



The Effect of Parental Involvement, Social Support and Resilience on Public School Enrollment among Thai Malay Muslims in Southern Thailand

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KEYWORDS Education. Minority. Conflict. Psychosocial. Mediation Analysis

ABSTRACT This quantitative research aims to explore effect of parental involvement, social support and resilience on public school enrollment in southern Thailand. The questionnaires were employed to collect data from 299 Thai Malay Muslim pupils in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces. The result of structure equation modeling showed that the proposed model fitted with the empirical data (Chi-square = 28.41, df=21, p-value= 0.129, RMSEA= 0.039, SRMR=0.045, NFI= 0.95, CFI= 0.99, GFI=0.97). The path analysis indicated parental involvement has a direct effect on resilience ($\beta= 0.49$), social support has a direct effect on resilience ($\beta = 0.33$), resilience has a direct effect on public school enrollment ($\beta = 0.33$), parental involvement has an indirect effect on public school enrollment mediate by resilience ($\beta = 0.16$). This study underlined the need to reinforce parental involvement, social support, and resilience in public education.

INTRODUCTION

The education system in southern Thailand is grounded in historical, cultural, and sociopolitical complexities (Wisalaporn 2010; Nitjarunkul et al. 2014). Thus, the educational experiences of Thai Malay Muslim pupils in southern Thailand is more diversified and relatively disconnected from the rest of Thailand (Brooks and Sungtong 2015; Tuntivivat 2016). The Thai government implemented numerous education policy reforms to address the issues of public education among Thai Malay Muslim minority in southern Thailand. Nonetheless, the Thai Malay Muslims remain persistent and continue to carry on Islamic education in *Pondoks* and Islamic schools to ensure their identity and way of life. Currently, the education policy mandates Thai Malay Muslims to attend public schools until 6th grade after that they are allowed to choose their own schools. Liow (2010) claimed the vast majority of Thai Malay Muslim parents transfer their children from public schools to private Islamic schools or pursue Islamic education in the

Middle East or South Asia nations. Consequently, many public schools are struggling to remain open in three southern border provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat (Brooks and Sungtong 2015).

Many research studied on education in southern Thailand extensively focused on managing *pondoks* and private Islamic schools (Liow 2010; Wisalaporn 2010) multicultural education (Farrungsang 2008; Sungtong 2012), and education reform (Farrungsang et al. 2011; Nitjarunkul et al. 2014). While, a few studies on public education tend to point out the destruction of public schools from separatist insurgent attacks (O'Malley 2010; International Crisis Group 2009; Brooks 2015). There is hardly any research attempt to investigate the effects of parental influence, social support, and resilience on public school enrollment among Thai Malay Muslim pupils in southern Thailand.

Much academic research suggested that family plays a significant role in influencing children's education because it is the closest environment that children have in their lives (Okpala et al. 2001; Sacker et al. 2002; Kohl et al. 2000). Parental involvement is defined as a combination of commitment and active participation on the part of the parent to the school and to the student. Parental involvement refers to a situation where parents are directly involved in the

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education of their children, they involve themselves in the learning process of their children, and they fulfil their duties as parents in making sure that the learner is assisted in the process of learning as much as they possibly can (Clinton and Hattie 2013) Several studies found parental support plays the most critical role in children's academic achievement (Marchant et al. 2001; Desforges and Abouchaar 2003; Kenny et al. 2007; Bank et al. 2015). Parents with high socio-economic status are more likely to enroll their children in schools compared to poor minority parents (Blanden and Gregg 2004).

In context of adversity, many research studies focused on functions of social support as protective factors for students' academic achievement (Tao et al. 2000). Social support is a social structure of an individual's life and the specific functions served by various interpersonal relationships. Many studies proposed that when social support was perceived to be available, it could help protect children against psychological problems and increase their efficacy in coping in difficult situations (Lakey and Cohen 2000; Calvete and Connor-Smith 2006). Later, the concept of resilience has gained popularity in research across both nations and disciplines (Breda 2018). Resilience defined as the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the development of the system (Masten 2015) Resilience is children's ability to learn to live with uncertainty and adapt to challenging life experiences (Masten 1994; 1991) Resilience is not only derived from psychological traits but also from social context. Resilience have found to foster development and learning among at risk students (Wang 1997; Masten 2001; Barrow et al. 2007).

The existing literature review conceptualized the effect of parental involvement, social support, and resilience on education among at risk students from various contexts of adversity. However, the primary issue absent from the literature is critical to understanding the experiences of the Thai Malay Muslim pupils in the complex socio-cultural context amidst armed conflict in southern Thailand.

