

Political Information Exposures, Politicians' Perceptions, Political Attitudes and Political Participations among People in Bangkok Metropolitan Area

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Abstract—The purposes of this study are to study political information exposure, politicians' perceptions, political attitudes and political participations among people in Bangkok Metropolitan Area. The sample consisted of 420 which were selected by using accidental sampling method. Questionnaires were administered to all of the respondents to obtain the data for this research. T-test, one-way ANOVA and Pearson's correlation coefficient were used to analyze the data. The findings are as follows: The difference in gender, education, income and occupation has significantly effect upon political information exposures. The difference in age, income has significantly effect upon politicians' perceptions. The difference in income has significantly effect upon political attitudes. The difference in gender, income and occupation has significantly effect upon political participations. There were a significantly relations between political information exposures, political attitudes, political participations and between politicians' perceptions, political attitudes and political participations.

Keywords—Political Information Exposures, Politicians' Perceptions, Political Attitudes, Political Participations.

I. INTRODUCTION

THAILAND celebrates its 70 years of democracy, dating back to the downfall of the absolute monarchy in 1932. Although Thailand has used 18 constitutions in 70 years but democracy are still not developed. For a half century, Thai politics were dominated by military and bureaucratic elites, with support of businessmen and big entrepreneurs. The unsustainability in political development has an impact to Thai economy, society and people. Moreover, Thailand has a problem of corruption for a long time and it is deep rooted in the culture. The problem of corruption is its corroding effects on economic growth. Huge amount of country development budget will be lost during the implementation of projects due to corruption itself. The possible reasons for corruption all over the world and Thailand are low salaries of public servants and uneducated citizens, big financial gaps between social classes, lacking transparency of governance, unstable political situation, lack of democracy, lack of freedom of speech, heavy bureaucracy, and centralization remain the root of a political problems and conflicts at the moment [1]. On the contrary, there is fast development in communication in Thai. Currently, there are 16,353,160 facebook users in the

Thailand, which makes it number 16 in the ranking of all facebook statistics by Country [2]. There are 8,682,940 users facebook and statistics rise up 104.74% and are ranking at 11 of the world [3]. Theory in communication indicated that communication through mass media, new media, interpersonal communication influences on individual and society. Communication affects attitudes, which in turn influence audience behavior [4]. Consequently, this research focuses on study the effect of political information exposure on politician perception, politic attitude and political participation of Thais people.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study political information exposures, politicians' perceptions, political attitudes and political participations of people in Bangkok metropolitan area.
2. To compare political information exposures, politicians' perceptions, political attitudes and political participations of people in Bangkok metropolitan area among people who are different in gender, age, education, occupation and income.
3. To study relationship among political information exposures, politicians' perceptions, political attitudes and political participations of people in Bangkok metropolitan area.

III. REVIEW LITERATURE

A. The Selective Exposure Theory

The selective exposure theory is a concept that refers to individuals' tendency to favor information that reinforces pre-existing views while avoiding contradictory information. People tend to select specific aspects of exposed information based on their perspective, beliefs, attitudes and decisions. People exposed to favorable information and ignoring the unfavorable [5]. Joseph Klapper(1960) concluded that mass communication does not directly influence people, but just reinforces people's predispositions. Mass communications play a role as a mediator in persuasive communication. Factors that affect the processes of selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention which include the groups, and the norms of groups, to which the audience members belong, interpersonal dissemination of the content of communication, the exercise of opinion leadership and the nature of mass media in society [6].

There are four basic concepts of selective exposure: 1) selective attention is tendency of person to pay attention only to messages that address a need or interest or are

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consistent with the person's attitudes, opinions, and beliefs [7]. 2) Selective perception - If people are confronting unsympathetic material, they do not perceive it, or make it fit for their existing opinion. 3) selective perception is a psychological cognitive bias related to how a person's expectations or the degree to which something stands out can affect observations [8]. Person tends to filter what they see and hear so as to suit their needs. Much of this process is psychological and often unconscious [9]. We are filtering out information we think unnecessary based on our system of values and beliefs [10]. 4) Selective retention is the process when people can remember messages that are closer to their interests, values and beliefs more accurately, than those that are in contrast with their values and beliefs, selecting what to keep in the memory, narrowing the informational flow [11].

B. Communication and Politics

Communication has a powerful effect in shaping attitudes of individual through the tools of mass communication, which convey messages from political elites, experts and other sources, with individual levels of political awareness often playing a key role in moderating the effects of these messages on attitudes [12].

Communication affects attitudes, which in turn Influence audience behavior [4].

C. Modernization Theory

Modernization theory emerged in the 1950s as an explanation of how the industrial societies of North America and Western Europe developed. The theory argues that societies develop in fairly predictable stages though which they become increasingly complex. Development depends primarily on the importation of technology as well as a number of other political and social changes believed to come about as a result. Modernization involves increased levels of schooling and the development of mass media, both of which foster democratic political institutions. Transportation and communication become increasingly sophisticated and accessible, populations become more urban and mobile, and the extended family declines in importance as a result. Organizations become bureaucratic as the division of labor grows more complex and religion declines in public influence. Lastly, cash-driven markets take over as the primary mechanism through which goods and services are exchanged [13].

