

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MOTIVATION AND PERCEIVED PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT WITH ENGLISH ORAL SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT OF GRADES 6 TO 8 STUDENTS AT KPIS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, BANGKOK

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the level of KPIS International School Grades 6-8 students' motivation, perceived parental encouragement and achievement in learning English oral skills as well as their relationship with each other. A motivation questionnaire was used to collect data from 81 Grades 6-8 students studying Language Arts in the academic year 2016 - 2017 at KPIS International School. Means, standard deviations, multiple correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression were used to analyze the data. The findings showed that the respondents had a slightly high level of motivation, perceived parental encouragement and English oral skills achievement. Amongst the subscale of motivation, students were mostly motivated integratively, followed by instrumentally and were least motivated by their attitudes to the learning situation. The relationships among the variables were investigated and it was found that all three had significant positive relationships with each other. Between motivation and perceived parental encouragement, motivation had a stronger relationship and could explain a higher percentage of variance of English oral skills achievement.

Keywords: Motivation, Perceived Parental Encouragement, English Oral Skills Achievement, Second Language Acquisition, Socio-Educational Model, Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), KPIS International School.

Introduction

The Thai people are divided on their views regarding the importance of learning English. Some think English is not as vital as learning other academic subjects. In contrast, there are reports that learning English is highly valued and is in demand by the Thais (Nagi, 2012). Currently the Thai government is implementing educational reforms that are focused on improving English learning (Mala, 2016). However, despite these reforms Thai students ranked third worst in Asia in English proficiency Index and a low O-NET English score of 24.98% (Davis, 2014).

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KPIS, is a WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) accredited international school in Bangkok that uses English as the medium of instruction. However, according to KPIS' WASC liaison officer, to maintain the high standard level of education, it was observed that there is still the need for students' continued improvement in language development (personal communication, June 29, 2016).

There are many elements that influence students' performance in learning English as a second language. According to Gardner, these can be classified between cognitive and affective factors. The affective factors that can influence language achievement are motivation and perceived parental encouragement (Gardner, 1985).

Objectives

Below are the research objectives that were addressed by this study:

1. To determine the level of motivation in learning English oral skills of Grades 6-8 students at KPIS International School.
 - 1.1 To determine the level of attitudes to learning situation of English oral skills of Grades 6-8 students at KPIS International School.
 - 1.2 To determine the level of integrativeness in learning English oral skills of Grades 6-8 students at KPIS International School.
 - 1.3 To determine the level of instrumentality in learning English oral skills of Grades 6-8 students at KPIS International School.
2. To determine the level of perceived parental encouragement in learning English oral skills of Grades 6-8 students at KPIS International School.
3. To determine the level of English oral skills achievement of Grades 6-8 students at KPIS International School.
4. To determine if there is a significant relationship of motivation and perceived parental encouragement with English oral skills achievement of Grades 6-8 students at KPIS International School.

Literature Review

Learning an L2 is a multifaceted process that requires not only basic technical skills such as grammar and syntax but also a modification of self-notion and an embrace of the social and cultural behaviors of the L2 owners (Dornyei, 1998). According to Gardner's (2005) fundamental model of L2 acquisition, L2 achievement is positively influenced by two main independent variables which are cognitive and affective dimensions. The theoretical framework of this study was based on Gardner's socio-educational model which proposes that affective elements motivation and parental encouragement influences L2 achievement (Gardner, 2005).

Motivation

Motivation is a drive that directs a person's behavior towards a particular target (Hurst, 2016). Researchers have pointed out that motivation plays an important role in students' success in their L2 acquisition (Dornyei, 1998; Gardner, 2005). It is essential to English oral skills achievement because it is closely related with students' willingness and ability to start a conversation (Loewen & Reinders, 2011). According to an international study done by Gardner (2009), five out of the six countries that

were investigated showed consistent high correlational results between motivation and students achievement in English subject.

As defined by both Gardner (2005) and Dornyei (1998), motivation in learning an L2 is not a simple construct that can be generalized and measured by one factor but rather a combination of many affective elements. In this study, motivation influences achievement through three factors: attitudes to learning situation, integrativeness and instrumentality (Gardner, 2009; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).

