

ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการสนับสนุนของผู้ปกครอง ทัศนคติในการเรียน และผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนของนักเรียนในจังหวัดรัตนคีรีประเทศกัมพูชา

The Relationship among Parental Support, Study Attitudes, and Academic Achievement of Students in Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia

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Abstract

This research aimed to study the relationship between parental support, their attitudes towards education, and academic achievements at the secondary level of indigenous and Khmer students in Rattanakiri Province, Cambodia. Multiple questionnaires were used as a data collection tool. A sample of the research was 231 indigenous and Khmer students, aged between 15 and 20 years old. These groups of students were selected with a two-step sampling technique: group sampling and student sampling for data translation. Group sampling was intended to select two high schools located in Cambodia's Rattanakiri Province. The researcher employed the independent sample tests using a t-test to determine

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the differences. The Pearson coefficient analysis was used to measure the relationship between the three factors.

The results showed that the parental support and their attitudes towards academic achievements have no significant differences. There are differences in academic achievement between the two groups of students, however. The Pearson's coercive value showed that parental support has a significantly negative correlation with student achievement. On the other hand, there is no significant correlation between attitudes towards education and academic achievement.

Keywords: Parental Support, Attitude Towards Education, Academic Achievement

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ เพื่อศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการสนับสนุนของผู้ปกครอง ทัศนคติของพวกราชที่มีต่อการศึกษา และผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนของนักเรียนในระดับมัธยมศึกษา ของนักเรียนพื้นเมืองและของนักเรียนเชมร ในจังหวัดรัตนคีรี ประเทศกัมพูชา โดยใช้แบบสอบถาม เป็นเครื่องมือในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูล กลุ่มตัวอย่างของการวิจัย คือ นักเรียนพื้นเมืองและ นักเรียนเชมรระดับมัธยมศึกษา ที่มีอายุระหว่าง 15-20 ปี จำนวน 231 คน ซึ่งได้รับการคัดเลือก ด้วยเทคนิคการสุ่มตัวอย่าง 2 ขั้นตอน คือ การสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบกลุ่ม เพื่อเลือกโรงเรียนมัธยมศึกษา 2 แห่งในจังหวัดรัตนคีรี ประเทศกัมพูชา และการสุ่มตัวอย่างนักเรียนเพื่อเป็นตัวอย่างของการศึกษา สำหรับการแปลผลข้อมูล ผู้วิจัยใช้การทดสอบตัวอย่างอิสระ โดยการหาค่าค่าคะแนนที่ (*t-test*) เพื่อ ตรวจสอบความแตกต่างของการสนับสนุนของผู้ปกครอง ทัศนคติที่มีต่อการศึกษาและผลสัมฤทธิ์ ทางการเรียนระหว่างนักเรียนพื้นเมืองและนักเรียนเชมร และใช้การวิเคราะห์สหสัมพันธ์แบบเพียร์สัน เพื่อวัดความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการสนับสนุนของผู้ปกครองและทัศนคติที่มีต่อการศึกษา กับผลสัมฤทธิ์ ทางการเรียน ผลการศึกษา พบว่า การสนับสนุนของผู้ปกครองและทัศนคติของพวกราชที่มีต่อ การศึกษาของนักเรียนพื้นเมืองและเชมรนั้น ไม่มีความแตกต่างอย่างมีนัยสำคัญ แต่มีความแตกต่าง ของผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนระหว่างนักเรียนสองกลุ่ม ค่าสหสัมพันธ์แบบเพียร์สันแสดงให้เห็นว่า การสนับสนุนของผู้ปกครองมีความสัมพันธ์เชิงลบอย่างมีนัยสำคัญกับผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียนของ นักเรียนอย่างไรก็ตาม ไม่มีความสัมพันธ์อย่างมีนัยสำคัญระหว่างทัศนคติที่มีต่อการศึกษาและ ผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียน

