

The Levels of Value in School Choices at Private Vocational Schools

ระดับค่านิยมในการเลือกเรียนในโรงเรียนอาชีวศึกษาเอกชน

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Abstract

This study was aimed at investigating the factors of value in school choices at private vocational schools and the levels of value in school choices at private vocational schools. The sample consisted of 379 students of 53 Private Vocational schools which were selected through stratified random sampling. The instrument used for collecting the data was the questionnaires with reliability of 0.987 that consisted of three parts: Part One was general data; Part Two was a 5-level rating scale questionnaire that included the factors of value in school choices at private vocational schools, and Part Three was about the levels of value in school choices.

The findings revealed that most of students who studies in private vocational schools were 219 male (58.4%) and 156 female (41.6%). Their GPA's were in between 2.1-3.0 (60.8%). They choose to study at these private vocational schools as a second choice (39.7%). Most of their parents held bachelor's degree (48.8%). And their parents had monthly income between 20,001-25,000 Baht/m (51.2%). The direct effects of latent variables of value in school choices ranging from maximum to minimum were school demographic factor to value (94.3%), students' demographic to schools' demographic (26.1%), and students' demographic to value (7.2%) respectively. The indirect effect of latent variables of value in school choices at private vocational schools from students' demographic to value was 24.6%. The levels of value in school choices ranging from maximum to minimum were social factor (87.0%), environment factor (86.0%), religion and belief factor (86.0%), economic factor (85.0%), political factor (84.0%), and theoretical factor (84.0%).

Key Words: Levels of value, Vocational School, School choices

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยที่ส่งผลต่อค่านิยมในการเลือกเรียนอาชีว

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ศึกษาเอกชน และศึกษาระดับค่านิยมในการเลือกเรียนในโรงเรียนอาชีวศึกษาเอกชน กลุ่มตัวอย่างคือนักเรียนจำนวน 379 คนจาก โรงเรียนพาณิชย์การ 53 โรงเรียน ซึ่งทำการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบแบ่งชั้น เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลคือแบบสอบถามที่มีความเชื่อมั่นที่ 0.987 ซึ่งประกอบด้วย 3 ส่วน คือ ส่วนที่หนึ่งประกอบด้วยข้อมูลทั่วไป ส่วนที่สองประกอบด้วยแบบสอบถามแบบ 5 ระดับถามเกี่ยวกับปัจจัยในการเลือกเรียนอาชีวศึกษาเอกชน และส่วนที่สามเป็นคำถามเกี่ยวกับระดับของค่านิยมในการเลือกเรียนในโรงเรียนอาชีวศึกษา ผลจากการศึกษาพบว่า นักเรียนอาชีวศึกษาเป็นเพศชายจำนวน 219 คน (58.4%) เป็นเพศหญิงจำนวน 156 คน (41.6%) GPA ของนักเรียนส่วนใหญ่อยู่ที่ 2.1-3.0 (60.8%) และนักเรียนส่วนใหญ่เลือกเรียนโรงเรียนที่กำลังศึกษาอยู่เป็นอันดับที่สอง (39.7%) ผู้ปกครองของนักเรียนส่วนใหญ่จบปริญญาตรี (48.8%) ผู้ปกครองของนักเรียนมีรายได้ระหว่าง 20,000-25,000 บาทต่อเดือน (51.2%) ปัจจัยที่ส่งผลโดยตรงต่อค่านิยมในการเลือกเรียนจากมากไปหาน้อย คือ ชื่อเสียงโรงเรียนส่งผลต่อค่านิยมมากที่สุด (94.3%) รองลงมาคือ ตัวนักเรียนเองส่งผลต่อโรงเรียน (26.1%) และตัวนักเรียนส่งผลต่อค่านิยม (7.2%) ตามลำดับ ปัจจัยที่ส่งผลในทางอ้อมในการเลือกเรียนอาชีวศึกษาเอกชน คือจากตัวนักเรียนเองส่งผลต่อค่านิยมประมาณ 24.6% ระดับค่านิยมในการเลือกเรียนในโรงเรียนอาชีวศึกษาเอกชนจากมากไปหาน้อยเกิดจาก ปัจจัยด้านสังคม (87.0%) ปัจจัยด้านสิ่งแวดล้อม (86.0%) ปัจจัยด้านศาสนาและความเชื่อ (86.0%) ปัจจัยด้านเศรษฐกิจ (85.0%) ปัจจัยด้านการเมือง (84.0%) และปัจจัยด้านวิชาการ (84.0%) ตามลำดับ.

