



# Guidelines to End Student Brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region

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## ■ Abstract

The project, called “Guidelines to End Student Brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region” aims to explore situations that may lead to brawling, as well as study performance procedures, and investigate problems and setbacks against finding solutions to end student brawling. In addition, further studies were done to propose patterns and preventive measures for handling student brawling. This Qualitative Research employed in-depth interviews and storytelling approaches and selected samples through Purposive Sampling. A focus group was set up to brainstorm ideas for guidelines to end student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region and was divided into 2 sections:

1. In-depth interviews focused on exploring the situation, and causes of student brawling. The parties involved were  
1.1 vocational school student brawlers. 1.2 families of student

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brawlers and injured persons, namely parents and guardians 1.3 peer groups such as friends of the same age, senior and junior friends 1.4 schools/ institutions, namely teachers/ professors 1.5 the community such as people who lived in the area of the crime, or nearby. 2. storytelling related to knowledge sharing of performance procedures, problems and setbacks of those involved in student brawling, namely 2.1 police station administrators or supervisors of those who managed and set up policies to end student brawling 2.2 police officers of the Children and Woman Protection Sub-Division 2.3 police officers of the Police Station Suppression Unit in the areas where student brawling occurred 2.4 a total of 70 teacher/instructors from both public and private schools/ educational institutions.

The research findings from in-depth interviews indicate that student brawling currently stems from students adopting their senior friends' actions. Furthermore, the weapons used in brawling are easy to get. Such actions affected well-behaved students, and damaged the reputation of both

institutions and student families. Moreover, the outcomes from storytelling indicated that the performance procedures, problems and setbacks of those involved in ending the student brawling, and the stakeholders' concerns must all be considered when establishing a network to share and update information, and in the setting up of patrol units to end student brawling. Problems and setbacks such as the reduction of network collaborators, lack of work coordination, and inconsistencies in policy led to reluctance from all concerned parties to continue working on preventive measures. As a result, student brawling continued. Besides proposing a model and guidelines, educational institutions must establish a policy for concrete prevention with surveillance of student behavior; especially those deemed high-risk students. Any signs of attempted brawling should be stopped immediately.

In addition, educational institutions need to collaborate with civil society and other agencies to build surveillance networks, especially in high-risk areas.

These networks should be supplied with the equipment needed for self-defense and the ability to quickly inform a third party. In addition, an instruction course should be arranged together with a leadership camp so students can develop positive self-efficacy and apply themselves in a more appropriate manner. The outcomes from in-depth interviews and storytelling could be applied to the written manual to end students brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region.

### ■ Statement of Problems

Every country expects its members to be well rounded with political, administrative, economic, social and cultural cognitive development. This especially applies to children who will become a crucial mainspring in the development of a nation. If children and youths are well educated with promising development, good behavior and health, virtue and ethics, they will grow up to be good, competent and worthy citizens. As a result, the country will continue to prosper with stability and full

development. On the other hand, a nation full of poor quality citizens will incur problems and experience stunted development. Therefore, countries worldwide should emphasize the importance of child development in order to achieve national prosperity, and economic and social stability.

When considering changes in Thai society, one of the problems that occurs continuously is the use of violence (Usarut Nitiyarom, 2005), especially by vocational students. (Jidapa Suaebvong, 2010). Brawling has evolved to such an intensity that the use of knives, explosives, and even pen guns, made from school supplies, has become commonplace. Brawling mostly occurs in public resulting in injury and even death at such places as department stores, bus stops, on buses, during concerts and even in front of schools. (Rujiraporn Hongthong, 2550). As a result of these actions some brawlers were expelled from school. The violent brawling of these students is stigmatized by society as a cause for loss of assets and life (Nattaporn Sokunthat, 2014). Furthermore, statistical data from

the Office of the Private Education Commission reveals that in the past 2-3 years, student brawling has increased in intensity with the use of deadly weapons, ranging from long iron rulers to guns and machetes. Some of these brawls have ended with the loss of life. The problem is so severe and chronic that every sector must give priority to seeking concrete preventive measures to end student brawling. The impacts are not only found on the brawler himself, but also in his learning development and mental health. This in turn could lead to sexual deviation, or could be displayed as aggressiveness leading to violence. In some cases this could result in criminal activity if such problems are ignored. Therefore, concerned parties should collaborate to prevent and rectify situation systematically. In order to do this they must understand the performance procedure, problems and setbacks as well as propose a model and guidelines for preventing student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region as well as writing a preventive manual for brawling that could be an effective guide.

