

# **Predictors of Attitude towards Preparation for Quality Aging in Undergraduate Students**

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## **Abstract**

*This correlational study aims at investigating important predictors and predictive percentage of psychological and situational factors on attitude towards preparation for quality aging. Samples were 489 undergraduate students. Results from Multiple Regression Analysis on attitude towards preparation for quality aging in total sample yielded 43.07%. The important predictors were future orientation and self-control, social support, and need for achievement. The predictive percentage in subgroups range from 34.86% to 47.89%. The interesting findings were found in some subgroups in terms of different predictors from the total sample. The findings from this study could shed light on increasing favorable attitude towards preparation for quality aging in adolescents. Discussion and implications are presented.*

**Keywords:** Psycho-social antecedents, Attitude towards preparation, Quality aging, Thailand

## **1. Introduction**

Aging population is rapidly accelerated from 963 millions in 2017 to 2080 millions in 2050 [1]. Thailand will reach super aging society within the year 2030 [2]. Preparation for quality aging should be awareness in all population span, especially young generation. Generally, younger people may have misconception about growing old [3] that could lead them to avoid thinking about preparation for becoming elderly. However, in order to accomplish a certain thing, preparation in the beginning will ensure the victory, e.g. preparation of ICT skills for quality education [4].

According to Theory of Reasoned Action [5], it suggested that attitude and intention are the important predictors of behavior. Several previous studies revealed supportive findings of this suggestion especially in health area (e.g., [6]; [7]) that affect quality of life in the future. Therefore, this study aims at investigating

psychological and situational factors that could predict attitude towards preparation for quality aging in undergraduate students.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Attitude towards Preparation for Quality Aging***

It has long been evident that attitude and object attachment are separated, but related [8]. Attitude is a psychological construct. Many scholars ([9] ; [10]) indicated that attitude consisted of three dimensions. First, cognitive aspect involves the beliefs and thoughts that would associate to an object or a behavior. Second, affective aspect covers feelings or emotions about a certain object or behavior. It can be positive or negative ways. Third, behavioral intention aspect is confused with behavior in some areas of study. It is referred to commitment, readiness, or intention to an object or behavior. Most of attitude measures are in the form of self-report with summated rating scale [11].

In this study, attitude towards preparing for quality aging is defined as three aspects, namely, cognitive, affective, and behavioral intention regarding making plans or getting ready to become successful aging in the future.

### ***2.2 Psychological Traits and Attitude towards Behavior***

In this study, four psychological traits were investigated as the antecedents of attitude towards preparation for quality aging. First, core self-evaluation involves positive thinking, low anxiety, having confidence and high self-esteem [12]. In previous studies, it was found that core self-evaluation was related to attitude towards behavior, especially in terms of satisfaction ([13]; [14]).

Second, mental health associates with stress, anxiety, psychological well-being. Good mental health persons tend to have appropriate attitude towards behavior, e.g., attitude towards suicide [15], attitude towards buying behavior [16], as well as satisfaction [17].

Third, the ability to foresee the positive and negative consequences of one's own actions, and the ability to control oneself to achieve goal as planned is related to a psychological characteristic, called future orientation and self-control [18]. Previous studies revealed the strong positive relationship between this psychological trait and attitude towards desirable behaviors [19] .

Fourth, Based on McClelland's theory [20], individuals with high need for achievement usually have committed to put efforts and resources to accomplish a task. Easily give up in doing something before achieving the goal is less likely to happen. There were some evident that need for achievement is related to attitude towards behavior ([21] ; [22])

### ***2.3 Situational Factors and Attitude towards Behavior***

Three situational factors are investigated in this study. First, social norm refers to expectations from significant others. It is one of important constructs in theory of Reasoned Action [5]. Previous studies revealed similar findings that social norm regarding to a certain object or behavior is associated with attitude towards behavior, e.g., attitude towards cooperate social responsibility behavior [23], attitude towards becoming professional farmer [24].