Purpose of the Research

The study aims to explore the effects of parental involvement, social support and resilience

on public school enrollment among Thai Malay Muslim pupils in southern Thailand.

Research Hypotheses

- H1:** The causal model of public school enrollment among Thai Malay Muslims in Southern Thailand by the variable groups of the causal factors includes parental involvement, social support and resilience correlate with the empirical data.
- H1.1:** Parental involvement has a positive direct effect on resilience.
- H1.2:** Social support has a positive direct effect on resilience.
- H1.3:** Resilience has a positive direct effect on public school enrollment.
- H1.4:** Parental involvement has an indirect effect on public school enrollment mediated by resilience.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The data were collected in the armed conflict area of three southern border provinces of Thailand: Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. The three southern provinces had 164,830 students in secondary level in 2012. There were 31,346 students in public schools, 129,784 in Private Islamic schools, and 3,700 in religious institutions. A total of 299 students currently studying in hazardous area of three southern border provinces were surveyed. 39 percent were male ($n = 114$) and 61 percent were female ($n = 185$). Their ages ranged from 11-15 years (mean age = 12). There were 91 percent of the students identify themselves as Thai ethnic ($n = 273$) and 9 percent identify as Thai Malay ethnic ($n=26$). The proportion of the sample that went to public school versus the private Islamic schools was 50:50 ($n=149:150$). The average parent income of those in the sample was 5,000-9,999 baht (145-290 USD) per month. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from Srinakharinwirot University.

Survey Development

The questionnaires were developed based on an extensive literature review and also

emerged from the fieldwork to provide an insight of the complex sociocultural context amidst armed conflict of southern Thailand. A first version with sixty-one items consists of demographic information and four variables: social support, parental involvement, resilience, and intention to enroll in public school. Then, questionnaires reviewed by a panel of five experts in order to check the survey items for clarity, completeness, and appropriate language, as well as provide additional insight. There were forty one items in the revised version that had an Item Objective Congruence (IOC) Index higher than 0.6.

The three dimensions of social support (peer support, community support, and government support) were employed to determine the extent to which social support may influence the Thai Malay Muslim pupils to enroll in public school. This questionnaire consist of twelve measurement items on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree). The measurement items were: (1) I feel accepted by the community, (2) I think the government is there to help me, (3) I believe the government provides adequate assistance. The twelve-item scale reliability estimate Cronbach alpha was greater than .79. The three-dimensions of parental involvement (parental support, parental socioeconomic status, and parental cultural norms) were assessed by twelve measurement items. The Thai Malay Muslim pupils were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a five point Likert-type scale. The measurement items were: (1) my parents are happy to see me study (2) my parents always buy me school materials. Cronbach alpha for parental involvement was moderate at .78. Resilience was measured with two dimensions (emotional stability and problem solving). The

eleven measurement items were: (1) I feel calm even in difficult situations; (2) I can concentrate despite the military in school; (3) I feel problems are part of life. The Cronbach alpha for resilience reached as high as 0.84. The intention to enroll in public school was measured with six items. The measurement items were: (1) I believe secular education is important (2) I do not care much about religious study. Cronbach alpha was moderate at .77. The printed questionnaires were distributed to 299 Thai Malay Muslim pupils monitored by their teachers at seven school sites in the three southern border provinces.

RESULTS

Correlation Matrix

The correlation matrix of all dimensions of the four constructs studied is shown in Table 1. The result found that correlation between emotional stability and problem solving was the highest ($r=0.519$, $p\text{-value}=0.01$) following with the correlation between community support and government support ($r=0.469$, $p\text{-value}=0.01$) while the peer support and intention to enroll in public school was the lowest ($r=0.119$, $p\text{-value}=0.05$) In sum, the correlational results have demonstrated appropriate evidence of convergent and discriminant validity for the measures of social support, resilience and intention to enroll in public school.