คำสำคัญ: ค่านิยม อาชีวศึกษาเอกชน การเลือกเรียน

Introduction

Since 1960, a major goal of the National Development Plan had been for the educational system to be in harmony with and comply with economic and political plans. The government had faced the challenge of literacy and the task of training young men and women for the dynamic development process. Instruction had been modified to include the specialized skills required by industries. The major government and private organizations; Ministry of Education, the National Education Commission, and the Ministry of University Affairs, were all committed to planning, administering, and coordinating the national education system (Office of the National Education Commission.2007). At present ONEC and DOVE were in the process of drafting the Vocational Education Act. In the vocational education act, the vision statement would cover (1) quality, standard, and efficiency; (2) equal opportunity, lifelong learning, variety, and articulation; (3) cooperation, shared responsibility between public, private, and community; modernity, technological advancement, internationalization; (4) learning with practical experience, competency-based training, entrepreneurial skills, and work ethics; and (5) relevance with economic and social context.

The principles for vocational education and training (VET) would (a) provide opportunity for everyone who had interest and was capable of learning in vocational education; (b) instill vocational education at the basic education level in order to develop appropriate knowledge, attitude and skills; (c) give priority to learner's needs and allow an individual to progress to an advanced degree level; and (d) install a system of vocational qualification to bridge the gap between education and work so that an individual could enter the world of work and come back to education and training at any time. The administrative system for VET would promote (a) unity in policy guidelines and variety in management; (b) networking between educational institutions, i.e., public institutions, private institutions, and industry; (c) two levels, i.e. national level: the Committee on Technological and Vocational Education and institutional level: networking of vocational education institutions. Teaching and learning would (a) cover the target group who were school-age population as well as the labor force who wish to upgrade knowledge and skills; (b) provide a good proportion between theory and practice and promote the application of universal knowledge in the Thai context; (c) based on competency standards for learners at each level; (d) include evaluation that emphasizes application of knowledge more than just theory; and (e) support research and development to promote the transition from vocational education to the world of work. Cooperation with community and industry would (a) involve community participation at every stage from planning to implementation; (b) provide effective incentives necessary for private participation, such as, tax incentives, and coupon for VET. Quality and standards would (a) probably require license for vocational education teachers; (b) provide continuous and systematic in-service training for vocational teachers; (c) establish funds for vocational teacher development; and (d) develop vocational qualification framework.

Finally, financing and resources for VET would be mobilized from public and private sectors whereby financial support would be provided for students who do not wish to continue beyond compulsory education to obtain vocational training of at least one year before entering the labor market (Bhumirat. 2007).

Problems Statement

The decline in vocational school enrollment is due to a number of reasons. First, an economic crisis occurred in Asia, especially in Thailand in 1997, and after the coup d'état in September 19, 2006 (Thansettakij. 2007). The Thai economy is still in the recovery stage. As a result, some parents lost their jobs, and others suffered from job finding (Thansettakij. 2007). Today, many parents are unable to afford the tuition fees for their children (Thansettakij.

2007). Second, the competition among public and private vocational schools in Thailand is very fierce. Private vocational schools compete with other private schools, public high schools, and public vocational colleges. In addition, for the past several years the MOE has issued an annual admissions policy stating that the public high schools and public vocational schools must admit all students who would like to continue studying in the public schools. Because the students who study in public schools pay lower tuitions as a result of government support, this policy discourages the flow of students from public to private vocational schools. Third, some Thai students and their parents believe that obtaining a degree from a university will result in a higher income and social prestige (Udompoch. 2000). Thus, parents encourage their children to study in the general high schools if they have a good academic background. Only students with lower academic abilities are encouraged to study in vocational schools.

The concern for the enrollment issues in private vocational schools triggered by the various reasons as above has prompted the researcher to look into the many factors of value that influence private vocational schools choice. Taking up a research topic in "Structural Relations of Factors of value in School choices at Private Vocational schools," the researcher expected findings that would shed light on planning and marketing as well as on increasing competitiveness of the private vocational schools.

Research Objectives

This research's objectives were to investigate the factor of value in school choices at private vocational schools and to find out the levels of value in school choices at private vocational schools.

Conceptual Framework

The researcher has based his study on the one theory and the two concepts:

Concerning the theory of value in school choices at private vocational schools, the researcher studied the ideas from Spranger's theory (Spranger. 1928) which consisted of 6 factors, i.e., (1) economic factor (2) social factor (3) political factor (4) environment factor (5) religion and belief factor and (6) theoretical factor.