Second, supports from significant others also affect one's behavior. Social support is a multi-dimensional construct. Scholars at least agree that there are three dimensions of support, namely, emotional, informational, and material ([25] ; [26]). Previous studies found that individuals received social support also reported favorable attitude towards desired behaviors ([27] ; [28])

Third, role modeling, according to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, involves perceptions in terms of actual seeing or hearing of desirable behaviors displayed by significant others. Several previous studies revealed the that having good role model related to attitude towards desire object or behaviors ([29] ; [22])

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Samples

Five hundred undergraduate students in junior level from three universities in Thailand were asked to filled out questionnaires. Only completed data from 489 undergraduate students were employed. They consisted of 134 male students and 355 female students (27.40% and 72.60%, respectively). The average age of these student was 21 years. They received the monthly allowance with the average of 5,045 Bahts.

#### 3.2 Measures

There were four groups of variables in this study. These variables were mostly assessed in the form of summated rating, consisted of 7-15 items for each variable. Six-point rating scale ranging from "absolutely true" to "absolutely not true" was attached with each item. The item quality was tested by two statistical approached: item discrimination (t-ratio) and item-total correlation. Construct validity for each measure was tested by confirmatory factor analysis. The reliability for each measure was computed. Details are in Table 1.

Table 1 Item and measurement quality

Measure	No. of items	Range of t-ratio	Reliability ( $\alpha$ )	Confirmatory Factory Analysis						
				$\chi^2$	df	p-value ( $p > 0.05$ )	RMSE A ( $\leq 0.06$ )	CFI ( $\geq 0.95$ )	TLI ( $\geq 0.95$ )	SRMR ( $\leq 0.08$ )
1. Attitude towards preparation* (AP)	12	4.94-8.52	0.84	56.84	47	0.15	0.04	0.97	0.95	0.06
2. Core self-evaluation (CSE)	12	2.02-3.24	0.79	37.68	40	0.57	0.00	1.00	1.01	0.07
3. Mental health (MH)	12	5.45-8.68	0.86	41.10	44	0.59	0.00	1.00	1.01	0.05
4. Need for achievement (nAch)	12	2.88-7.68	0.75	48.58	47	0.40	0.01	0.99	0.99	0.06
5. Future orientation and self-control (FS)	11	3.82-7.05	0.70	50.30	39	0.10	0.05	0.95	0.93	0.07
6. Social norm* (SN)	7	2.78-4.85	0.68	10.30	11	0.50	0.00	1.00	1.01	0.40
7. Social support* (SS)	15	2.45-8.52	0.71	46.10	44	0.38	0.02	0.99	0.99	0.79
8. Role modeling* (RM)	14	4.46-8.48	0.81	73.40	63	0.17	0.04	0.97	0.96	0.07

Note: \* Constructed or adapted by the researcher.

Attitudes toward preparation for quality aging (AP) consisted of three dimensions ([30] ; [31] of preparation for quality aging, namely, cognitive aspect (e.g., aware of necessity for preparation, perceive benefits of preparation), affective aspect (e.g., admire the ones who searching for becoming successful aging feel nervous when thinking about preparation for aging), and behavioral intention aspect (e.g., ready to search for information on preparation for aging, willing to participate in seminar or training regarding quality of life).

The psychological trait group consisted of four variables: 1) core self-evaluation consists of four dimensions: self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control which is based on [32]. 2) mental health (MH) involves low anxiety and emotional stability. 3) need for achievement (nAch), based on McClelland’s theory of motivation [33] refers to a person’s desire or drive to accomplish tasks, skills, or assignments. 4) future orientation and self-control ([34] ; [35]) (FS) is defined as thoughts or anticipation of a person about future consequences from their own actions and ability to control oneself.

The situational factor group consists of three variables, namely, 1) social norm refers to the expectations from significant others (e.g., senior students, superstars) of what one should do according to the preparation for quality aging. 2) social support (SS), [25] and [26] is defined as receiving three dimensions of help from significant others: emotional, informational, and material support. 3) role modeling (RM) involves report of having good exemplar from significant others (e.g., family members, relatives, friends) in preparation for quality aging

**3.3 Data Collection and Statistical Approach**

Data were collected during January to March 2019. At the beginning of data collection session, the researcher described the objectives of the study, as well as rights of participants (e.g., can terminate at anytime, no specific individual will be mentioned in the study). It took about 50 minutes for data collection in each session. The statistical analysis used in this study was Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) both enter and stepwise. Data were analyzed in total sample and subgroups.

**4. Results**

The results from Table 2 indicates that correlational coefficients in this study range between 0.119 (p<.01) to 0.648 (p<.01).