คำสำคัญ: การสนับสนุนของผู้ปกครอง ทัศนคติในการเรียน ผลสัมฤทธิ์ทางการเรียน

Introduction

The right for Education is a fundamental human right that a human being deserves since he was born. Education is commonly a means to an entrance for

development and peaceful societies (UNICEF, 2018a). Investment in education and any form of knowledge provides a long term benefits to economic and social development. There is a common understanding that adolescents who had not got good education are at a higher risk of unemployment and poverty. There are some common problems that could happen when the students' educational achievement is low such as hopelessness, delinquency, drop out, psychological problem, and substance abuse. In contrast, students who can achieve higher academically are more likely to lead well-being lives (Heradstveit, Skogen, Hetland, & Hysing, 2017). After the ending of Khmer Rouge regime almost of hard and soft capitals in Cambodia were ruined. Because of torture, overloaded work, and starvation, nearly 2 million people were killed. Among those victims, educated and/or highly ranged people, who were sources for reconstructing country, were targeted (Marshall, Schell, Elliott, Berthold, & Chun, 2005). The remained survivors, who were extremely exhausted both physical and mentally, were mostly illiterate. Nowadays is the beginning of the fifth decades after the failing of that genocide fields, still Cambodia's development of economics, infrastructures, and education system is behind.

Cambodia is a less developed country and was ranked as having poorest economies in the region. Government hopes to turn Cambodia's economic status from a low-income to a lower-middle-income status shortly in the future and an upper-middle income status by 2030 (United Nations, 2016). Because it is a young country with 48 % of the total population aged 24 and under (Worldometers, 2019) these hopes might be within reach. In fact, Cambodia's future inclusive developments depend upon its young people's competency and commitment but not on the huge amount of the youth. For this reason, education is ranked as a second priority in Cambodian's millennium development goals. Cambodia educational development plan is a ten-point program towards improving education and human capital development. Two of those were to strengthen education towards improving the quantity of human capital for greater competitiveness, improving the quality and effectiveness of education (ASEAN, 2017).

Unfortunately, school dropouts or non-completion rates were high in Cambodia. From 2007 to 2016, the dropout rate at the lower secondary level stays pretty high, and has not showed any significant improvement since then. The numbers of dropout students are even larger when they turn into the upper secondary level, up to 23.8 percent in the last academic year (UNICEF, 2018a). The gross enrolment rate in the upper secondary level was just 24.3 percent in the academic year 2015-2016 (UNICEF, 2018a). 37.82 percent of the upper secondary school students have failed the upper secondary examination (MoEYS, 2017). Recently, the enrollment of the education has

increased, however, Cambodia's education system is still struggling with the high dropout rates and low quality of teachers and poor learning strategies of the students (UNICEF, 2018b). Particularly, the statistics of dropouts of school adolescents in countryside are about twice the number in the urban areas (UNICEF, 2018b). All the above mentioned data indicate problems within the education sector in Cambodia, and especially in Ratanakiri, the remote area.

Ratanakiri itself is known as the most disadvantaged province, located in the remote north-eastern Cambodia. Ratanakiri has worst either enrollment or quality of education among all the 25 provinces in the country. 75% of the total populations are ethnic minorities; most of them are subsistence farmers and rely on gathering forest products for their living. There are four obstacles faced by highlander students in upper secondary level in Ratanakiri including limited financial resources, long distance and lack of transportation connected to schools, individual difficulty, and obstacles from family/community (Svensson, 2018). Moreover, high dropout rates and poor academic achievement are problems identified among upper secondary students in Ratanakiri. As mentioned above, young adolescents' education is one of the main issues that have been concerning the government in Ratanakiri. Meanwhile, academic achievement is the important outcome that parents and society expect from their young adolescents. That is why any mater regarding higher academic achievement should be more seriously taken into action.

The purposes of this study were to find out the differences in parental support, study attitude and academic achievement between indigenous and Khmer students, and to investigate the relationship between determinates and outcome variables.

Objectives

This study aimed to investigate the following research objectives:

1. To investigate the differences between parental supports and study attitude of indigenous and Khmer students.
2. To investigate the differences in academic achievement between indigenous and Khmer students.
3. To study the relationship among parental support, study attitude, and academic achievement of high school students.