Based on the concept of factors of value in school choices at private vocational schools, the researcher studied the findings of Anawut Choosup (2002) which consisted of 14 factors indicating school choice in private vocational schools such as (1) programs options (2) guardian's preference (3) academic reputation (4) social reputation (5)

advertisement (6) gender (7) house or residence (8) tuitions (9) desire to study in a private vocational school (10) parent's educational level (11) scholarships (12) GPA (13) rank of school choice (14) family income. Pattama Roopsuwan (2003) had given the variables of satisfaction with studying in vocational institutions such as extracurricular activities, GPA, Major of the study, parents' education level, and satisfaction. From these concepts, the conceptual framework was drawn up as shown in Figure 1.

Definition of Terms

1. **Value in school choices at private vocational schools** means the element power that affects the beliefs, needs, and wants of an individual and consequently prompts him or her on studying in private vocational school or having this type of profession. It was described in term of the principles of six attitudes of persons namely: economic factor, social factor, political factor, environment factor, religion and belief factor, and theoretical factor.

2. **Factors influencing choices of private vocational school** mean the factors that influence the value determinants in school choices at private vocational schools. They consisted of school demographic characteristics and student demographic characteristics.

3. **Private vocational school** means the educational institutions organized by private owners, foundations, churches, etc. to provide programs of career development in commerce.

Research Methodology

The sample of this study included the private vocational schools in Bangkok. Most of these schools generally offered two commercial programs: the 3-year Certificate in Commercial Education, and the 2-year Diploma in Commercial Education. Some schools offered only the 3-year Certificate in Commercial Education; however, the main focus of the research was on the first year students at the Certificate level of Commercial Education of private vocational schools in Bangkok. The population consisted of 29,970 students from 53 private vocational schools in Bangkok, Thailand, in the educational year of 2007. The student sample selected included 379 students from 53 vocational schools in Bangkok, Thailand, by using sample criteria of Krejcie and Morgan (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). The Stratified