Attitudes to Learning Situation

A learning situation is composed of the sociological, psychological and instructional environments (Firestone, 2017). Students can learn more effectively if the environment provided is positive and supportive (Mansaray, 2013).

Integrativeness

This subscale refers to the openness of the learner towards the characteristics and culture of the L2 being learned (Gardner, 2005). Integrativeness accounts for a variation for students' willingness to communicate in English, thus influencing academic achievement (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).

Instrumentality

This refers to the condition for which the language is being studied. The purpose of learning English as L2 can be of practical or utilitarian purpose (Gardner, 2009). Students are motivated to learn English because they consider it is a tool for personal and economic development (Nagi, 2012).

Perceived Parental Encouragement

Gardner (2009) proposed that parental encouragement influences language achievement and supports motivation. However, the degree of parental involvement differs from one age group, nationality and culture to another (Gardner, 2009; Westerman, 2012).

Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB)

The Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) is a research instrument that was created specifically to measure the variables and subscales of the socio-educational model (Gardner, 2005). Its development comprises of 20 years of study and is reported to have substantial internal consistent reliability of the scales and was widely used and modified by many researchers around the world (Gardner, 1985, 2009).

English Oral Skills Achievement

English oral skills are the ability to both receive and verbally pass on information, feelings, and ideas to others efficiently (Johnston, 2010). Shoebottom (2017) proposed that influential factors of oral skills achievement are broadly divided between the interplay of internal and external elements such as age, cognition, motivation, curriculum, culture and social status. Miller (2017) further added that support at home can positively influence English oral skill achievement while Horwitz (2001) pointed that language anxiety produces a negative effect.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

The CCSS are a set of objectives and expectations for knowledge and skills that students need to achieve in each grade level to be successful in college, career and life. It emphasizes on developing students’ problem solving and critical thinking as well as presents a standard and consistent way of assessing students’ progress throughout 42 states in America (Common Core State Standards, 2017).

KPIS International School Midterm GPA Grading System

In this study, oral skills achievement was measured through midterm GPA scores, a 4-point grading system where students are given a point on every activity done during the entire midterm based on each rubric standard using the CCSS as a guideline. The PowerSchool platform then computes the score combining it with other standards and will result into one midterm GPA (personal communication, April 4, 2017).

KPIS International School

KPIS International School, formerly known as Keera-pat International School is a K-12 private international school in Bangkok. It was established in 2005 and follows the California State Curriculum. It is a member of ISAT and is accredited by WASC. The mode of communication is all done in English. The CCSS is used as the guideline for assessments and PowerSchool as the technological platform for recording students’ grades and data (personal communication, September 9, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of KPIS International School Grades 6-8 students’ motivation, perceived parental encouragement and achievement in learning English oral skills as well as their relationships with each other.

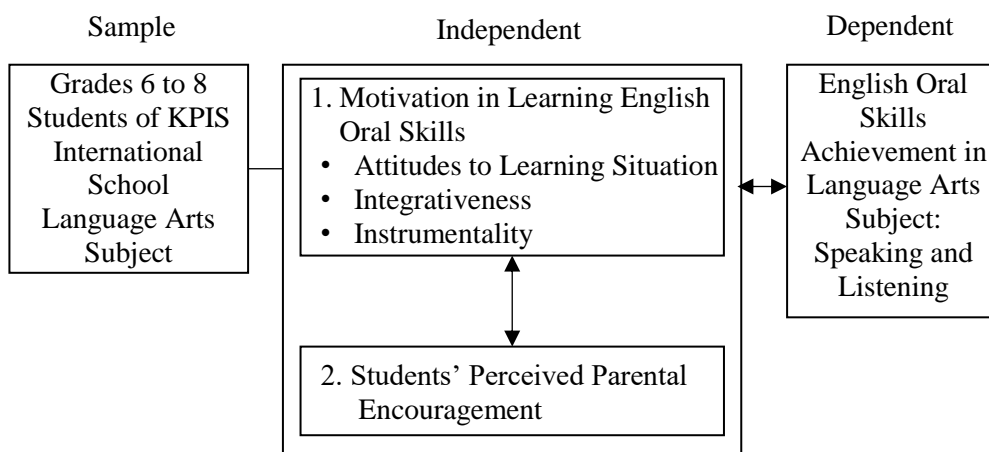


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of This Study

Method

This research was a quantitative correlational study of Grades 6-8 students of KPIS International School studying LA. The instrument that was used to investigate the objectives was the motivation and perceived parental encouragement in learning English oral skills questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations were used for objectives one to three, while multiple correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression were used for objective four. The midterm GPA for LA: Speaking and listening were collected to investigate objectives three and four.