Table 2 Correlation, mean and standard deviation in total sample

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 at	50.511	8.025	1							
2 cse	48.303	7.323	.422**	1						
3 mh	40.671	10.490	.227**	.533**	1					
4 nAch	51.558	6.750	.505**	.554**	.119**	1				
5 Fs	48.744	7.481	.580**	.508**	.197**	.648**	1			
6 sn	27.736	5.307	.405**	.364**	.210**	.412**	.447**	1		
7 ss	59.247	9.153	.502**	.474**	.283**	.430**	.442**	.548**	1	
8 rm	52.836	9.458	.304**	.382**	.267**	.291**	.295**	.319**	.422**	1

Note: \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01

By performing Multiple regression analysis on attitude towards preparation for quality aging using psychological characteristics and situational factors as predictors, the result in total sample reveals that all 7 predictors yield predictive amount of 43.07%. The important predictors by descending beta order were future orientation and self-control, social support, and need for achievement. The predictive percentage in subgroups range from 34.86% to 47.89%.

Table 3 Multiple regression analysis on attitude towards preparation for quality aging

Group	Cases	Predictive %	Predictors	Beta*
Total	488	43.07	fs,ss, nAch	0.36,0.28,0.16
Male students	133	34.86	fs,sn	0.43,0.28
Female students	354	45.88	fs,ss, nAch,mh	0.36,0.27,0.17,0.09
Young students (≤ 21 years)	249	39.27	fs,ss,	0.43,0.30
Old students (>21 years)	238	47.89	fs,ss, nAch	0.37,0.27,0.20
Low GPA students (≤2.87)	244	38.35	fs,ss	0.45,0.28
High GPA students (>2.87)	243	45.45	fs,ss, nAch	0.3,0.31,0.20

Note: \* all beta are significant at p<.05.

### 5. Conclusions, Discussion and Recommendations

This correlational study aims at pinpointing the important predictors and discovering predictive percentage of psychological and situational factors on attitude towards preparation for quality aging in undergraduate students. The results from Multiple regression analysis revealed important predictors of attitude towards behavior in terms of both psychological and situational factors. The similar findings were also found in previous studies in predicting psychological state ([36] ; [37])

Furthermore, the findings indicated that future orientation and self-control was the most important psychological predictor of attitude in total sample and all subgroups. The recent studies also found the similar results ([24] ; [38]). For example, a study of the predictors of attitude towards CSR in undergraduate student also revealed that future orientation and self-control was the important predictor of this attitude [39] .

As for situational predictor, the findings revealed that social support was the most important predictor of the attitude in total sample and most of the subgroups. In male students, it was found that social norm is the most important situational predictor of attitude, instead. It can be concluded that male students’ attitude towards preparation for quality aging is increased via indirect perception of expectations from group conducts. In this case, male students would have favorable attitude towards preparation for quality aging by being expected from significant others in preparing to become growing old. On the other hands, female students tended to respond to the direct action towards them. By receiving social support from significant others it could affect as the reinforcement for female students to enhance favorable attitude towards preparation for quality aging. It also should be pointed out that need for achievement was found as another important psychological predictor of attitude in total sample, and especially in female students, old

students, and high GPA students. The previous studies also found that need for achievement was the vital predictor of other attitudes in these similar subgroups [40]

Based on the findings from this study, it is suggested in general that in order to increase attitude towards preparation for quality aging in undergraduate students, the following psychological and situational factors should be heightened. As for psychological factors, the two psychological characteristics should be trained in undergraduate students, they are, future orientation and self-control, as well as need for achievement. For situational manipulation to increase this certain attitude, social support regarding preparation for quality aging to undergraduate students in terms of emotional, informational, and material aspects are encourage.

As for future studies, the recommendations are as follows: 1) future study on the antecedents of attitude towards behavior in undergraduate students should include future orientation and self-control, need for achievement, and social support as antecedents. 2) Due to some psychological and situational predictors were left from multiple regression analysis, it is suggested to use path analysis in order to discover indirect effects of these predictors (e.g., mental health, core self-evaluation, role model) on attitude towards behavior. 3) These set of predictors can be used to investigate in other types of samples, e.g., secondary school students or early adults in order to create body of knowledge to shed lights for better preparation for quality aging.

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