

# The Study of Public Consciousness of Undergraduate Students, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Nantida Otakum

**Abstract**—The purpose of the study is to study the level of public consciousness of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University undergraduate students. This study also compares differences in the level of public consciousness among undergraduate students who are different in sex and year of study. The research methodology employed a questionnaire as a quantitative method. The respondents were undergraduate students at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Totally, 400 usable questionnaires were received. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data analysis. The results showed that the level of public consciousness of undergraduate students was at a good level in all aspects. The aspect of social participation was at the highest level, while the aspect of shared vision was at the lowest level. The results also indicated that undergraduate students with differences in sex and year of study were not significantly different in public consciousness level.

**Keywords**—Participation, public consciousness, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, undergraduate students.

## I. INTRODUCTION

SOCIETY nowadays mainly focuses on economic development, creating an obsession with materialism and consumerism. People value their own benefits over the benefits of society. This lack of public consciousness, in turn, leads to misbehavior problems, such as a lack of discipline, a decrease in morality, an increase in taking advantage of each other, and an increase in the encroaching upon, and the destroying of, the environment, etc. All of these problems can be attributed to a lack of public consciousness.

The educational institutes are one of the most important factors for developing the country. However, nowadays, they are facing an increase in undesirable behavior from the learners because of the competitiveness, and fast-pace of everyday life. This affects and forms certain personalities, and automatically creates a selfishness, or competitiveness, within the learners and makes them only focus on studying. They are not interested in having a public consciousness or caring about the environment around them [1]. National Education Act of B.E. (1999) stated that the learners should be, “smart, good, and happy,” [2].

The Ministry of Education has set educational purposes, by promoting the development of the learners to be good citizens. As a result, the educational institutes are supposed to instruct learners, or the youths, to have the knowledge and capabilities to survive as a good citizen, who can live with other people in society happily.

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According to these reasons, the term, “public consciousness,” therefore, has currently been mentioned more often in order to cultivate the awareness for people to realize their responsibility to the public, rather than one’s self, which means everyone should give more than they should take. The public consciousness is comparable to the idea of people owning public things together. Everyone has a duty to look after and maintain public property without difficulty, and this action must not be against the laws which are considered useful for the public [3].

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University is one of the educational institutes that focuses on “holding the public consciousness” of the learners. This can be seen from the institute’s motto which reads, “Professional practitioners, academic excellence, intelligent communicators, and strategic thinkers with public awareness” [4]. It also conforms to the mission of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University which focuses on the production of first-rate undergraduates, who shall be ready for the community and the society of a knowledge-based economy; which in turn will lead to a happier population. Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University cares and intends to produce and develop its undergraduates; as a result, it has become the number one Rajabhat Institute in Thailand.

With regards to the importance of public consciousness, the researcher would like to study the level of overall public consciousness of the undergraduates in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and would like to study whether the undergraduates are interested in the activities concerned with public consciousness, according to varying factors. The researcher hopes to apply the results for use in educational planning and activities, so to develop the students of the university. Hopefully, this might help to provide quality citizens with a public consciousness, who can live happily in society, and help create beneficial aspects for society in the future.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Definitions of Public Consciousness

There are various definitions from Academics and Experts as follows: The Royal Academy of Thailand [5] has defined public consciousness as to recognize and take into account for the common good together.

Ganitha Nitadpattana and Mallica Mattigo [6] stated that public consciousness means mental awareness, and taking into account for the public or regardless of public and others. Gosol Meekwamdee [7] explained that public consciousness is the action which reflects responsibility to the public, by taking care of, participation and to involve in public activities for the

public's benefit by considering the one who causes public damage, but intend to act to maintain public, for example, performing your duty to protect public assessment and to let others use public assessment without taking it to own possession.

In addition, Manassa Shinupakarnpong [8] defined public consciousness as to inspire people to do benefits for society throughout sympathy to reduce argumentation and to motivate each other for a happy society.

Riem Nomrak [9] stated that public consciousness is feeling and thought of one of the problems of society by the realization process to analyze, criticize, and to love and help others by realizing of own benefit and public's benefit at the same time.

Arisa Sooksom [10] provided the definition of public consciousness as the awareness to do anything for the sake of the common good. The creative mind is a mind that thinks good and not to destroy others, society, cult, nature and the environment which aim to benefit society.

Moreover, Chai Bodhisita, Uraivan Kanungsookkasem, and Amara Soonthornthada [11] gave the definition of public consciousness in behavior as follows:

1. Being responsible to the public by avoiding the use and actions that will cause damage to public property that includes a duty to participate in taking care of the public.
2. Respect for rights, and the public use of others because the public property is state owned or publicly owned; therefore, everyone has the rights to equal access to public property.

