maintain their interests by using democratic methods as a tool to build legitimacy^[4].

Literature review: Political intelligence is the capacity of people to have systematic thinking by analyzing cause and effect of government administrators's political power in terms of policy, planning and policy implementation. Therefore, people who have political intelligence will be able to analyse the need or possibility of policies. They understand whether the policies or projects will give advantage to society. Moreover, they also learn what their citizen duty are, especially duty of voting. They can elect appropriate representatives to administer government affairs by using their political intelligence. They also help and educate other people to have accurate knowledge about politics.

Political interest is the sense of people towards politics. Such feeling tends to be high or low level depends on people's experience and political environment. Political interest will stimulate people to be interested in joining political participation including political expression, political communication through mass medias, political campaign, voting and political party's activities.

Political socialization is a learning process which embeds people concerning political orientation including political authority, political regime, political community, attitude and belief of each political society from one generation to another generation. That process is done by agents of political socialization including family, peer

group, school, mass medias and religion. Many researchers were interested in studying relationship between personal variables (gender, age, education level, socialization from various agents, father's occupation of mother's occupation and family income) and political intelligence. Sanit Sirivisitkul examined the grass root people's political intelligence, especially food delivery drivers in Bangkok. The research result showed that age and income had relationship with political intelligence. Food delivery drivers had moderate level of political intelligence^[5]. Pairin Kuttipong studied undergraduate university students's political intelligence in Thailand. He used many independent variables to examine the relationship with political intelligence. These independent variables were father's occupation, mother's occupation, socialization from family school and mass medias. The research result showed that political socialization through mass medias agent, father's occupation and mother's occupation had relationship with undergraduate university student's political intelligence in Thailand^[6].

From the above literature review, gender, domicile, class year, father's occupation, mother's occupation, religion, income, political interest and political socialization will be used as independent variables for this research to examine the influence on university student's political intelligence. University students are chosen as a sample group. From the general election of members of the Thai House of Representatives in the past 2019, the new generation is a New Voter. This new voter is the first time voter between the ages of 18-26 (ThitiMeeTaek, 2019: online) which is 6-7 million voters (PisitChaiwat, 2018: online). They are also a vote base that is important for the number of members of the House of Representatives (MPs) of each political party. Moreover, university students in Bangkok and surrounding provinces are a diverse sample group in terms of gender, religion, household income and other factors that can reflect the overall picture of political intelligence.

Research objectives: To study the level of political socialization, political interest and political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity.

To examine the influence between personal factors and political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity.

To examine the structural equation model of political socialization and political interest influence the political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity.

Hypothesis:

- H₁: Personal factors influence political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity
- H₂: Structural equation model of influences political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity

Political socialization has a direct influence on the political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity. Political interest has a direct influence on the political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is a survey research. Research samples, data collection and data analysis are as follows:

Research samples: The samples used in this study were 305 university students in Bangkok and its vicinity.

Data collection: The instrument of this study is a questionnaire created by the study to collect data. It is built on the study of concepts, theories, documents and related research. The questionnaire is divided into 4 parts as follows:

Part 1: A questionnaire about general information of the respondents. The students used multiple choice and fill-in questions. To collect data and bring the information to distribute the frequency, the percentage is divided by the personal factors of the respondents, i.e. gender, domicile, income, class year, father's occupation, mother's occupation, religion.

Part 2: Political socialization questionnaire uses the Likert's type scale. There are both positive and negative messages by dividing the scoring criteria into 5 levels of 12 items.

Part 3: Political interests questionnaire uses the Likert's type scale (the scoring criteria are divided into 4 levels of 10 items).

Part 4: Political intelligence questionnaire using the Likert's type scale, the scoring criteria are divided into 5 levels of 50 items.

Data analysis: In this study, the researcher uses two kinds of statistics to analyze the data.

Descriptive statistics: Percentage and Mean statistical values are used to describe general information about the personal variables of the sample. Mean (Standard Deviation) is used to describe information about political socialization, political interest and political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity.

