

ABSTRACT

Title of Research Paper : Psycho-situational Correlates of Moral-voting Behavior of Students in Rajabhat Institute

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This correlational study was intended to examine the correlates of moral voting behavior of students at Rajabhat Institutes, with four major objectives: 1) to study the situational correlates of psychological states and moral voting behavior of these the students; 2) to study the psychological correlates of the moral voting behavior of the students; 3) to study the psycho-situational correlates of moral voting behavior , and 4) to find important predictors of moral voting behavior among all the above mentioned variables.

The sample in this study consisted of 504 students, from four Rajabhat Institutes, two located in Bangkok and two located in other provinces. About half of the students were in lower divisions. About half the sample were students majoring in public administration and the other half were students majoring in other fields.

This research project based on 3 theories, namely, the Psychological Theory of Work and Moral Behavior, the Psychosocial Development Theory and the Reasoned Action Theory and associated research. Five types of variables were studied: 1) moral voting behavior consisted of two separate variables, i.e. moral participation in elections and moral voting for member of parliament and political party; 2) situational variables there were 3 variables, i.e. being in a dishonest environment , receiving political news, and being aware of moral norms about election; 3) three psychological characteristics of the students were - future orientation, ego identity and moral reasoning ability; 4) three psychological state variables, which were - belief in internal control about politics , favorable attitude towards voting, and democratic values; and 5) bio-social and family background variables, i.e. , - sex, age, college year, socio-

economic status of the student's family, major field of study, and home location. Most of the variables in this study were assessed by using the method of summated ratings, each measurement consisted of 10 to 15 items, each accompanied by 6 – unit – rating scale.

Three-way Analysis of Variance, Multiple Regression Analysis, and Discriminant Analysis were employed to test eight hypotheses. The secondary statistical methods used were Scheffe's Method for means comparison and Correlation Coefficients were computed. The analyses were made both for the total sample as well as the sub-groups divided by the bio-social characteristics of the students for more detailed.

There were five significant results of the study, as follows:

First, the students who were in a low dishonest environment showed a much higher incidence of moral participation in elections, higher moral voting for member and political party, higher belief in internal control about politics and higher favorable attitude towards voting than students who were in a high dishonest environment. The students who received more political news showed a higher incidence of moral participation in elections, higher moral voting for members and political party, higher belief in internal control about politics, higher favorable attitude towards voting and higher democratic values than their counterparts. Students who showed high awareness of moral norms were higher in moral participation in elections, higher moral voting for members and political party, higher belief in internal control about politics, higher favorable attitude towards voting and higher democratic values than students with low awareness of moral norms. These three incidents were found in the total sample as well as in 5 following subgroups, i.e., students in bangkok, male students, younger students, students who majored in public administration, and Year 3 and Year 4 students. Also, students who were in a low dishonest environment, had received more political news and at the same time had high awareness of moral norms showed a higher incidence of moral participation in elections and a more favorable attitude towards voting than their counterparts. This result was especially found in only 2 subgroups, namely, students who majored in public administration and students who lived out of town in a province.

Second, Students with high future orientation had a higher incidence of both aspects of moral voting behavior. This relationship was found in the group as a whole and in several

sub-groups. In addition, students who had a high degree of ego identity had a higher incidence of both aspects of moral voting behavior. This relationship was found in the group as a whole and particularly in the 4 following sub-groups, i.e. , younger students, Year 1 and Year 2 students, students from families with low socio-economic status, and students who lived in town. Similarly, students who had a high degree of moral reason ability had a higher incidence of both aspects of moral voting behavior. This relationship was found in the group as a whole and in several sub-groups.

Third , Students who had a high belief in internal control about politics had a higher incidence of both aspects of moral voting behavior. This relationship was found in the group as a whole and particularly in the following 4 sub-groups of younger students, students majoring in subjects other than public administration, students in Bangkok, and students living out-of-town with low degree of democratic values. Students who had a high degree of favorable attitude towards voting also had a higher incidence of both aspects of moral voting behavior. This relationship was found in the group as a whole and particularly in the sub-group of male students with a low degree of democratic values. In addition, it was found that students who had a high degree of democratic values had a higher incidence of both aspects of moral voting behavior. This relationship was found in the group as a whole and particularly in the 3 sub-groups, i.e. , students living out-of-town , students living out-of-town with a low degree of belief in internal control about politics , and male students with a low degree of democratic values. Students who had a high degree of all three variables (belief in internal control about politics , favorable attitude towards voting and democratic values) showed a high incidence of moral voting for members of parliament and political parties. This relationship was seen most clearly in the sub-group of students from families with high socio-economic status.

Fourth , it was found that situational factors, alone and in combination with psychological characteristics , could account for 30.5 and 36.7 % of the variation in the behavior of moral participation in elections and moral voting for members of parliament and political parties respectively. The highest prediction rate for moral participation in elections behavior was 41.8 % in students from families with high socio-economic status and the highest prediction rate for moral voting for members of parliament and political parties behavior was 44.1 % in students living outside the city in provinces other than Bangkok.

Finally , the following 5 predictors (awareness of moral norms , moral reason ability , favorable attitude towards voting , democratic values and receiving political news) together could correctly discriminate the students with high moral voting behaviors from the lower ones , at the rate of 77.8 %

Four recommendations were offered:

First , the group of students that is most in need of urgent attention is those with a low level of moral participation in elections . The following steps are recommended:

The 4 sub-groups of students namely , these majoring in subjects other than public administration, younger students, students in Bangkok, and students living out-of-town , should be trained in 5 areas , namely , moral reason ability . democratic values, awareness of political news, in favorable attitude towards voting and future orientation.

Second , another group of students that is in need of urgent attention is those with a low level of moral voting for members of parliament and political party. The following steps are recommended:

The 2 sub-groups of students namely, older students and female students need to heighten their moral participation in elections behavior by developing their moral reason ability , their favorable attitude towards voting and their future orientation. Secondly the people with whom these students have close contact, such as teachers, family members and friends, should be encouraged to participate in elections morally.

Third , in order to promote the moral participation in elections and the moral voting for members of parliament and political parties of the students in general, awareness of moral norms in election should be heightened together with the students' moral reason ability , favorable attitude towards voting , democratic values and awareness of political and election news.

Finally , Rajabhat Institutes should take the following steps to develop the moral voting behavior of students in these four sub-groups:

1) Year 1 and Year 2 students firstly need to have a better favorable attitude towards voting. Secondly, they need to develop better moral reason ability, democratic values, awareness of political news , moral norms about election and ego identity.

2) Year 3 and Year 4 students firstly need to develop better moral reason ability. Secondly, they need greater awareness of political news, better democratic values and ego identity as well as greater moral norms about election .

3) Students majoring in public administration firstly need to have a better favorable attitude towards voting . Secondly, they need to develop better moral reason ability , democratic values, moral norms about election and ego identity.

4) Students majoring in fields other than public administration firstly need to develop better moral reason ability . Secondly, they need to have better awareness of political news, to develop better ego identity, better democratic values, greater belief in internal control about politics, and greater moral norms about election.