From the definitions of the public consciousness, it can be concluded that the public consciousness means when one compiles the duty but do not suffer others, being a good person, be generous, respect for the rights of others and willing to help others when there are chances and capability to do so as well as paying attention to the public property as of his own and to share with others to have the opportunity to use public property together.

#### *B. The Elements of Public Consciousness*

Sompong Singhapol [12] said that public consciousness is composed of three main elements:

1. Self-conscious (Self-Consciousness) which is the consciousness to develop self-awareness to become a completed person; this awareness has been cultivated in Thailand for a long time which some occurred and some not under the circumstances of the departments to try to develop their man works to be diligence, responsibility, tolerance, etc.
2. Others-oriented consciousness is conscious of the relationship between ones in the society; for example, compassion and leniency to each other are the consciousness that has been built on the primitive culture of Thailand. Therefore, it is not difficult to build up.
3. Social of Public Consciousness is a realization of the importance of cohabitation in society. Individuals should realize the concept of sharing and respect for others rights.

Haruthai Artproo [13] had studied the composition of the public consciousness of the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> year nursing students in educational institutions in Bangkok, and she found that the composition of the public consciousness is divided into 6 areas as follows:

1. The awareness of the problems in society, one's recognition of economic and social conditions which is necessary to be solved to remain in normal condition.
2. The criticism of social, economic and political conditions, including the causes of the conditions that might lead to social problems.
3. The love, generosity, and unity among people in the society that can lead people to help solve social problems together.
4. The realization of one's own potential and ability to solve social, economic, and political problems.
5. The cooperation among people in solving and following up on the problems in the society, people participating in community development activities.
6. The network of people with a common purpose in doing activities that are beneficial to society.

Anchalee Yingrakphan [14] proposed elements of the public consciousness in the same directions as follows:

1. Avoid damaging public property and make a proper use of it.
2. Being responsible for caring for the public property.
3. Respect for other people's right to access to public property, do not block others' opportunities in public use.

More recently, Riam Nomrak analyzed the composition of public consciousness among undergraduate students at Ramkhamhaeng University's student organizations. The study was extended by the study of Haruthai Artproo, which divided public consciousness of students into 9 elements:

1. Shared vision in recognizing the problems,
2. Love, generosity, and unity,
3. Social participation,
4. Public responsibility,
5. Showing politeness and honor to others,
6. Standard of performance
7. Communicating with others
8. Social interactions, and
9. The ability to acquire knowledge.

This study has applied the nine aspects of public consciousness of Riam Nomrak to study the public consciousness level among undergraduate students at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

#### *C. Common Features of Public Consciousness*

Features of public consciousness are as follows [15]:

1. The dedication and devotion to the society mean that
2. people who have public consciousness will not only act on their rights but also assist others in social development.
3. To respect the differences between each other because we are living with different people who are from different backgrounds. If we can accept the differences, we can live with others happily.

4. Consideration of common interests rather than their own interests.
5. Doing things that can contribute to the society.

Additionally, Anuchart Puangsamlee and Veerabool Wisartkhul [16] gave the similar features of public consciousness as follows:

1. A shared vision among people in the community.
2. Civic education.
3. Love and unity.
4. Interactive learning through action.
5. Communication and social networking.

According to the literature review, the researcher would like to study the level of public consciousness among the undergraduate students at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The study is to answer the question whether the students who are of mixed gender and in a different year of study have the same level of public consciousness or not.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from undergraduate students at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. According to Rubin, Rubin, and Piele [17], survey research employing questionnaires is an appropriate way to collect data from large numbers of people and seeks to explain people's current views surrounding an issue.

#### A. Population and Sample

The populations of this study are undergraduate students at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The sample for the study will be recruited randomly from six faculties at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University consists of six faculties: Faculty of Education, Faculty of Fine Arts, Faculty of Science and Technology, Faculty of Management Science, Faculty of Industrial Technology, and Faculty of Humanities and Social Science.

The minimum sample size required for the study is 128. The sample size was determined by using G\*Power Software based on the use of a univariate t-test and a one-way multivariate analysis of variance in data analysis [18], with approximately 80% power to reject the null hypothesis at the .05 significance level for medium effect size. A medium effect size is sufficient to achieve acceptable power in social science research [19]. Because the researcher concerns about receiving a low response rate and would like to ensure the statistical power, the questionnaires were distributed to 400 undergraduate students.