Literature review

Around 80 percent of Cambodian populations are living in rural area. Cambodian parents struggle with poverty and mostly they live far away from social facilities. With regard to family relations, parents are having difficulties to manage anger and conflicts,

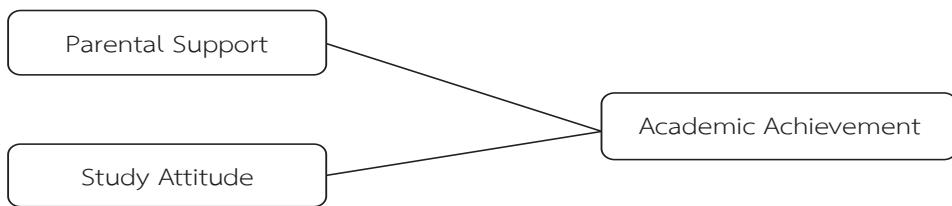
to agree on family rules, and to discipline their children without violence. They face challenging in taking care of the families as well as having difficulties to accepting their own mistakes and making changes in family and in their children. They have strong beliefs on rising up the children for example parenting should not spoil the children, or the belief that little children cannot be educated. Special problems are encountered in communities with a lack of education and these problems are facing twice by the indigenous communities who are generally disadvantage and less education (CIS and RUPP, 2014).

It has been estimated that 65% of the provincial population are from indigenous ethnic minorities including Brao Ombaa, Jarai, Kachoq, Kavet, Krung, Lun, Tampuan, and some newly arrived Cham. The literacy rate among the indigenous peoples is quite low, only 29% of indigenous peoples can write and read Khmer language compared to the general population with 77.1%. Indigenous peoples completing beyond primary education (after grade 7) rate is only 27.1%, while general Khmer is 52.8% (CIPA, 2019). According to the psychologist, at around the ages of 12 to 18 adolescents are transforming themselves from childhood to adulthood and this is a major stage of development (Erikson, 1963). Thus, family especially parents are the first role model for children and can essentially impact on children's learning, sociability, competency, and behaviors. Supported by the social learning theory of Bandura (1977), adolescents' development and relationship are the results of their interactions with their environment and those who are close to them. Therefore, we might draw a conclusion that parental support is an important factor for children's competency and psychological development. In general, parents are supposed to provide four kinds of support to their children, namely psychological support (trust, love, empathy), instrumental support (money, time), informational support (advice, information, instruction, guideline), and appraisal support (rewards, encouragement, feedback) (Tardy, 1985). These four types of support are important for students' competency development. Many previous studies have found that parental support of and involvement with children play an important role on their academic achievement (Kordi & Baharudin, 2010; Hong, 2012; Khan, 2013; Rafiq, Fatima, Sohail, Saleem, & Khan, 2013). In addition, lack of warmth and communication between parents and children and poor relationship between them impact on students' behavioral outcomes like school misbehavior (Eng, Mulsow, Cleveland, & Hart, 2009).

Attitude is another factor found associated with academic outcomes. Attitude is a set of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards specific objects, groups, events or symbols (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005). It is an important aspect people use to understand human's behaviors. Attitudes can be learnt through experience and or

persuasion. In general, achievement of any learner depends on his/her attitude towards the learning materials. There is a general belief that a positive attitude often leads to successful learning. The findings of many previous studies discovered a positive significant relationship between students' attitude and achievement (Ayodele, 2016; Veresova & Mala, 2016; Dagnew, 2017; Rf, Pm, & Ee, 2018).

Conceptual Framework



Methods

Participants

The population of this study consisted of 572 adolescents who were studying in grade 11 in an upper secondary school in academic year 2018 - 2019, in Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia. All of the participants were Khmer students and indigenous students only and they must be ages between 15 to 20 years old. Two public high schools in Banlung, Ratanakiri were selected using cluster random sampling and 231 upper secondary school students were randomly selected to participate in the study by using multi-stage.

Data Collection

A questionnaire translated into Khmer was used to gather the data. Before distributing the questionnaires, the students were clearly introduced that their participation was voluntary and that the information they provided would be kept confidential. The data collection was conducted in the two public high schools in Banlung, Ratanakiri. The participants completed the 19 questionnaire items within 30 minutes.