Results of Path Analysis

The four hypotheses were tested using path analysis and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Correlation matrix estimates for dimension means of variable (N= 299)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Peer support	1.00								
2. Community support	.310**	1.00							
3. Government support	.342**	.469**	1.00						
4. Parental support	.242**	.184*	.269**	1.00					
5. Parental socioeconomic status	.218**	.197*	.266*	.306**	1.00				
6. Parental cultural norm	.073	.042	.102	.179*	.213**	1.00			
7. Emotional stability	.253**	.384**	.431**	.214**	.362**	.144*	1.00		
8. Problem solving	.246**	.166*	.178*	.199*	.280**	.168*	.519**	1.00	
9. Intention to public school enrollment	.119*	.025	.051	.235**	.248**	.336**	.247**	.293**	1.00

** $p < 0.01$. * $p < 0.05$

Table 2: Result of the path analysis (N=299)

Variables	Independent variable					
	Resilience			Intention to public school enrollment		
	DE	IE	TE	DE	IE	TE
Social Support	0.33*	-	0.33*	-	0.11	0.11
Parental Involvement	0.49*	-	0.49*	-	0.16*	0.16*
Resilience	-	-	-	0.33*	-	0.33*

Note: * $p < 0.05$, DE=Direct Effect, IE=Indirect Effect, TE=Total Effect

- H1.1:** The finding indicated that parental involvement has a significant positive direct effect on resilience ($\beta = 0.49, p < 0.05$). This means that Thai Malay Muslim pupils perceived to have a strong parental involvement had higher resilience.
- H1.2:** The finding indicated that social support has a significant positive direct effect on resilience ($\beta = 0.33, p < 0.05$). This means that Thai Malay Muslim pupils who perceived to receive sufficient social support had higher resilience.
- H1.3:** The finding indicated that resilience has a significant positive direct effect on public school enrollment ($\beta = 0.33, p < 0.05$). This means that Thai Malay

Muslim pupils who had higher resilience were more likely to enroll in public school.

- H1.4:** The finding indicated that parental involvement has a significant indirect effect on public school enrollment mediate by resilience ($\beta = 0.16, p < 0.05$). This means resilience was a partially mediator between parental involvement and public school enrollment.

The Results of Structural Equation Modeling

The correlation matrix provides an assessment of interrelations among the internal dimensions of the four constructs, but it does not describe the relationship among the four con-

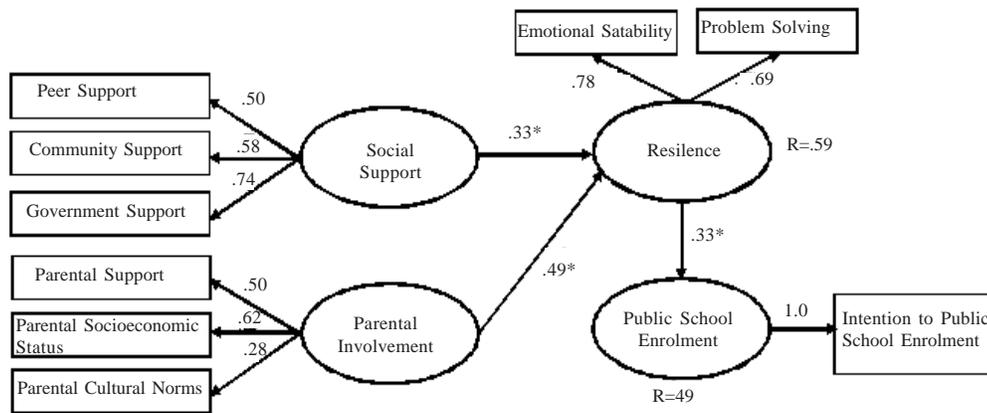


Fig.1. The effects of parental involvement, social support and resilience on public school enrollment among Thai Malay Muslims in Southern Thailand

Chi-square = 28.41, df= 21, P-Value = 0.129, RMSEA = 0.039, NFI= 0.95, CFI= 0.99, GFI=0.97, SRMR = 0.045

structs. Although the correlation among the raw scores of the construct could provide some rough estimates of the relationship among the construct, such estimates tend to be inaccurate because of measurement errors. Therefore, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach was implemented to examine the relationship among the four constructs studied, while taking into account the hypothesized model. As Figure 1 shows, three pathways among the four constructs suggest that their interrelationship can be described. Parental involvement had the strongest direct positive effect on resilience with a significant path coefficient at 0.49. Social support had a significant positive direct effect on resilience with a significant path coefficient at 0.33. Resilience had a direct positive effect on intention to enroll in public school, with a path coefficient at 0.33. Parental involvement had an indirect effect on intention to enroll in public school mediated by resilience with a path coefficient at 0.16. The fit indices of the structural model shown that Chi-Square = 28.41, df=21, p-value=0.129, RMSEA=0.039, SRMR=0.045, NFI=0.95, CFI=0.99, GFI=0.97. These indices meet all of the selected criteria and suggest that the overall model-data fit is reasonable and acceptable. Therefore, the hypothesized model was confirmed in that there is a causal relationship between parental involvement, social support, resilience, and public school enrollment that can be accepted as a true and convincing model.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of study is to explore the effects of parental involvement, social support and resilience on public school enrollment among Thai Malay Muslim pupils in southern Thailand. This study developed and tested a causal model of the effects of parental involvement, social support and resilience on public school enrollment. The results of structural equation model consistent with the proposed hypotheses. The findings demonstrated that parental involvement, social support and resilience had direct and indirect effects on public school enrollment among Thai Malay Muslim students which congruent to previous researches on effects of parents, schools, community and educational resilience among at risk students (Bryan 2005; Will-