#### B. Measures and Procedures

The respondents were asked the questions regarding public consciousness activities, and also asked to score on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Public consciousness reflected in items such as: "I participate in the activities that develop the society," and "I take a good care of public property."

A convenience sampling was used to distribute a questionnaire to participants, collecting data from

undergraduate students at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Totally, 400 usable questionnaires were received.

#### C. Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS/Windows 10.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Science). The statistics employed univariate t-test and a one-way multivariate analysis of variance.

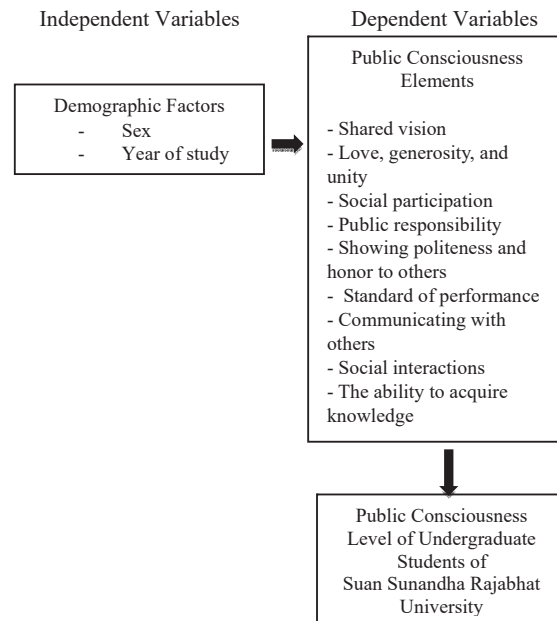


Fig. 1 Research conceptual framework

TABLE I  
THE DESCRIPTIVE OF PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS LEVEL

Public Consciousness Aspects	Mean	S.D.
1.1 Shared vision	4.08	0.70
1.2 Love, generosity, and unity	4.27	0.70
1.3 Social participation	4.28	0.72
1.4 Public responsibility	4.23	0.68
1.5 Showing politeness and honor to others	4.14	0.72
1.6 Standard of performance	4.17	0.77
1.7 Communicating with others	4.22	0.73
1.8 Social interactions	4.20	0.72
1.9 The ability to acquire knowledge	4.22	0.77
<b>Overall mean</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>0.56</b>

### IV. FINDINGS

The sample consists of 47% men and 53 women. 18.5% is first-year students, 33% is second-year students, 37% is third-year students, and 11.5% is fourth-year students. The findings indicated that the public consciousness level of undergraduate students was at a good level ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ).

Among all aspects of public consciousness, the social participation aspect was at the highest level ( $M = 4.28$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ), while the shared vision aspect was at the lowest level ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ). The findings also revealed that undergraduate students with differences in sex ( $t = -.335$ ,  $p >$

.05) and year of study ( $F = 1.227, p > .05$ ) were not significantly different in public consciousness level.

#### V. DISCUSSION

The purposes of this study were to study the level of public consciousness of undergraduate students at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The study also compared the level of public consciousness among these students who are of mixed gender, and from a different year of study. The results showed that the overall aspects of public consciousness level were at a good level. Students with differences in sex and year of study were not significantly different in public consciousness level.

Agreeing with Aomchai Vongmonta, and Prasert Bandisak [20], they studied the level of public consciousness among undergraduate students at Prince of Songkla University Pattani campus. The results showed that all aspects of public consciousness were at a high level. Students with differences in sex, year of study and faculties were not significantly different in the level of public consciousness. They also found that students with different religions were significantly different in public consciousness level.

Additionally, Haruthai Artproo studied public consciousness among nursing students in Bangkok, and she found that year of study was not significantly different in the level of public consciousness among nursing students. Likewise, Chanjira Moolmuang [21] also noted that students who are different in the year of study had the same level of public consciousness.

#### VI. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

The limitations of this study are as follows:

1. The target group from this study was only chosen from the students in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, as such, in the future there should be a study about the public consciousness level from more the Rajabhat Institutions in order to gain the results that may be different,
2. The future study should focus on other target groups, such as the staffs, professors, and the administrators. The results from various groups will provide the variety of opinions that can lead to the improvement and development of educational planning and activities of the university,
3. Because the present study focuses on sex and year of study for demographic factors, the future study should add more demographic factors, such as the faculty, religion, and students' GPA.
4. The future study should apply the qualitative method, such as an interview and observation, collecting data from the respondents in order to get deeper information, and
5. There should be the study regarding the comparison of public consciousness level between the students from public and private universities.

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