D. Media and Development

Daniel Lerner was the author of the passing of traditional society: Modernizing the Middle East (1958), which provided comprehensive the role of mass communication in the process of modernization. In Lerner's model, increasing urbanization led to the growth of mass media (as people demanded news and information) and literacy (as more and more schools were built), which in turn resulted in greater public participation in economic activity and politics. Lerner maintained that mass communication was the key factor in helping traditional societies to become modern. Lerner theorized that radio, television, magazines, and newspapers were important catalysts of the modernization process [14]. According to

McLuhan (1964) suggested that media have effect in transform society, through the game we play, the radios we listen to, the televisions we watch [15].

E. Political Attitude and Political Participation

Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen, found that attitude and behavior are correlated (a) when the observed behavior is judged to be relevant to the attitude, (b) when attitude and behavior are observed at comparable levels of specificity, and (c) when mediation of attitude and behavior relation by behavioral intentions is taken into account [16].

IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Using above theory and concept, this research design conceptual framework as following figure.

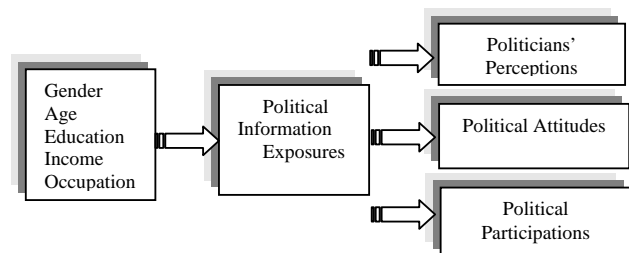


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework

V. METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted by survey research people in Bangkok metropolitan area.

A. Sample

The sample 420 of residents in Bangkok metropolitan area was selected by accidental sampling procedures.

B. Data Collection

Questionnaires were used to collect data. The questionnaire used likert scales to assess political information exposures, politician perceptions, political attitudes and political participations.

C. Reliability

Table I presents the scale properties of the four parts of instruments employed in this study in terms of the alpha coefficients. The alpha coefficients demonstrated that all the instruments were satisfactory internal consistency reliability, in excess of the threshold of .65 which recommended by DeVillis [17].

TABLE I
INSTRUMENTS RELIABILITY

Instruments	The Alpha Coefficients
Political Information Exposure	.833
Politician Perception	.890
Politics Attitude	.829
Political Participation	.860
Total	.913

D. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by SPSS, employing the statistics frequencies, mean, standard deviation, t-test, one-way ANOVA and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

VI. RESULTS

TABLE II

T-TEST AND ONE - WAY ANOVA TEST OF POLITICAL INFORMATION

Variables	Political Information Exposures	Politicians' Perceptions	Political Attitudes	Political Participations
Gender	✓ t(405)= 2.074*, p. = .039	✗ t(403) = .981, p. = .327	✗ t(406)=1. 610, p.=.108	✓ t(407) = 3.450, p. = .001
Age	✗ F (4,403) = .271, p. = .897	✓ F(4,400) = 3.607*, p. = .007	✗ F(4,403) =2.120, p=.078	✗ F(4,404) = 1.662, p. = .158
Education	✓ F(3,404) = 5.920*, p. = .001	✗ F(3,401) =2.614, p. = .051	✗ F(3,405) = 1.518, p=.209	✗ F(3,406) = 1.879, p. = .132
Income	✓ F(4,402) = 5.589, p. = .000	✓ F(4,400) = 2.395*, p. = .050	✓ F(4,403) =3.451*, p=.009	✓ F(4,404) = 4.404*, p. = .002
Occupation	✓ F(5,401) =3.044*, p. = .010	✗ F(5,400) = 1.837, p. = .105	✗ F(5,402) =1.888, p=.095	✓ F(5,404) =4.581*, p. = .000

TABLE III

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICAL INFORMATION EXPOSURES, POLITICIANS' PERCEPTIONS, POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATIONS

Correlation	Political Information Exposures	Politicians' Perception	Political Attitudes	Political Participations
Political Information Exposures	-	.098	.185*	.629**
Politicians' Perceptions		-	.703*	.119*
Political Attitudes			-	.185**
Political Participations				-

*Significant at level .05

** Significant at level .01

The research hypotheses testing found as follows:

H 1: The difference in gender, education, income and occupation has significantly effect upon political information exposures.

H2: The difference in age and income has significantly effect upon politicians' perceptions.

H3: The difference in income has significantly effect upon political attitudes.

H4: The difference in gender, income and occupation has significantly effect upon political participations.

H 5: There were a significantly relations between political information exposures, political attitudes and political participations, including between politicians perceptions, political attitudes and political participations.

The research finding showed as Table II and Table III.

VII. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study has shown the role of political information exposure as a potent democratizing agent. Indeed, increased political information exposures demonstrated some of the coefficient correlates with political attitudes and political participations in this study.

It is particularly interesting to note that political information exposures predicting political attitudes and political participations. Beside these, this research found that politicians' perceptions significant correlate to political attitudes and political participations. The results of this study generally reinforce the relationships outlined by the process of modernization of Daniel Lerner, specifically the effect of media on political participations. This suggests that Thai government should have a policy to promote citizen to be exposed political information which in this study was shown to be significantly correlated to political attitudes and political participations in order to increase political participations which is one factor to develop Thai politics. Future research should identify the specific effect of each media or channel on political attitude and political participation.

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