Population and Sample

This study represents the population of 84 students from Grades 6-8 studying Language Arts (LA) subject at KPIS International School. The sample is 81 participated students out of the population of 84 students from the academic year of 2016-2017. A total of three students were not able to participate due to unavailability.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for this study was motivation and perceived parental encouragement in learning English oral skills questionnaire. It was adapted from Gardner's AMTB International Version (Gardner, 2004, 2005). It is a 6-point Likert scale comprising 26 item questions that asked students to indicate their level of agreement. Table 1 illustrates the score value of items and interpretation of the mean scores for the four subscales.

Table 1: Interpretation of the Scores of Attitudes to Learning Situation, Integrativeness, Instrumentality and Perceived Parental Encouragement

Response anchor	Score Value	Mean Score	Interpretation
Strongly agree	7	6.01-7.00	Very high
Moderately agree	6	5.01-6.00	High
Slightly agree	5	4.00-5.00	Slightly high
Slightly disagree	3	3.00-3.99	Slightly low
Moderately disagree	2	2.00-2.99	Low
Strongly disagree	1	1.00-1.99	Very low

Note: Adapted from Gardner, 2010, p.130

Validity and Reliability

The AMTB has good content and construct validity as well as strengths in efficiency in data gathering, association and replicability of the data and ability to generalize data results to a wider population (Ushioda and Dornyei, 2012). Dornyei (2001) also noted that it has good predictive validity and can be used as a standardized motivation test. The internal reliability scores are well established and it has been used for quantitative studies done internationally (Gardner 2005, 2010) and locally in Thailand (Santikarn, 2015). This study produced substantial internal reliability results. The Cronbach's Alpha Value of the subscales were: attitudes to learning situation (.88), integrativeness (.76), instrumentality (.71) and perceived parental encouragement (.89).

KPIS English Language Arts Midterm Grade

English oral skills achievement in this study pertains to the midterm GPA that the students received from their Language Arts (LA) class: Speaking and Listening. It was a 4-point rating system with 4.0 having the highest level of achievement and 1.0 as the lowest. The mean GPA scores are interpreted as: 1.00-1.49 is below standards of the CCSS and interpreted as low level, 1.50-2.49 is approaching standards and slightly low level, 2.50-3.49 is meeting standards and is a slightly high level and 3.50-4.00 is exceeding standards and is interpreted as high level.

Collection of Data

Collection of data was done in the fifth week of March 2017 and the midterm grades were collected in first week of April 2017. Due to absences and unavailability, out of the 84 distributed, 81 surveys were collected giving a return rate of 96%. The researcher with the homeroom teacher were both present during the administration of the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of means and standard deviations were used for Research Objectives 1, 2 and 3 while multiple correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression were used for Objective 4. Gardner's interpretation was used for the mean scores (See Table 1). The Pearson r results were interpreted as a value of 0.10 to 0.29 is interpreted as having a weak relationship between the variables, 0.30 to 0.50 as moderate and 0.51 to 1.00 as a strong relationship (Lund Research Ltd., 2013).

Findings

Presented below are the findings of the four research objectives.

Table 2 shows the level of attitudes to learning situation (Sub-objective 1.1).