## ■ Objectives

1. Explore the situation leading to student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region
2. Study performance procedures, problems and setbacks of third parties in putting an end to student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region
3. Recommend preventive guidelines to end student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region

## ■ Research Methodology

### 1. Research Model

This research was conducted as Qualitative Research through in-depth Interviews and storytelling within an objective framework. Samples were selected with Purposive Sampling and storytelling in order to write a manual on how to manage and end student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region

### 2. Samples and Selection

2.1 Samples were selected from 2 targeted population groups as follows:

2.1.1 Third parties involved in student brawling were the subjects of in-depth interviews:

- Ten student brawlers
- Ten samples consisted of parents and guardians from the families of student brawlers and injured persons.

- Ten samples were same age friends, senior and junior friends.

- Ten teachers from schools/ educational institutions

- Ten local residents living at the scene of the crime and nearby areas.

Total 50 samples in the first group

2.1.2 The concerned parties through story telling working toward preventing student brawling are as follows:

- Five officers from the police station administration or unit supervisor in charge of management and setting up of policy to end student brawling.

- Five police officers from the Children Police unit

- Five suppression unit police officers from police stations near brawling areas

- Five teachers/instructors from public and private schools / educational institutions

Total 20 samples in the second group  
Research samples for both groups were 70 people.

The data from In-depth Interviews and Storytelling were compiled and analyzed in preparation for writing a manual to prevent student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region by applying Content Analysis to identify research topics or categories and key concepts contributed to the research pattern or themes.

## ■ Research Results Conclusion

### 1. Qualitative Results

The first part of this qualitative research involved In-depth Interviews with 50 key informants by divided into 5 groups as follows: 1) Student / Undergraduate brawlers 2) Families of student brawlers and injured persons namely, parents and guardians 3) Same age friends, senior and junior friends 4) School/educational institutions such as teacher/instructor

5) Community local residents living at the scene of a crime and nearby areas. This qualitative research separated the studied topics into 1) Cause of student brawling 2) Pattern of student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region 3) Impact from student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region.

### **Group 1: Brawler Students**

The findings from interviewing student brawlers indicated that brawling is caused by the desire of senior students to maintain their institution's dignity. To those students, any negative statements about their institution from students of another institution, or violence caused upon students in the same institution, is reason enough for revenge in order to maintain their institution's dignity and payback their opponent. According to one key informant in this group, brawling patterns have completely changed by becoming much more violent with the use of ever more deadly weapons; from using T-shape rulers or knives in the past to the present use of pistols and Ping-Pong explosives. Furthermore, today's

brawling often happens unexpectedly when adversaries see each other in public. This is quite different from the past when both sides would arrange the fight to settle some perceived grievance. The brawling itself has grown in intensity. At first quarreling without the use of weapons usually left both sides with bodily wounds or bruises, but never required hospital treatments. Then the quarrel evolved to the use of weapons and planning ahead, but still at a moderate intensity so physical injury from brawling was minimal with only minor body wounds that could be treated in the hospital with patient release the same day. In contrast, today's planned brawling often ends up with both sides suffering severe injuries such as, being blinded or deaf, loss of bodily organs, as well as developing psychoses, chronic diseases, sever injury , or loss of life.

### **Group 2: Student brawler families and injured parties, namely, parents and guardians**

The parents and guardians of student brawlers stated that brawling occurred because senior students told

new students during the welcoming freshman event that they must maintain their own institutions dignity. Such information was kept secret from the institution and families. The brawling pattern has changed from the past where students used force or weapons constructed from teaching supplies and usually planned in advance. In contrast today's brawling in Bangkok involves students using armed violence and occurs face-to-face, as soon as an adversary is seen.

The degree of violence in student brawling in Bangkok is rather high. As many as 95 percent of injuries occurred during brawling, which sometimes led to loss of life. These figures supported by the statistical records on student brawlers kept by the Royal Thai Police. According to a key informant, the brawling affects the families of brawlers and injured parties or victims, especially the loss of loved ones and being stigmatized as a delinquent with deviant behavior. People were also afraid of the impact from living in an area where those children hanged out.