Data Analysis

Data interpretations were based on two methods. First, we used independent sample t-test to examine the differences in parental support, study attitude, and academic achievement between Indigenous and Khmer students. Second, Pearson's product correlation was employed to examine the relationship among parental support, study attitude and academic achievement. Interpretation of the correlation was based on Cohen's coefficient value, the r value between 0.10 to 0.29 indicates a small correlation, the medium correlation is between r = 0.30 to 0.49, and the large correlation

is between $r = 0.50$ to 1.0 .

Measurement

Parental support: The parental support scale, which is the sub-construct scale of Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale, was adopted (Malecki & Demaray, 2002). This scale measures adolescent perceptions of supports that they received from parents. The parental support scale consists of 10 items. The students respond to a 7-points Likert scale: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), somewhat disagree (3), neither agree nor disagree (4), somewhat agree (5), agree (6), and strongly agree (7). This scale has a good reliability and consistency where its Cronbach's alpha was .81.

Study attitude: The School Attitude Assessment Survey-Revised scale was established by McCoach and Siegle (2003). It consisted of 9 questions. This instrument was created to use with adolescents in the upper secondary school level. The Cronbach's score of the employed scale was 0.80 which confirmed a good reliability and validity.

Academic achievement: The students' mean scores in all first semester subjects in the 2018 - 2019 academic year were used to measure their academic achievement. This score was obtained from the school principals. The upper secondary schools in Cambodia use a 50-point grading scale, with 50 indicating the highest possible achievement (10mk1979, 2018).

Results

Profile of the Participants

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of participants

Participants	Frequencies (F)	Percentages (%)
Gender		
Male	117	50.6
Female	114	49.4
Age		
15-16	38	16.5
17-18	133	57.5
19-20	60	26.0
Ethnicity		
Khmer	166	71.9
Indigenous	65	28.1
Total	231	100

There was a total of 231 participants, 50.6 percent were male and 49.4 percent were female. Their reported ages were between 15-20 years. Adolescents from ages 15-16 constituted 16.5 percent of the participants, 17-18 years old 57.5 percent and 19-20 years old 26.0 percent. The majority of the participants, 71.9 percent, were Khmer, 28.1 percent indigenous. The participants were permanent residents of Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of determinates and outcome variables of indigenous and Khmer students

	Ethnicity	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S.E. Mean
Parental support	Khmer	166	3.73	0.797	0.061
	Indigenous	65	3.78	0.679	0.084
Study attitude	Khmer	166	5.00	0.718	0.055
	Indigenous	65	5.11	0.620	0.076
Academic achievement	Khmer	166	32.20	4.732	0.367
	Indigenous	65	33.49	3.389	0.420

Table 2 shows that indigenous students received equal parental support equal to Khmer students. The indigenous students' study attitude was in line with Khmer students. From the mean scores we can see that there are differences in academic achievement between these two groups. The data shows that the mean score of academic results of indigenous students is higher than that of Khmer students.

Table 3: Statistics of t-test for parental support and study attitude between indigenous and Khmer students

t-test for equality of Mean							
T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
					Lower	Upper	
Equal variances assumed	-0.49	229	0.62	-0.05	0.11	-0.27	0.16
Parental Support							
Equal variances not assumed	-0.53	136.35	0.59	-0.05	0.10	-0.26	0.15

Table 3: (cont.)

t-test for equality of Mean							
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	-1.15	229	0.24	-0.11	0.10	-0.31	0.08
Study attitude							
Equal variances not assumed	-1.23	134.46	0.22	-0.11	0.09	-0.30	0.07

Table 3 shows that the parental support scores for Khmer and indigenous students are not statistically significant as the p-value is higher than 0.05 ($p = 0.62$). Results confirm that there is no significant difference in parental support between these two groups. Results also show that there is no statistically significant difference in study attitude between Khmer and indigenous students with the p-value higher than 0.05 ($p = 0.24$).

Table 4: Statistics of t-test for academic achievement between indigenous and Khmer students

t-test for equality of Mean							
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	-2.00	229	0.04	-1.29	0.64	-2.56	-0.02
Academic achievement							
Equal variances not assumed	-2.31	162.33	0.02	-1.29	0.55	-2.39	-0.19

The result in Table 4 indicates a significant difference in academic achievement between indigenous and Khmer students. Academic achievement of indigenous students

is higher than that of Khmer students ($t = -2.00$, $p = 0.04$). Thus, indigenous students have overall higher academic achievement than Khmer students.