iams 2011). Moreover, exploratory analysis suggested emotional stability rather than problem solving was the main driver of resilience among Thai Malay Muslim pupils in armed conflict of southern Thailand. While further investigation is necessary, this finding is consistent with evidence that emotional support protects against depression in difficult situation (Santini et al. 2015). A further study found emotion regulation can be a mediator of the relationship between resilience and distress (Vaughan et al. 2019).

The further finding indicated that parental involvement has a significant positive direct effect on resilience which is supported by many initial studies suggested that family is the first and the most significant influence on children's education because it is the closest environment that children have in their lives (Kohl et al. 2000; Sacker et al. 2002). This parental involvement plays the most critical role in children's academic outcomes and associated with a wide range of positive child outcomes such as good academic skills, positive attitudes and social competence (Kenny et al. 2007). In the conflict setting of southern Thailand. The Thai Malay Muslim pupils perceived to have a strong parental involvement had higher resilience. This finding is also supported by many studied that suggested parental involvement can foster academic resilience for at risk minority children (Ceja 2004; Williams 2011).

Concurrently, the social support also found to have a positive direct effect on resilience which mean Thai Malay Muslim pupils who perceived to receive sufficient social support had higher resilience. This finding was proven to be true by many studied that shown social support can increase children's ability to cope with difficult situations (Lakey and Cohen 2000; Calvete and Connor-Smith 2006; Hall et al. 2014). The next finding indicated that resilience had a significant positive direct effect on public school enrollment. In ethno-religious conflict settings characterized by high levels of social division, it is likely that Thai Malay Muslim pupils are generally seeking more emotional stability and problem solving to cultivate resilience in order to attend public schools. This finding was supported by many studies that found resilience can foster education among children in adversi-

ty (Masten 1994, 1999, 2001; Wang 1997; Barrow et al. 2007).

The final finding which was one of the major theoretical implications for this study indicated that resilience was a mediator between parental involvement and public school enrollment among Thai Malay Muslims. This study focused on resilience as the mediating factors or processes that enable positive outcomes in the wake of adversity. This notion is supported the nature of resilience processes (Van Breda 2018) which defined as the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the development of the system (Masten 2015) or the process of adjusting well to significant adversity (Theron 2016). This is congruent to studies found that resilience plays a mediating role between home, school, community, and education outcomes among children from various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds (Lee and Stewart 2013; Williams 2011; Schwartz et al. 2019). Moreover, resilience can be mediators of pupils' perceived stressful life events and school adjustment (Zhang et al. 2019).

CONCLUSION

The assimilation policy used public schools as tools to advocate a homogeneous Thai identity that prohibited Islamic education have affected millions of Thai Malay Muslim in southern Thailand. The unintended consequences of public policies have continued to influence Thai Malay Muslim pupils to drop out of public schools. Thai Malay Muslim pupils drop out of public schools is a major crisis for Thai education system because it has played a vital role in contributing to the ethno-religious conflict between the Thai Buddhist state and Thai Malay Muslim minority. Hence, it is crucial to gain a better understanding of important factors that motivate Thai Malay Muslim's to enroll in public schools. This research pointed out parental involvement and social support are key protective factors for fostering resilience and public education of the Thai Malay Muslim students in the complex sociocultural context of armed conflict in southern Thailand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The practical implication from the result of this study is the Thai government and local com-

munity should continue to put effort on supporting the Thai Malay Muslim pupils because social support can fostering resilience and increase ability to cope with adversity in armed conflict situation. Moreover, it is necessary to proactively reach out to the Thai Malay Muslim parents in order to inspire their children to see value in secular education since quality public education is an effective tool to transform at risk children to good citizens of the global society.

LIMITATIONS

This cross-sectional correlational approach using the structural equation modeling technique does not allow for conclusions to be drawn on causal inference. Therefore, longitudinal studies are recommended to strengthen causal inference.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the anonymous participants and peer reviewers for their time, and also local professors and government officers for their advice and assistance on this project.

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Paper received for publication in October, 2019
 Paper accepted for publication in November, 2019