

**EFFECTS OF TEACHER AUTONOMY SUPPORT  
INTERVENTION ON THAI STUDENTS' MOTIVATION:  
A SELF DETERMINATION THEORY PERSPECTIVE**

A Thesis submitted to the College of Arts and Sciences in fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
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## **Abstrak**

Teori Penentuan Diri mengutarakan hal yang berkaitan dengan Sokongan Autonomi Guru (TAS) untuk menggalakkan motivasi pembelajaran dan meningkatkan hasil akademik. Namun terdapat kontroversi silang budaya berkaitan konstruk autonomi Teori Penentuan Diri sehingga menyebabkan timbulnya persoalan tentang aplikasi TAS dalam persekitaran bilik darjah di Asia. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara sokongan autonomi dalam motivasi pelajar Thai. Seramai 103 pelajar (56 perempuan dan 47 lelaki) Gred 6 dari sekolah awam di Thailand terlibat dalam kajian yang menggunakan kaedah eksperimen kuasi antara kelompok tidak setara. Pelajar dalam kelompok ujikaji ini menerima arahan daripada guru yang terlatih dalam pengajaran sokongan autonomi dalam tujuh (7) sesi (60 minit setiap sesi) di bilik darjah. Data dikumpulkan dan dilakukan prauji, ujian1 dan ujian2 menggunakan inventori motivasi instrinsik oleh Ryan (1982), soal selidik pengaturan sendiri oleh Ryan dan Connell (1989) dan soal selidik iklim pembelajaran oleh Black dan Deci (2000). Analisis menggunakan Multivariate Analysis of Variance di peringkat prauji menunjukkan tiada perbezaan hubungan di antara kumpulan yang dikaji dengan kumpulan kawalan bagi semua pemboleh ubah termasuk jantina. Walau bagaimanapun terdapat perbezaan min antara kumpulan tersebut berdasar: (i) antara kedua-dua kumpulan yang diuji pada pra ujian1, (ii) antara ujian1 dan ujian2 untuk kumpulan yang dikaji dengan kesan utama melibatkan semua pemboleh ubah dan (iii) min di antara ujian1 dan ujian2 yang dilakukan semula di antara kumpulan yang dikaji. Bagaimanapun, kesan utama yang dilihat hanyalah bagi pemboleh ubah usaha, hubungan dan sokongan autonomi teranggap. Sehubungan itu, didapati Teori Penentuan Diri telah menunjukkan bahawa autonomi bukanlah nilai yang terikat dengan budaya, bersesuaian dengan pelajar Thai dan memberi kesan dalam pendidikan dan polisi di Thailand.

Kata kunci: Motivasi, Teori penentuan diri, Thailand, Autonomi guru, Kaedah kuasi-eksperimen

## **Abstract**

Self Determination Theory (SDT) postulates that Teacher's Autonomy Support (TAS) promotes learning motivation and academic outcomes, but cross cultural controversies within SDT question the significance of TAS in Asian classrooms. The present research tests the relevance of TAS on Thai students' motivation in relation to Thai Education reforms. In a quasi-experimental non-equivalent group design, 103 students (56 girls and 47 boys) of Grade-6, from a Thai public school, participated in the present study. The experimental group underwent an autonomy supportive intervention for seven (7) sessions (60 minutes each) in a regular classroom setting by a trained teacher. Data were gathered for the Pretest, posttest1 and posttest2 using an intrinsic motivation inventory by Ryan (1982), a self-regulation questionnaire by Ryan and Connell (1989) and a learning climate questionnaire by Black and Deci (2000) for variables which include interest, effort, pressure, relatedness, perceived autonomy support, identified and external regulation. An analysis using Multivariate Analysis of Variance in the pretest showed no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group on all variables including gender. However, significant mean differences were observed in the following cases: (i) between both groups at the posttest1, (ii) between the pretest and posttest1 of the experimental group, with the main effects observed for all variables as a result of TAS and (iii) between means of the posttest1 and posttest2 in the experimental group. However, the main effects were only significant for variables such as effort, relatedness and perceived autonomy support. Thus, the findings have strengthened the SDT belief that autonomy is not a culturally bound value and is equally relevant for Thai students and has implications for Thai education and its policies.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Self-determination Theory, Thailand, Teacher autonomy support, Quasi experimental design.

## **Dedication**

*I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beloved grandparents and my in-laws for their blessings, inspiration and dreams that guided me to this achievement.*

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## **List of Abbreviations**

SDT: Self-determination Theory

TAS: Teacher Autonomy Support

PAS: Perceived Autonomy Support

IMI: Intrinsic Motivation Inventory

SRQ: Self-Regulation Questionnaire

LCQ: Learning Climate Questionnaire

PIS: Problem in School Questionnaire

GCOS: General causality Orientation

NEGD: Non Equivalent Group Design

SES: Social Economic Status

ONEC: Office of National Education Commission

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

“Motivation is defined as a process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained” (Pintrich & Schuck, 2002, p.3). It can be explained as a desire, or a force that induces living beings to pursue goals and maintain goal oriented behaviors. Motivation plays a pivotal role in determining optimal school functioning among students. Studying motivation for classroom learning and student performance has always been a major issue for researchers in educational psychology (Urdan & Turner, 2005). It is important for educators to have knowledge of the learner’s motivation in order to develop appropriate condition for them to experience positive motivation. Without this, educators may fail to engage students in learning (Alexander, 2005). Schools, being the primary influence on children’s upbringing, are studied extensively to develop a system which fosters a genuine interest for learning. Several studies have been conducted in the quest of finding out ways and means to promote better academic outcome, to enhance student engagement and reduce the dropout rate (McCombs & Whisler, 1997; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Wlodkowski & Jaynes, 1990). Numerous theories such as Pavlov’s (1927, 1928) classical theory, Skinner’s (1953) operant conditioning theory, and Festinger’s (1957) cognitive dissonance theory have made attempts to identify the nature and characteristics of motivation. Among these, Self-determination Theory

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