### **Group 3: Friends of the same age, senior and junior friends**

The findings from interviewing key informants regarding the topics of friends of the same age, senior and junior friends revealed most student brawlers propaganda was promulgated by the second or third year vocational students, which they communicated to freshman on the way home. Topics included the use of self-defense when meeting opponents from other institutions. Today's brawling is much different from the past where brawling involved one-on-one fighting. Today's students engage in group fighting with weapons such as, short knives, guns and explosives. Student brawling has increased to this degree of violence because weapons are easily bought and sold, even at the weekend markets; without the need to show identification or a selling permit. The effects from student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region, according to a key informant who once committed such offenses, were considered critical problems and needed to be fixed immediately.

**Group 4: Schools/Educational Institutions such as, teachers/instructors involved with student brawling**

The key informants in this group, namely, teachers/instructors stated that brawling happened because senior students told new students to maintain their institution's dignity and carry on the tradition in order to announce strong institutional unity. Furthermore, student brawling was committed as revenge against other institutions or opponents, as pay back for friends, senior or junior students who had been attacked, which to them is a serious insult to personal and institutional dignity. Payback between the two opponents in the past would involve a planned fight. Today's brawling has changed to include the use of weapons. When both sides meet each other face-to-face, even by chance, brawling can happen regardless of location. The degree of violence today is high, with the use of weapons usually ending in severe injuries such as loss of sight, hearing, and dismemberment, chronically illness, and even loss of life. In the past,

brawling occurred with a lesser degree of violence and so the inflicted injuries were only bruises or minor cuts, not severe enough to require hospital treatment. The degree of violence increased gradually, and instead of a small fight with the use of simple weapons that could inflict small cuts, not deep enough to require hospital admission. Today it has developed into extremely violence. Such incidents affect directly the integrity of the institutions when society brands them as poor quality educational institutions because the teachers/instructors are unable to provide good enough training to the students/undergraduates. Furthermore, the incurred effects force the teachers/instructors to work overtime, which become a heavy burden.

**Group 5: The Community comprised of local residents living in the student brawling areas or nearby**

The community comprised of local residents living in the crime scene or nearby. Conclusions were made from interviewing 10 samples mentioned earlier. The findings

indicated that most brawling occurred when senior students told freshman to defend the dignity of their institution and regard other institutions as their opponents. To them, brawling is for the dignity of the institution and must be preserved as well as the need to avenge other institutions that quarrel with them.

Moreover, the brawling pattern has changed from ordinary fights to an increased degree of violence including the use of weapons face-to-face. In the past injuries received were only bruises or minor cuts, not deep enough to require the hospital admission. In contrast, today's brawling has become so intense with the use of deadly weapons and advance planning, that causing severe bodily injuries such as blindness, deafness, dismemberment, or even loss is common. Student brawling affects the livelihoods of the community from loss of income, to damage of assets, as well as the time lost talking to the police about the incidents.

## 2. Storytelling

Storytelling involved 20 key informants and was divided into 4 groups. The first group comprised of the police station administrators or unit supervisors in charge of administering and setting up policies to prevent student brawling. The second group consisted of the police officers from the Children and Women Welfare Unit. The third group was police officers from the Student Brawling Suppression Unit. And the fourth group comprised of teachers and instructors from private and public educational institutions. The storytelling set up the scope based on the following questions and statements:

1. Do the performance procedures for those involved in the operation help prevent student brawling, and how?
2. Problems and setbacks of those involved in preventing student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region
3. How are the guidelines for preventing student brawlers in the Bangkok Metropolitan region constructed?
4. Propose guidelines leading to preventive measures for student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region.

The findings from storytelling twice indicated that the performance procedures of those involved in preventing and rectifying the problems of student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region required collaboration between the educational institutions, family, community representatives and police officers on a regular basis in order to create a collaborative network, to share information, and guard areas to prevent brawling occurring.

In addition, the educational institutions should extend their administrative roles and policy-making, especially on setting up performance procedures and rectify the brawling situations through an extensive and consistent plan; otherwise it may obstruct the entire operation completely.

Problems and setbacks of the concerned parties in preventing student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region indicated a reduction of network collaboration between the educational institutions,

community representatives, and police officers with fewer collaborators. As a result, there is not enough manpower to patrol the areas, and even when there is surveillance at high-risk areas, brawling students usually just moved to other places.

The problems and setbacks in the institution occurred when the frequent change in administration affected the institution's policy until the staffs were unable to do their work, especially coordinating the surveillance in risk areas. When the police officers and community networks failed to work side by side, it opened the opportunity for students to brawl.

Seniority or SOTUS in the educational institution is another cause of problems when seniors try to persuade freshman to join the group and embed them with misconceptions on brawling. This can include involvement with drugs and even police officers/ teachers/ instructors are not aware that some students are using some of the new types of drugs.