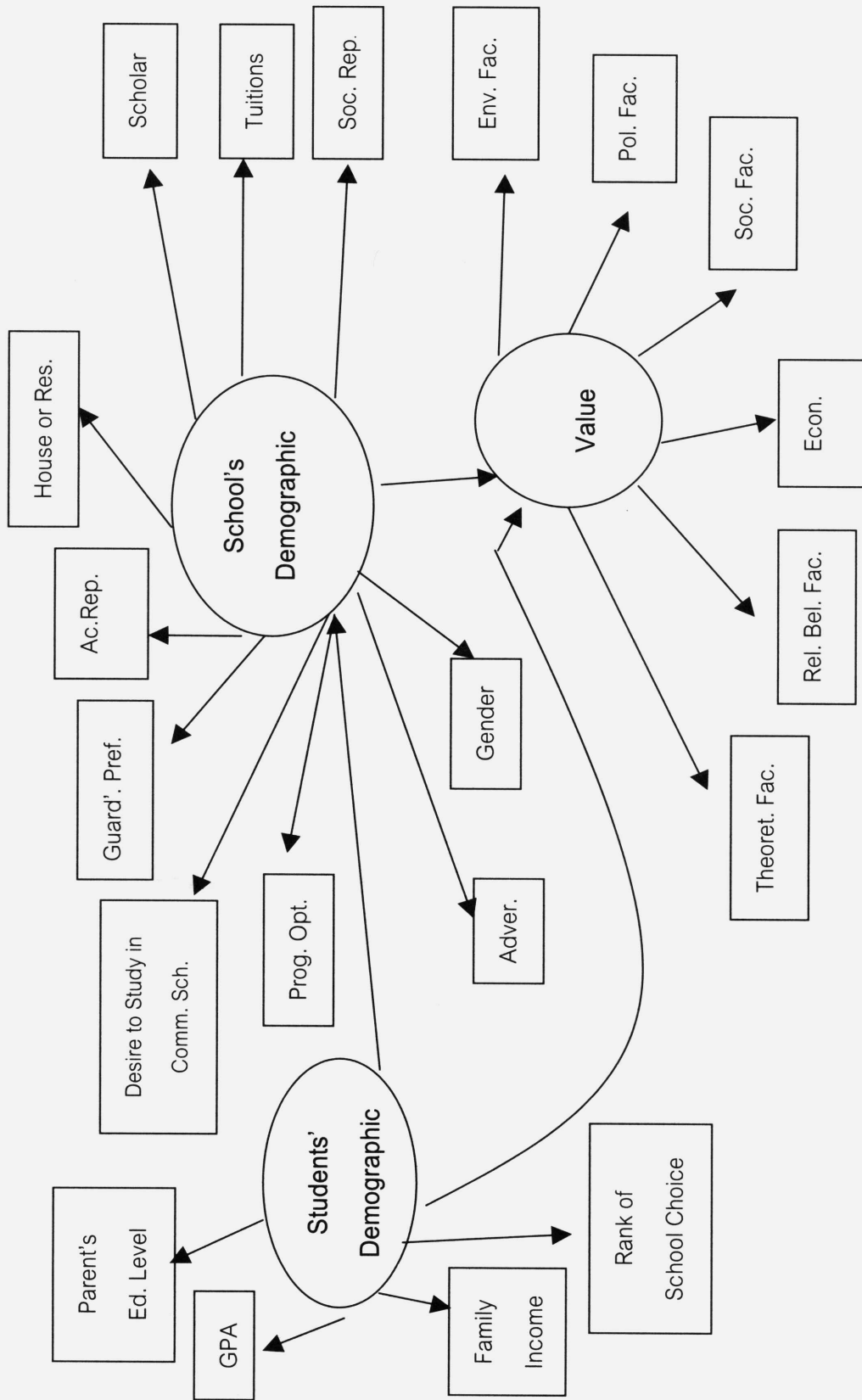


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Random Sampling was used. The research instrument used in this research was the questionnaire which was divided into 3 parts to question the first-year commercial students in Bangkok, Thailand, as the following details. Part 1 of the questionnaire was the general information of the targeted students. Part 2 of the questionnaires was concerned with the factors of value in school choices at private vocational schools. They were rating scales of 5 levels which consisted of 61 questions. Part 3 of the questionnaire was concerned with the level of value in school choices at private vocational schools. They were rating scales of 5 levels which consisted of 39 questions.

The instrument included the study of the tendency of theory, research, related documents of related factors of value in school choices at private vocational schools was constructed. The questionnaires which were concerned with the factors of value in school choices by modifying a questionnaire of Anawut Choosup (2002) and the questionnaire concerning of the level of value from Spranger's Theory (1928). The constructed questionnaires were sent to the experts to examine and define the important role of covering the theory. The questionnaires were subsequently submitted to another group of experts to examine the content validity. Finally, the questionnaires were modified according to the suggestions of the experts. The validity of questionnaires was extrapolated by submitting a questionnaire to the experts. The language used in questionnaires were edited by 3 experts, and then it was tried out with 30 non-targeted students to find the reliability by using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (Shinatrakool, 1999). The reliability was 0.987. The process of data collection was carried out by requesting a letter from King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang and sent a letter to each of 53 administrators in private vocational schools in Bangkok to ask for cooperation in data collection. The 379 questionnaires were sent out to 379 students of 53-targeted schools by mail or by hand delivery around July, 2008. Data analysis was done by using SPSS for Windows and LISREL. The correlation of factors that influence value in school choices at private vocational schools was determined by Path Analysis of LISREL version 8.72 to prove the validation of the model, while the Goodness of Fit Measurement was used to measure the level of harmony of functions (Viratchai, 1999). Chi-Square test was used to prove the assumption of harmonious functions. If Chi-Square value was high, the model LISREL was not consistent. If Chi-Square value was low, the model LISREL was consistent (Viratchai, 1999). The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) was a level of harmony of a pair-wise comparison with the convinced data of two models. If Chi-Square was high, when comparing with an autonomous degree, the model must be adjusted downward from the first value; therefore, the new model was more harmonious to the

convinced data. The GFI was the ratio of differentiation between harmonious function of the old model to the new model that would be adjusted. GFI value would fall between zero and one. When GFI was closed to one, it indicated the model was harmonious with the convinced data (Viratchai. 1999). Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) was the adjustable value of GFI that obtained by considering the size of autonomous degree, number of variables, and sample size. When the AGFI value was closed to 1.00, the model was harmonious with the convinced data (Viratchai. 1999). Root Mean Squared Residual (RMR) was the index showing the remainder by averaging the comparison of level of harmonious with the convinced data of two models. When the RMR was closed to 1, the model was harmonious with the convinced data (Viratchai. 1999).