Inferential statistics: Multiple classification analysis is used to study personal factors influencing political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity. Structural equation model is used to examine the

causal relationship of political socialization and political interests influences the political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity. The statistical significance used in this analysis set at the 0.05 level^[7, 8].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Political socialization of students: Overall, the sample group had a moderate level of political socialization ($\bar{X} = 3.6$). When considering each item, it was found that the sample group had political socialization from the highest level to the lowest level by the following items, respectively^[9]: close friends of the sample tends to agree with politics ($\bar{X} = 4.11$) an opportunity to exchange political opinions with friends ($\bar{X} = 4.01$) and he continually discusses the topic of politics and government with his group of friends ($\bar{X} = 3.91$).

Political interests: Overall, the sample group had a moderate level of political interest ($\bar{X} = 2.38$). When considering each item, political interest of the sample group was ranked from the highest level to the lowest level by the following items, respectively: the sample group who exercises the right to vote for members of the House of representatives in the past ($\bar{X} = 3.10$), the sample group interest in the news about the country's political movements via. online media ($\bar{X} = 3.08$) and he discusses with his colleagues or family members about the issues of the country ($\bar{X} = 2.66$).

Political intelligence: Overall, the sample group had a high level of political intelligence ($\bar{X} = 3.81$). When considering each item, political intelligence was ranked from the highest to the lowest level by the following items, respectively: perception of political problems ($\bar{X} = 3.98$), a democratic ideology ($\bar{X} = 3.78$) and a rational exercise of rights ($\bar{X} = 3.69$).

Hypothesis test results

Hypothesis 1: Personal factors influence political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinities. Using multiple classification analysis, the results are as shown in Table 1.

From the study, it was found that the variables influence political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and vicinities was mother's occupation while other variables no influence on political intelligence.

Hypothesis 2: Structural equation model of causal factors influence political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and vicinities.

Political socialization has a direct influence on the political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity^[10]. Political interest has a direct influence on the political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity. The independent variables are: Political socialization (SOCIAL) has 3 components:

Table 1: Analysis of the variation of political intelligence of university students n = 305

Hierarchical analysis model					
Source of variation	Sum square	DF	Mean square	F-values	Sig.
The main effect of the independent variable	19013.33	20	950.66	1.33	0.15
Gender	335.51	2	167.75	0.23	0.79
Domicile	1.85	1	1.85	0.00	0.95
Income	1140.88	3	380.29	0.53	0.65
Class year	810.38	3	270.12	0.38	0.76
Father's occupation	3385.72	4	846.43	1.18	0.31
Mother's occupation	9962.33	4	2490.58	3.50*	0.00
Religion	3376.65	3	1125.55	1.58	0.19
Explainable variation	19013.33	20	950.66	1.33	0.15
The residue variation	202098.41	284	711.61		
Total variation	221111.75	304	727.34		

* Statistically significant at the 0.05 level

- Political socialization from family (A)
- Political socialization from school (B)
- Political socialization from peer group (C)

Political Interest (INTEREST) has 5 components:

- Expressions on political issues (D)
- Follow up on political news (E)
- Being a role player in the community (F)
- Voting campaign (G)
- Participation in the activities of political parties (H)

The dependent variables are: political intelligence (INTELLIGENT) has 3 components:

- Perception of political problems (I)
- Rational exercise of rights (J)
- Democratic ideology (K)

Analysis of structural equation (Structural Equation Model: SEM) appears as follows (Fig. 1). The results of a structural equation model analysis of the causal factors of political socialization and political interest influenced political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity. It was found that the statistical values to check the harmony of the model with the empirical data were Chi-square = 49.920 Degree of freedom = 36 Probability level = 0.061 and CMIN/DF = 1.387. It can be seen that the probability level was higher 0.05 and CMIN/DF was less than 3 GFI = 0.927 approaches 1.0 RMSEA = 0.059 which was <0.08 indicated that the model was consistent with the empirical data. From Table 2, the results showed that factors influenced the political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinities consisted of political socialization and political interests. These factors had a significant direct and indirect influence on political intelligence. It was found that the total influence of political interests (TE) = 1.99, political socialization had direct influence (DE) = -0.54. Indirect Influence (IE) = 1.12 and total influence