Table 5: Correlation among parental support, study attitude and academic achievement

Variables	Academic achievement
Parental support	-0.156
Study attitude	-0.019

*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Correlation coefficient shows a significant and negative relationship between parental support and academic achievement ($r = -0.156$, $p = <0.05$). This correlation indicates that these two variables have a negative direction, which means that academic achievement is lower when the parental support is higher. Correlation analysis also shows a very small negative insignificant relationship between study attitude and academic achievement ($r = -0.019$). Meaning that the students' academic achievement, no matter it is high, medium, or low, is might not related to their study attitude.

Discussion and Conclusion

The objectives of the study were to find out the ethnic differences in parental support, study attitude, and academic achievement between indigenous and Khmer students and to study the relationship among parental support, study attitude, and academic achievement. It is important to highlight that the current study measures parental support by assessing the students' perceptions of the support they received from their parents which may not reflect the actual parental support behaviors.

Our finding shows that there is no difference in parental support between indigenous and Khmer students meaning that these two groups of students reported receiving support from their parents at the same level. Somehow, the parents of these students in this age, regardless of ethnicity, may have learnt to behave more appropriately toward their children. Our finding contradicts the claim of Wong and Hughes (2019) that parents from different ethnic groups reported their involvement differently. The difference is that their study was conducted with White, Hispanic, Black White, and Black parents who might have very distinct cultures because of the variety of their nationalities. In contrast, the parents in the context of our study have common nationalities. Based on observation, due to lack of written sources, even though indigenous and Khmer parents have different ethnicity, they might have a lot in common in terms of practices and cultures. Moreover, there is also no significant difference in

study attitude between indigenous and Khmer students. Their attitude toward studying was undifferentiated. The way of living of these two ethnic groups are getting very close these days. Sometimes we cannot even differentiate between indigenous and Khmer adolescents, unlike in the past when differences between indigenous and Khmer people were easily observed. Moreover, those adolescents went to the same study institutes which could similarly shape their attitude and understanding of learning.

Our study reveals that there is difference between indigenous and Khmer adolescents in terms of academic achievement. We found that indigenous students had higher academic achievement in general compared to their counterpart, Khmer students. Indigenous students grow up with some different backgrounds from Khmer students. Indigenous students mostly reported living far from the urban and school and were more disadvantaged compared to Khmer students. Furthermore, they faced four obstacles such as limited financial resources for education, long distance from villages to the school, obstacles of individual, and obstacles from family/community (Svensson, 2018). Thus, they may face different difficulty, challenge, and hardship in life, and those barriers they faced could turn out to be factors encouraging them to study harder than Khmer students. Therefore, not all poor and disadvantaged children do poorly in school. For example, a group of black students living in the disadvantaged families in South Africa had high achievement (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). Another study supported that bilingual children may also develop more flexibility in their thinking as a result of processing information through two different languages (Gregerson, 2009). The study demonstrates a negative significant correlation between parental support and academic achievement. This negative correlation indicates that the higher the level of parental support, the lower the achievement scores of the children. Or it can be explained that when parents increase their support the children's academic achievement tends to decrease. This result aligns with a previous study which found a significant and negative correlation between support from parents and students' English test score (By & Laochariyanon, 2019). More parental support may be related to more pressure on students' learning performance because more support from parents may make them feel they need to be more gratitude, more obedient, and more obligations. They may be afraid of going unaligned with their parents' desires. These pressures can bring students anxiety and this anxiety, or negative learning experiences can hold back their learning outcomes, as mentioned by Taguchi, Magid and Papi (2009). In addition, parental support can increase anxiety and created negative learning outcomes (Papi, 2010).

This can be explained further by perceived social support theory that parental support should be clearly defined and understood by both parents and children.