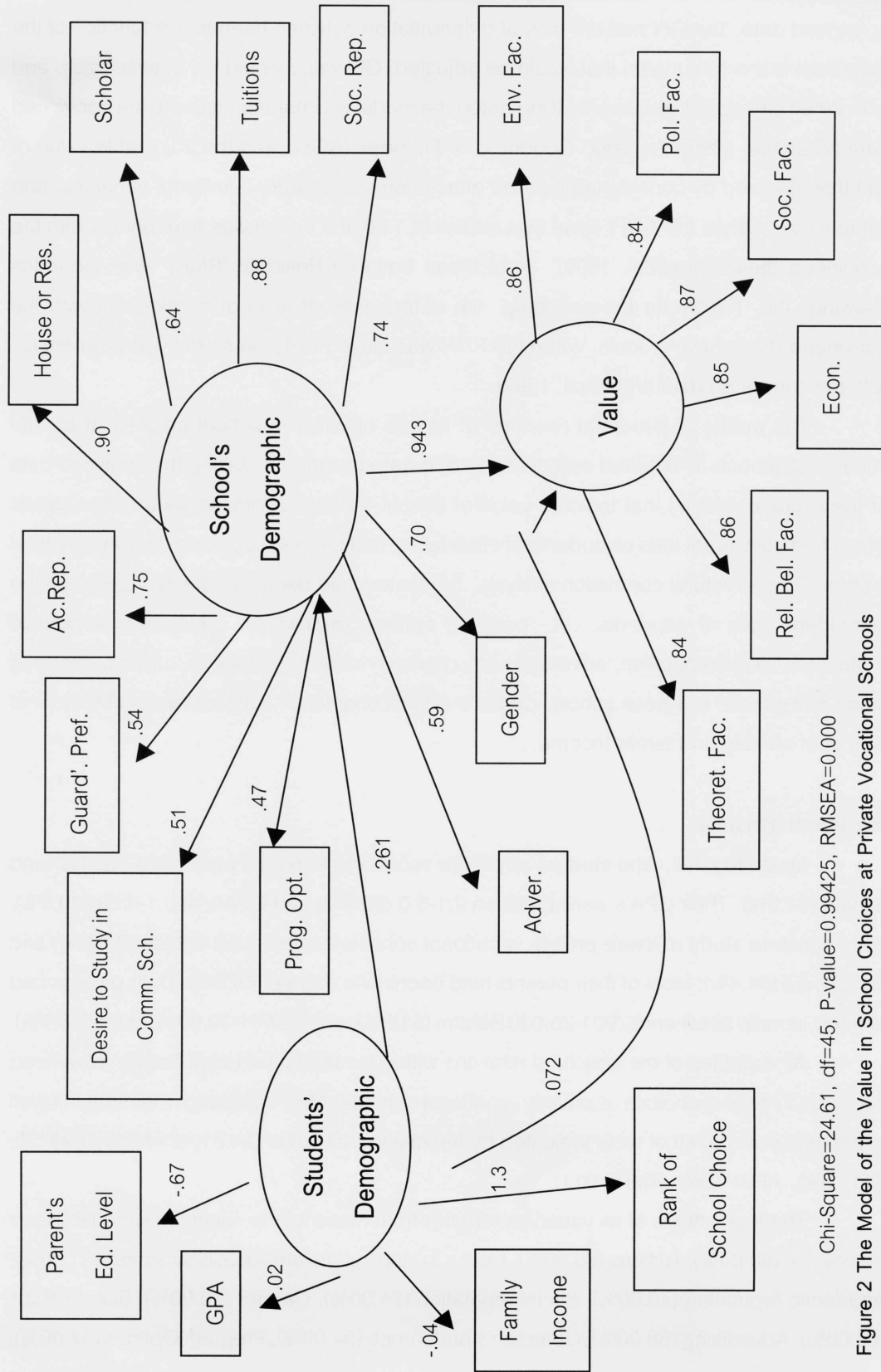
The model of structural relations of factors of value in school choices at private vocational schools in Thailand was developed. It was designed by taking the analyzed data of the status of factors that indicate value of school choices at private vocational schools which had coincident idea of students of each factor had been set up accordingly to the total factors of the structural correlation analysis. The factors had been categorized based on the coincident idea of students, i.e., program options, guardian's preference, academic reputation, social reputation, advertisement, gender, house or residence, tuitions, desire to study in a private business school, parent's educational level, scholarships, GPA, rank of school of choice, and family income.