Table 2: Influence of variables in the causal factor model of political socialization and political interest influence political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity

Independent variables	DE	IE	TE
Political socialization	-0.54	1.12	0.58
Political interest	1.99	-	1.99

TE = (Total Effect); IE = (Indirect Effect); DE = (Direct Effect); N/A = Not Applicable

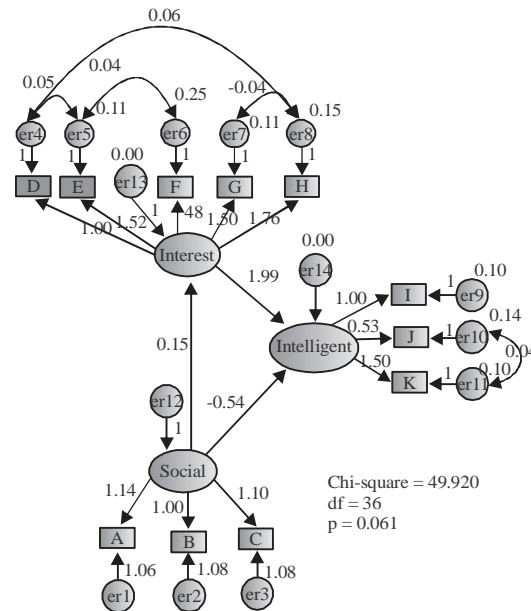


Fig. 1: The causal factors of political socialization and political interest influence political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity

(TE) = 0.58. It can be concluded that the causal factor model of political socialization and political interest influenced political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity. It was consistent with the empirical data with a statistical significance of 0.05 in accordance with the hypothesis. When considering the influence of independent variables on dependent variables,

it was found that political interest (TE = 1.99) had a higher influence than political socialization (TE = 0.58).

CONCLUSION

The results of the research revealed that the level of political socialization and political interest were moderate where as political intelligence was high. From the hypothesis testing, it was found that the mother's occupation influenced political intelligence whereas other variables did not influence political intelligence. Regarding the structural equation model, the causal factors of political socialization and political interest influenced political intelligence of university students in Bangkok and its vicinity. Political interest had a greater influence on political intelligence than political socialization^[11].

SUGGESTION

The study found that parent's occupation such as mother's occupation, influenced political intelligence. Therefore, the government should strengthen knowledge and understanding of politics, governance and democratic ideology through family leaders, especially mothers who are closest to their children by spreading to various professional groups to be highly effective as a freelancer.

Government agencies should organize activities to promote more legitimate political interests to provide students with knowledge and understanding of politics in various matters through online media such as Facebook, Twitter and Line mainly. From the study, it was found that the three issues that the sample group had the least interest in were those related to the activities of the all political parties, therefore, it is appropriate to create a correct understanding in Thai society that activities or political movements of students linked to political parties or political groups as Thai people in order to strengthen and uphold democracy is a freedom that can be done under the framework of the Constitution and does not detract from the pure power of students in any way.

According to the study, it is found that political socialization through peer groups is at the highest level. Therefore, it is appropriate to raise awareness of political problems, cultivating a democratic ideology including the exercise of voting rights which is an important component of political intelligence through other institutions, such as family and educational institutions, to be equally effective with peers groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mixed method research should be used by supplementing quantitative research with qualitative

research. Data collected by in-depth interview participant observation and focus group including the time to collect more data should be increased to ensure that the research results are accurate confidence and higher efficiency.

Other researchers should study other populations apart from students in Bangkok and its vicinity. Other independent variables should be applied to examine the influence towards political intelligence such as knowledge of politics political culture, etc.

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