The most dangerous time for students is when they travel back and forth between school and home, especially when the bus refuses to stop and pick up vocational students, so fights break out when students from opposing institutions meet each other.

A model and guidelines to prevent and rectify problems of students brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region

The educational institutions must set up a policy to actively prevent brawling by assigning adequate numbers of teachers/instructors to monitor the students' behavior, especially the high-risk students. Any signs of problems should be addressed immediately. Furthermore, the educational institutions should integrate their works with a public network and other concerned agencies so as to expand the surveillance network with the main focus on high-risk areas. In addition, officers should have equipment ready to be used when needed such as, walkie-talkies, protective gear, and the ability to use social media to quickly notify concerned parties of any suspicious events.

Moreover, educational institutions should screen students to detect non-students, including alumni who have behaved negatively in order to prevent their infiltration among the new students. This could create a misconception and poor behavior.

■ **Recommended preventive policy to rectify problems of student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region.**

All concerned agencies should collaborate to monitor problems and actively the solutions. Social contact between alumni and current students should be cut off since they are the ones that convey wrong ideas to their juniors. Further, the government must give this matter priority as well as seriously acting upon preventing crime and increasing social networks to reinforce manpower for better surveillance. In relation to the civil society or agencies that obtain information from the school, the operation should be kept secret to protect the given information and its

source. With respect to the educational institutions, the administrative teachers should be assigned to monitor the students' behaviors directly in order to empower them to make decisions faster. Moreover, the educational institutions should inform the police and networks in the area details of such projects so they can collaborate for the success of the operation as well as to enlist third parties who express their intention to assist the project. The duties and responsibilities should be clearly identified for all parties involved. The educational institutions should be proactive in finding solutions for drug use by students.

In preparing the course syllabus, a leadership camp should be included for students/undergraduates to increase their capability and apply an appropriate approach. The training should incorporate knowledge on laws and punishments for criminals for carrying weapons in public without permission as well as a written manual for knowledge management to prevent student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region and recommen-

dations to identify a so-called "bloody route" with complete details of all high-risk locations. In addition, student commuters should be separated into high-risk and non-risk groups without labeling with stigmatizing words such as lead bully or troublesome kids. Details should also include school surroundings such as student hangouts and pavilions in front of the school.

## ■ Research Recommendation

The authors recommend the model and guidelines for preventing student brawling in the Bangkok Metropolitan region as follows:

### 1. Policy Recommendation

1.1 It is the government's direct responsibility to prevent student brawling as well as informing the public on the incidents, risk areas for brawling, nature of life-threatening brawling and weapons used.

1.2 The government should consider and review the carried weapons laws in order to impose a higher penalty. Furthermore, the relevant legal action should be enforced

effectively. Police officers arriving at a crime scene should quickly prevent and suppress the crime. Manpower should be adequate and ready for operation, including the consistency in arresting culprits, and accomplices. The arrest of the culprit must be done accurately and without violence by setting up a penalty based on the degree of wrongdoing and violence, starting from low to high level. If the offender is still a minor, the punishment should focus on public service and serving society or enhancing public consciousness.

1.3 The government should encourage the media to frequently publish stories of good Samaritan students and restrict stories that may instigate violence or inappropriate behavior. Most brawling is caused by a student's imitation of violent behavior.

Moreover, the presentation of news with negative words such as, "student brawlers" "vocational thugs" "big bully" "young bully" "brutal boys" or even the term "vocational students" or "risky group" should not be used because it may mislead students into thinking that these words are popular

values and attitudes. Words like "occupational students" or "worrisome students" are more appropriate.

#### 1.4 The Ministry of Education

1) There should be a revision of curriculum for the 2nd year Vocational Certificate students in public and private institutions. It should include a subject that promotes labor skills in the ASEAN Region as well as arranging for students to meet entrepreneurs as part of a field trip so they have less chance to associate with seniors. The career extension should guide the students toward their learning objectives and future goals.

2) Joint activities between public and private institutions should be arranged for freshman, in order to alter student's behavior, promote harmony, and improve discipline. The opening date for 1st year and 2nd year students must not be the same date so they cannot hang out together and share ideas to build an inappropriate SOTUS system.

