

THESIS TITLE : PREDICTION AND EXPLANATION OF ACHIEVEMENT
BEHAVIOR OF THIRD YEAR STUDENTS AT NATIONAL
UNIVERSITY OF LAOS ACCORDING TO THE THEORY
OF REASONED ACTION

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ABSTRACT

The present study was a correlation and comparison research aiming at investigating the prediction and explanation of achievement behavior of university students according to the theory of reasoned action. The purposes of the study included 1) to study the students' direct and indirect attitudes towards education, 2) to study the students' inclination towards educational subjective norm, 3) to study the variables that could predict the students' studying intention, their attitudes toward education and their inclination towards subjective norms, 4) to study the relationship between the students' studying intention and their achievement behavior and 5) to compare behavioral belief, the evaluation of behavioral belief, the belief in education subjective norm and the motivation to incline towards subjective norm between the students with high and low achievement behavior. The sample consisted of 350 third-year students at the National University of Laos during 1999 academic year. The students were selected through a two-stage sampling, i.e. by fixing the proportion of the sample from each faculty and the selected students were randomly reselected. The instruments used in the study included the questionnaire developed in accordance with the theory of reasoned action and another questionnaire on achievement behavior based on McClelland's theory. Analysis

of the collected data was done by means of an SPSS/PC⁺ computer program to find arithmetic mean, standard deviation, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, multiple regression equation and a t-test.

The findings:

1. The students showed a positive attitude towards education and inclination towards subjective norm with mean values of 24.86 and 77.83, respectively. Their mean values on achievement behavior, learning achievement and studying intention were 95.4, 2.70 and 2.77, respectively.

2. The students' direct attitude towards education had a significantly positive correlation with their indirect attitude towards education at the .05 level of significance ($r = .46$). The indirect inclination towards educational subjective norm had a significantly positive correlation with their indirect inclination towards educational subjective norm at the .05 level of significance ($r = .34$).

3. The students attitudes towards education together with their inclination towards educational subjective norm could predict their studying intention up to 23%. It was further found that the students' attitudes towards education had a greater effect on their studying intention than their inclination towards educational subjective norm ($r = .48$, $P < .05$, $w_1 = .37$, $w_2 = .23$), and their studying intention and achievement behavior were significantly correlated at the .05 level of significance ($r = .30$).

4. A comparison of behavioral belief and behavioral evaluation between the high-achievement behavior students and the low-achievement behavior students showed that the low-achievement group believed that they had a greater chance of becoming an academic in the future than the high-achievement group believed group, while the high-achievement group believed that their parents were more proud of them than were the parents of the low-achievement group at the .05 level of significance. Regarding the student's normative belief and motivation to incline to subjective norm, it was found that high-achievement group had a greater faith in their fathers than the low-achievement group which was more significantly inclined towards their teachers than the high-achievement group at the .05 level of significance. There were not any significant differences on other beliefs.

Recommendations: As the findings of the present study showed that attitude towards education and inclination towards subjective norm affected the students' achievement behavior, it is therefore recommended that the teachers, parents and persons concerned should inculcate the right attitude towards education in the students by emphasizing the beliefs found in the study. The students should be allowed to enroll in the academic faculty of their own choice. The people concerned should also provide the students with academic knowledge and experiences so that they would be able to work with confidence after finishing their studies. The inclination towards elder relatives and peers had a greater influence on the students than any other groups. Therefore, such subjective norm should have a part in advising them to have the right attitude towards education and a positive belief in education so that they could develop a desirable achievement behavior.