Research Results

Most students, who studied at private vocational schools, were male (58.4%) and female (41.6%). Their GPA's were between 2.1-3.0 (60.8%) and GPA's of 3.1-4.00 (30.4%). They chose to study at these private vocational schools as a second choice (39.7%), and first choice (34.4%). Most of their parents held bachelor's degree (48.8%). Their parents had monthly income between 20,001-25,000 Baht/m (51.2%), and 25,001-30,000 Baht/m (26.4%).

All variables of the structural relations within the model had significantly influenced the value in school choices at private vocational schools. After validating, the model fit well to the empirical data that were indicated by the chi-square value (24.61, df=45, p=0.99426, GFI=.993, AFGI=.969, RMR=.011).

The total effects of all variables ranging from maximum to minimum were House or Residence (90.00%), Tuitions (88.00%), Desire to study at private vocational school (81.00%), Academic reputation (75.00%), Social reputation (74.00%), Gender (70.00%), Scholarships (64.00%), Advertising (59.00%), Guardian's preference (54.00%), Program Options (47.00%),



Chi-Square=24.61, df=45, P-value=0.99425, RMSEA=0.000

Figure 2 The Model of the Value in School Choices at Private Vocational Schools

School choice (130.00%), Parent's education level (67.00%), Family income (4.00%), and GPA (2.00%).

The direct effects of latent variables to value in school choices at private vocational schools ranging from maximum to minimum were: School demographic factors to value (94.3%), Student demographic to factors (26.1%), and the Student demographic to value (7.2%) respectively. The indirect effects of latent variables to value in school choices at private vocational schools were student demographic to value (24.6%).

The levels of value in school choices ranging from maximum to minimum were social factor (87.0%), environment factor (86.0%), religion and belief factor (86.0%), economic factor (85.0%), political factor (84.0%), and theoretical factor (84.0%).

Discussion

The factors of value were determined individually according to results. In terms of housing conditions or residential areas, it was considered as the high priority factor of value in school choices at private vocational schools. Students would like to have some neighbors to go to the same school and have a convenient way to commute. This was consistency with Astin (1993). So, administrators should construct star network of learning centers to serve huge numbers of students.

Tuitions was the follower, the students chose these schools because their parent's income was sufficient to afford the schooling expenses. Follows by the students studied in these schools because teachers can find jobs for them while they are studying. And lastly, there were no significant additional costs other than tuitions. They were not interested in the school allowable of making use of their relative's learning materials. That's because most learning materials were out of date after being used for years. Therefore, administrators should advertise on package of tuitions with free learning materials.

Social factor was the most important factor for value in pursuing studies at private vocational schools, this is because, and the students studied in a private vocational school because they thought that their friends were very helpful. They had good access to computers and technology in their schools. They liked schools' environment, and the teachers were always available to advice and help.

The environmental factors do play an important role in learning process. The students wanted to gain more knowledge acquired from vocational schools to earn money during their studying. The students liked the school with a unique uniform, and it was convenient for them to borrow books from the library. They were satisfied with learning

experiences. The school had internet facilities and E-mail address for all students to contact their teachers. The school library had been adequately equipped for researching.

In order to develop the value in school choices at private vocational schools, the results of this study should bring into consideration. The advertisements that placed on buses should focus on several items, i.e., the long history of school academic reputation, courses are always challenging and meaningful, the school program options should relevant to labor market demand, and the graduates always get good jobs. The marketing department should find out the name list from alumni, and send letters for asking parents/guardians to send their cousins/relatives to study at their schools. The students would like to have social activities with several students. Thus, the marketing strategy would enhance the advertisement, which focused on the double entry for schools' surrounding students.

This study was based on the idea of Spranger (1928) on value in school choices, which was the abstracted idea. There should be a qualitative study to gain an authentic qualitative data. Moreover, the other idea on value in school choices should be used such as the idea of Hossler and Gallagher (1987), which focused on student's school of choice. Choosup (2002) and Roopsuwan (2003) based the study of factors that influence value in school choices on studies, which analyzed the factors affecting value in school choices that do not cover other factors. Other factors concerning value in school choices at trade and industrial schools, and arts and crafts schools should be taken into consideration. The development of the model for value in school choices was a limited study. There should be a study in other factors in order to find out the value in school choices pattern of the private vocational schools, which would be clearer in the future. The results of the study revealed that housing or residential conditions and program options play important roles in this study. It is recommended that further research concerning the specific educational programs should be conducted. The retention of students in school should be conducted for private vocational schools. If private vocational schools try to survive, they must try to retain their current students.

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