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations and Interpretations for Attitudes to Learning Situation Subscale Items (n=81)

Attitudes to Learning Situation	Item N ^o	M	S.D.	Interpretation
Negatively-worded items				
• I think my LA class is boring	11	4.17	2.00	Slightly high
• To be honest, I really have little interest in my LA class	12	4.05	1.98	Slightly high
• To be honest, I don't like my LA class	15	4.25	1.96	Slightly high
• I have a hard time thinking of anything positive about my LA class	16	4.75	1.84	Slightly high
• My LA class is really a waste of time	18	5.78	1.35	High
Positively-worded items				
• I would rather spend more time in my LA class & less in other classes	9	2.95	1.59	Low
• I enjoy the activities of our LA class much more than those of my other classes	10	2.89	1.45	Low

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations and Interpretations for Attitudes to Learning Situation Subscale Items (n=81)

Attitudes to Learning Situation	Item N ^o	M	S.D.	Interpretation
• I like my LA class so much, I look forward to studying more English in the future	13	3.78	1.81	Slightly low
• I look forward to the time I spend in LA class	14	3.73	1.72	Slightly low
• LA is one of my favorite courses	17	3.52	2.01	Slightly low
Total	10	3.98	1.26	Slightly low

Note. See Table 1 for interpretation table.

From Table 2, it can be seen that the total students' motivation in their attitudes to the learning situation was slightly low with a mean score of 3.98. A negatively-worded item, number 18, received the highest mean score of 5.78 which means that students did not think that the LA class as a waste of time. However, even though students valued LA class time, only a few of them enjoyed the activities done in LA class compared other classes as shown by the lowest mean score (2.89) of item 10.

Table 3 shows the level of integrativeness (Sub-objective 1.2).

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations and Interpretations for Integrativeness Subscale Items (n=81)

Integrativeness	Item N ^o	M	S.D.	Interpretation
• Learning to speak English is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with people who speak English	1	6.41	0.89	Very high
• Learning to speak English is important because it will allow me to meet and talk with people from different nationalities	2	6.31	1.10	Very high
• Learning to speak English is important because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate the English way of life	3	5.90	1.09	High
• Learning to speak English is important because I will be able to interact more easily with speakers of English	4	6.51	0.86	Very high
Total	4	6.28	0.75	Very high

Note. See Table 1 for interpretation table.

Students overall were very highly integratively motivated with a mean score of 6.28. They were very highly integratively motivated because it allowed them to interact more easily with speakers of English as shown by the 6.51 mean score of Item 4. However, students found learning to speak English to better understand and appreciate the English way of life as the least motivating as depicted by Item 3 with a mean score of 5.90.

Table 4 shows the level of instrumentality (Sub-objective 1.3).

Table 4: Means, Standard Deviations and Interpretations for Instrumentality Subscale Items (n=81)

Instrumentality	Item N ^o	M	S.D.	Interpretation
• Learning to speak English is important because I will need it for my work in the future	5	6.49	0.86	Very high
• Learning to speak English is important because it will make me more educated	6	5.94	1.29	High
• Learning to speak English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job in the future	7	6.38	1.05	Very high
• Learning to speak English is important because other people will respect me more if I know how to speak English	8	4.12	1.85	Slightly high
Total	4	5.73	0.97	High

Note. See Table 1 for interpretation table.

Students overall were highly instrumentally motivated in learning English oral skills with a mean score of 5.73. They were highly instrumentally motivated because they believed that they will need it for work in the future as indicated by the highest mean score of 6.49 of Item 5. Learning to speak English to be respected by others was the least instrumentally motivating factor for the students as depicted by Item 8 with the lowest mean score of 4.12.

Table 5 shows the findings for the first objective which is the level of motivation.

Table 5: Means, Standard Deviations and Interpretations for Motivation and Its Subscales (n=81)

Motivation	M	S.D.	Interpretation
Attitudes to Learning Situation	3.98	1.26	Slightly low
Integrativeness	6.28	0.75	Very high
Instrumentality	5.73	0.97	High
Motivation Total	4.88	0.83	Slightly high

Note. See Table 1 for interpretation table.

Table 5 shows that amongst the subscales of motivation, students are very highly motivated integratively with the highest mean score of 6.28. It is then followed by a high instrumental motivation with a mean score of 5.73. Students are least and slightly lowly motivated by their attitudes to learning situation with a mean score of 3.98. Overall motivation of Grades 6-8 students in learning English oral skills was interpreted as slightly high as shown by the total motivation mean score of 4.88.