3) Preparation for the administrative system such as budget allocation, personnel and knowledge management and good management should be developed systematically

with a qualified curriculum that includes academic learning, training and promotional activities. This is done in order to set up proactive measures for the first and second year vocational certificate students so they can learn to co-exist peacefully. If SOTUS is being used, it must be carefully watched for any signs of students using force to express their manly dignity. A joint network between students, parents, and teachers should be established to help each other monitor student's undesirable behavior.

#### 1.5 The Vocational Education Commission and Office of the Private Educational Commission

1) Set up rules on student uniforms to make sure that they are all alike. This should include the shirt, pants and shoes, with no need for school pins, belt or any symbols that indicate which institution the student attends. As a matter of course, students in all public and private institutions should dress alike.

2) Assign the same School Establishment day for public and private institutions throughout the country

3) A meeting should be set up between the Vocational Education Commission and the Office of the Private Educational Commission to design a lesson to teach vocational students that their institutions should be brawling free. This lesson should be studied and distilled in order to adapt to a prevention and suppression policy.

4) Increase the compulsory lessons that promote morale and ethics among students such as the requirement for every student to pass a Dharma practice course in the summer. This class should be taken by first and second year Vocational Certificate students.

#### 1.6 Royal Thai Police

1) Special units such as School Police should be established in schools under the Ministry of Education in order to monitor, search and arrest culprits. Moreover, the School Police duties should include prevention and building family and community relations as well.

2) Set up a criminal policy related to student brawling, including a plan to prevent and end brawling, enforce laws effectively and modify

some legal measures to be used for controlling rowdy students, carrying weapons in public and creating nuisance.

3) Invite concerned agencies to meet and discuss prevention issues as well as arranging publicity, rallies and public relations activities in order to close the door on student brawling.

1.7 The agencies in charge of preventing student brawling must collaborate with various government agencies such as the Royal Thai Police under the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, People Network, and Saemaruk Center to solve problems effectively.

## **2. Academic Recommendation**

2.1 Students' records should be reviewed and modified to include in-depth information to prevent student brawling.

2.2 The manual for knowledge management in preventing student brawling should give guidelines on how to stay away from high-risk areas.

2.3 Arrange a public broadcast to inform people on the number of incidents, weapons used, routes and

scenes of crime, as well as extending these statistics into the criminal policy and operational preventive plan.

2.4 Promote activities that focus on opposition to brawling and develop leadership for students to learn about the danger of brawling, as well as adding positive values among the students.

## **3. Practical Recommendation**

### **3.1 Family**

1) Parents and guardians should pay attention to students' behavior closely by arranging activities that involve everyone in the family so students and parents can spend more time with each other. Even though some children look physically mature, they are still mentally underdeveloped. Without good guidance or understanding from parents they may be easily persuaded into committing an offense.

2) Caring for students or family members at this age requires proper teaching and encouragement, never unreasonable reprimands or severe punishments from anger. Moreover, students should be taught to think sensibly and learn to reject bad things as well as enhance creative thinking

so students can differentiate right from wrong, instead of forbidding, giving order or imposing extreme strict control.

### 3.2 Vocational Schools/Secondary Schools

1) The educational administrator should set up consistent measures and policies to prevent brawling as an annual budget plan.

2) A meeting should be arranged for parents, teachers and instructors, local police, community leaders and people networks so they can be informed about the preventive policies, activities, and teaching as well as giving them the opportunity to notify the authorities of incidents that may lead to brawling, in order to prevent them before they actually take place.

### 3.3 Police officers at the local police station

1) Police Superintendents at the Police station should recognize the importance of preventing student brawling and urgently prepare measures to prevent such incidents.

2) Each police station should prepare its own brawling prevention plan and review it annually to keep up

with the rapidly changing brawling patterns, nature and degree of violence.

3) In preparation for a preventive manual on student brawling, preventive guidelines must be clearly identified as well as incorporated with the problems and setbacks, including the names of educational institutions, school administrators or administrative teachers that are available for contact at all times. Any changes in telephone numbers must be updated promptly. Moreover, different routes that students use for frequent traveling from home to school and back, high-risk places, waiting areas or hangouts should all be included in the manual.

However, solutions to prevent student brawling in Bangkok, especially among vocational students must be carried out through appropriate prevention so problems can be rectified in a most sustainable manner. At least, every social member should give this matter priority and be aware of the impact from youth misbehavior. Because Thai society continues to be impacted by their actions every year, a collaboration and surveillance

campaign should be encouraged to bring peace to society with no injury or loss of innocent life, as well as promote safety and well-rounded youths that will help better Thai society and our country.

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