Parents should know the children's needs and should respond to those needs. Otherwise, some consequences may happen such as a negative behavior or outcome when there is misunderstanding between parents and children (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984). Moreover, children may prefer little support from their parents when they grow older. Appropriate amount of parental support is good but too much parental involvement can have a negative relationship with children psychological well-being (LeMoine & Buchanan, 2011).

By connecting these findings with Cambodian context, we may see that parents in Cambodia have low level of communication with their children (García Coll et al., 2002), thus the lower the level that parents communicate with their children the higher the chance of committing misunderstanding between the parents and the children. According to the perceived social support theory a negative behavior or outcome may happen when there is misunderstanding between parents and children (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984). In addition, some parents who were war survivors or second generation of the survivors may be overprotective of their children and over protectiveness disturbs the autonomy development of the children (Bar-On et al., 1998). Those parents may continue living with unsolved psychological problems and might function as ineffective parents. Thus, they might have provided less support to their children or may have provided enough support to their children, but their support may not have aimed directly to higher their children's academic achievement. Cambodian parents consider their limited education and economic hardships as a barrier for involving in their children learning activities such as homework and academic encouragement (Piquemal, 2017). For example, people in rural Cambodia used to argue that education offers low economic value. Some people might not consider education as a key to economic opportunity and education might not lead to higher income jobs (Tan, 2007).

Correlation analysis in this study did not show any significant relationship between study attitude and academic achievement. It means that no matter what level of achievement the students acquired, it does not seem to relate to their study attitude. Our result is congruent with a previous study which found no significant correlation between science attitude and chemistry achievement among 11th grade students (Rathod, 2014). It is also in line with a past study conducted with minority students in West Bengal, India, which did not find any association between the attitude towards education and academic achievement (Das, Halder, Mishra, & Debnath, 2014). In addition, another recent study did not find direct relationship between the students' attitude toward school and academic achievement, but it was under the mediation role of self-concept (Veas, Castejón, Miñano, & Gilar-Corbí, 2019).

According to the consistency theory, people try to balance the state of cognition and behaviors, which indicates the connection between attitudes and behaviors. We usually assume that people behave according to their attitudes. Even though the connection between attitudes and behaviors was mentioned in the consistency model, this model cannot predict the complexity of the relation between attitudes and behaviors (Trepte, 2013). Furthermore, social psychologists agree that attitudes and actual behaviors are not usually absolutely consistent. For example, some students still skip classes even though they know that those classes are important. This example indicates that people are not always behaving according to their attitudes. Another past study claimed that cognitive and affective components of behaviors do not always match with behaviors (LaPiere, 1934). It is more likely that people will behave according to their attitudes as long as their attitudes are the result of their experience; they are an expert on the subject; they expect a favorable outcome; those attitudes are repeatedly expressed; or they stand to win or lose something due to the issue.

In light of the findings of our study, parents should reflect on their own behaviors. In other words, they should consider whether they have provided support which encourage their children academic achievement or failed to do so. Sometimes, parents failed to understand their children's needs; they may focus on non-related things which may not or do little to support their children's academic achievement. Children may instead need another kind of support from parents such as emotional support or appraisal support. Therefore, parents should pay more attention to their children's education and provide needs which support their educational achievement. Parents and children should regularly discuss the needs of the children and parents themselves and how parents can effectively respond to their children's needs. Especially, Cambodian parents should maintain closeness and approachable behaviors with their children and create more and effective communication with them to better the relationship and to decrease misunderstanding between them and their children. Researchers suggest that in order to help their children's competency development, parents should provide four kinds of support to them such as emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support (Tardy, 1985). The current study has a limitation in this respect because it measures parental support by assessing students' perceptions of the received parental support and this may not reflect the actual parental support behaviors.

Researchers hope that the current outcomes may become part of the knowledge for Cambodian parents to evaluate their supporting behavior in order to enhance children's educational success. Researchers would like to make a recommendation to the teachers, school counselors, and educators to form ways or chances to encourage

or motivate adolescents to have more communication and be more open with their parents or guardians. The government should work more on raising awareness of the benefits of having close relationship and regular communication between parents and children in the family and broadcast it more widely on social media. Future research should deeper the investigation on the differences and the effectiveness between the support of indigenous and Khmer parents on their children' learning performance in a mixed method study.

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