Table 6 shows the level of perceived parental encouragement (Objective 2).

Table 6: Means, Standard Deviations and Interpretations of Each Item of Perceived Parental Encouragement (n=81)

Perceived Parental Encouragement	Item N ^o	M	S.D.	Interpretation
• My parents try to help me speak English	19	3.72	2.19	Slightly low
• My parents feel that it is very important for me to speak English	20	5.35	1.65	High
• My parents feel that I should continue speaking English all through school	21	5.19	1.79	High
• My parents say that learning to speak English will be important for me when I leave school	22	5.49	1.75	High
• My parents urge me to seek help from my teacher if I am having problems with my English	23	4.47	2.17	Slightly high
• My parents are very interested in everything I do in my LA class	24	3.58	1.94	Slightly low
• My parents encourage me to practice speaking English as much as possible	25	4.20	1.99	Slightly high
• My parents think I should devote more time to speaking English	26	4.00	2.03	Slightly high
Total	8	4.50	1.47	Slightly high

Note. See Table 1 for interpretation table.

According to Table 6, the students' perceived parental encouragement was slightly high with a mean score of 4.50. Most students received a high level of parental encouragement by being reminded of the importance of English once they leave school as depicted by Item 22 with a mean score of 5.49. Item 24 received the lowest mean score of 3.58. Most students' parents are least interested with their child's activities in class.

Table 7 presents the level of English oral skills achievement (Objective 3).

Table 7: Mean, Standard Deviation and Interpretation for English Oral Skills Achievement (n=81)

English Oral Skills Achievement	M	S.D.	KPIS Interpretation Based on Common Core State Standards	Interpretation
Midterm GPA:				
LA: Speaking and Listening	2.91	.84	Meeting Standards	Slightly High

Table 7 presents the mean of the students' English oral skills achievement which is 2.91 out of 4.00 GPA. It is interpreted as slightly high. The average Grades 6- 8 students are meeting the CCSS level for English oral skills achievement.

Table 8 below indicates the bivariate correlation of the three variables. This is to check for the significance, strength of correlation and multicollinearity in preparation for the multiple linear regression test.

Table 8: Bivariate Correlations between Motivation, Perceived Parental Encouragement and English Oral Skills Achievement

Variables	1	2	3
1. Motivation	-	.54**	.49**
2. Perceived Parental Encouragement		-	.46**
3. English Oral Skills Achievement			-

Note. **All the bivariate correlation coefficients are significant at the .05 level (2-tailed), $p < .001$.

Table 8 showed that there was a significant relationship of motivation and perceived parental encouragement with English oral skills achievement of Grades 6-8 students at KPIS International School at .05 level. The results of following individual relationship between the variables are as follow:

The relationship of motivation and English oral skills achievement was moderately strong and positively correlated ($r = .49, p = .00$). Similarly, perceived parental encouragement and English oral skills achievement were also moderately strong and positively correlated ($r = .46, p = .00$). The last relationship was between motivation and perceived parental encouragement and it was strongly and positively correlated ($r = .54, p = .00$).

Overall, multicollinearity does not appear to be a problem since the correlation between the independent variables were relatively moderate, thus allowing a multiple linear regression analysis.

Table 9 shows the result of a multiple linear regression.

Table 9: ANOVA and Model Summary Statistics for Criterion Variable

Predictors	Criterion Variable (English Oral Skills Achievement)			
	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i> Value	Significance Value
Motivation	.49	.24	25.36	.00**
Perceived Parental Encouragement	.46	.21	21.52	.00**
Motivation and Perceived Parental Encouragement	.55	.30	16.46	.00**

Note. **All the correlation coefficients are significant at the .05 level (2-tailed), $p < .01$.

Table 9 indicates that there was a strong positive significant relationship between the combined predictors (motivation and perceived parental encouragement) with the criterion ($R = .55, p < .01$). It also indicated that the combined predictors explained 30% of the variance of English oral skills achievement ($R^2 = .30, F = 16.46, p < .01$). Additionally, individually tested, the coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) results indicated that, 24% of the variance of English oral skills achievement can be explained by motivation alone and 21% by perceived parental encouragement.

Discussion

Motivation and English Oral Skills Achievement

The findings demonstrated that the Grades 6-8 students of KPIS International School had a slightly high level of motivation in learning English oral skills. Among the motivation subscales, students were mostly motivated integratively followed by instrumentally. This result was similar to a study done in Thailand by Inngam and Eamoraphan (2014) which found that students were relatively highly motivated integratively and instrumentally to learn English. This high level of motivation may be due to globalization and technological advancements that have made English more prevalent, appealing and vital to students in terms of both social and occupational purposes. According to Gardner, learners now are more open to adopt the culture of the language being learned making them more integratively motivated (Gardner, 2005). Studies have also shown that English is the medium most used in international communication, thus supporting the importance and high level of instrumental motivation of the respondents (Statista, 2016). However, this high motivation was dampened by the students' attitude to learning situation. It was found that although students found LA a valuable subject, they had little interest in the class. Similar to a study done by Oroujlou (2011), the students in the current study felt less motivated in an unfavorable learning environment. Students are motivated to learn in a learning environment that is positive and supportive (Mansaray, 2013). However, an undesirable classroom atmosphere generates negative attitudes from students that result in low motivation and poor behavior (Hannah, 2013). Unlike past eras, students today are more used to having greater choice in learning materials, e.g., through the internet (Mansaray, 2013).

The first relationship findings indicated that students with higher motivation achieved better in English oral skills than students who were less motivated. The findings also indicated that between the variable's motivation was the better predictor of achievement. This was in accord with previous research which found that motivation is an essential component in a student's academic achievement (Oriahe, 2009) and has been generally acknowledged as one of the most significant factors that impacts success in language acquisition (Dornyei, 1998; Gardner, 2005). Similarly, in a Thai university study, the researchers found a positive relationship between students' motivation and their academic achievement (Kitjaroonchai & Kitjaroonchai, 2012).

Perceived Parental Encouragement and English Oral Skills Achievement

The findings showed that similar to motivation, KPIS students' perceived level of parental encouragement was also slightly high. This may have been due to Thai culture and parental habits. According to research done by Westerman (2012), parents in Eastern cultures are more inclined to be involved in their child's learning as compared to parents from Western cultures. Pawarnvate (2009) also pointed out that there is an increasing trend of Thai parents being more involved and actively participating in their child's learning, especially during the early years of education.

It was found that the students with high parental encouragement achieved better English oral skills outcomes than students who received less parental

encouragement. Just as Gardner (2009) asserted, parental encouragement is an essential component of motivation that influences language achievement. A study done in Thailand by Jiang and Ye (2014) supports the same result of a positive correlation between students' success and parental encouragement in learning English as a foreign language.

Motivation and Perceived Parental Encouragement

The findings indicated that the students who received high perceived parental encouragement were more motivated than students who received low perceived parental encouragement. Researchers have found that parental encouragement yields positive benefits not only to a student's academic achievement but also to the affective dimensions of motivation, e.g., attitude, self-esteem and social behavior (Olsen & Fuller, 2010). Previous studies by Santikarn (2015) and Hou and Lynch (2016) also support the same assumption.

English Oral Skills Achievement with Combined Motivation and Perceived Parental Encouragement

The findings of this study showed English oral skills achievement was slightly high. This may have been due to factors such as students' motivation in learning, exposure to the language and aptitude in learning. As stated by Shoebottom (2017), learning factors such as motivation, cognition, culture and environment influence L2 oral skills achievement.

The regression findings indicated that motivation and perceived parental encouragement were unique significant predictors of English oral skills achievement and that motivation in comparison to perceived parental encouragement was the better predictor. The combined predictors explained approximately 30% of the variance of English oral skills achievement.

Recommendations

For teachers, it is important that they provide a positive and conducive learning environment that engages students' interests and values. This may be done through a change in books, handouts or materials used, topics covered, class activities or projects, curriculum or even structural atmosphere. For future researchers a larger sample size and a wider geographical range would yield more applicable findings. They should also consider other factors such as nationality, social and cultural background of the students.

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