

Relationships and Attitudes of Thai Children Towards Old and Young Adults*

ความสัมพันธ์และทัศนคติของเด็กไทยที่มีต่อผู้ใหญ่

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ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างวัยที่มีลักษณะทางบวกมีความสำคัญต่อความพอใจในชีวิต การปรับตัวที่ดี และการมีบุคลิกภาพที่มั่นคงของทั้งเด็กและผู้ใหญ่ ส่วนความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างวัยทางลบมีผลกระทบทางลบต่อความสัมพันธ์ดังกล่าว การศึกษานี้มีความมุ่งหมายสองประการคือ ประการแรก เพื่อศึกษารูปแบบของความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างเด็กและผู้ใหญ่ รวมทั้งทัศนคติของเด็กต่อผู้ใหญ่ของเด็ก 5 พื้นที่ คือ เหนือ ใต้ ตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ กลางและกรุงเทพฯ ประการที่สอง เพื่อศึกษาความแตกต่างของอิทธิพลทางสังคม วัฒนธรรม เศรษฐกิจ และชนบททางศาสนา ของ 5 พื้นที่นั้น ที่มีผลต่อรูปแบบความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างเด็กและผู้ใหญ่ กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ศึกษาในครั้งนี้ คือ เด็กจำนวน 660 คน (7-12 ปี) ซึ่งเป็นตัวแทนของประชากรจาก 5 พื้นที่นั้น แบบสอบถามที่ใช้ในการวัดรูปแบบความสัมพันธ์และทัศนคติคือ Semantic Differential Subtest ข้อตกลงเบื้องต้นในการศึกษานี้ได้แก่ ลักษณะทัศนคติเป็นสิ่งบ่งชี้วัดลักษณะสัมพันธ์ภาพ จากการศึกษพบว่า ลักษณะสัมพันธ์ภาพระหว่างเด็กผู้ใหญ่มีหลายรูปแบบ ทัศนคติของเด็กที่มีต่อผู้ใหญ่ก็มีหลายแบบเช่นกัน ความหลากหลายดังกล่าวเกิดจากประเด็นหลักคือ ความแตกต่างของลักษณะเศรษฐกิจสังคม ค่านิยมเชิงวัฒนธรรมและชนบททางศาสนาของทั้ง 5 พื้นที่นั้น ผลการศึกษานี้ทำให้ทราบถึงปัจจัยเกื้อหนุนชีวิตที่ดีของเด็กและผู้ใหญ่ รวมทั้งวิถีชีวิตของคนไทยโดยรวมและโดยแยกตามพื้นที่ทั้ง 5 แห่ง อาทิเช่น เด็กไทยมีทัศนคติทางบวกต่อผู้ใหญ่ในหลายด้าน โดยขึ้นอยู่กับลักษณะความสัมพันธ์ในครอบครัว ลักษณะทางสังคมเศรษฐกิจและรูปแบบของวัฒนธรรมท้องถิ่น เด็กส่วนใหญ่ยังคงมีกิจกรรม

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กับญาติผู้สูงอายุและผู้สูงอายุที่ไม่ใช่ญาติ เด็กส่วนมากไม่ค่อยไปวัด ผู้สูงอายุในชนบทมีเวลาให้ กับเด็กมากกว่าผู้สูงอายุในเมือง เด็กชนบทมีความผูกพันกับผู้สูงอายุมากกว่าเด็กเมือง ทักษะคติ ของเด็กภาคใต้ต่อผู้ใหญ่ซึ่งยังเป็นหนุ่มสาวนั้นจะเป็นเช่นไรขึ้นอยู่กับจำนวนผู้สูงอายุที่อาศัยอยู่ใน บ้าน และจำนวนผู้สูงอายุที่มีความสัมพันธ์ด้วย ทักษะคติของเด็กภาคกลาง และภาคตะวันออก เชียงเหนือที่มีต่อผู้สูงอายุ มีความสัมพันธ์อย่างมีนัยสำคัญกับความเข้มงวดในการปฏิบัติกิจกรรม ทางศาสนา ในขณะที่ทักษะคติเช่นนี้ของเด็กภาคใต้ มีความสัมพันธ์กับจำนวนผู้สูงอายุที่เด็กคบหา สماعคมด้วย มีข้อที่พึงสังเกตว่าเด็กไทยมีทักษะคติโดยรวมด้านบวกต่อผู้ใหญ่ แต่สภาพเช่นนี้อาจถูก กระทบเพราะวิกฤตทางเศรษฐกิจในปัจจุบัน ทำอย่างไรจึงจะรักษาทักษะคติและความสัมพันธ์ด้าน บวกระหว่างเด็กและผู้ใหญ่ทั้งหนุ่มสาวและผู้สูงอายุเป็นประเด็นที่จะต้องสืบค้นต่อไป

Abstract

Positive intergenerational relationships play important roles on life satisfaction, well adjustment, and stable personality of both children and adults. Negative intergenerational relationships bring about the unfavorable outcomes of the well-being of both children and adults. The purposes of this study are to investigate patterns of intergenerational relationships and attitudes of Thai children in 5 regions of Thailand : north, south, northeast, central region and Bangkok. Another aim is to look at the influences of different cultural, socioeconomic and religious practices of those regions, which affect types of intergenerational relationships. Six hundred and sixty children in 5 regions are randomly selected for this study. The Semantic Differential Subtest is employed to measure children's attitude towards the young and old adults. It is under the assumption that types of attitude are the indicators of the relationships. Results of the study reveal variety of patterns of intergenerational relationships and attitudes of Thai children towards young and old adults in five regions of Thailand. The socioeconomic patterns, cultural values and religious practices of those regions are the major factors for the variation. The results are of interest in term of the well-being of children and adults, and on life styles of the Thais as a whole group and in each group of the five regions. To mention just a few, Thai children appear to have positive attitude towards the adults in many aspects based on their respective familial, socioeconomic and cultural setting. Most children have activities with their older relatives and non-relatives; most children report few visitations to the monasteries. Older adults, especially those in rural areas tend to have more free time to spend with children, and children feel closed to them. Southern children's attitudes towards young adults significantly relate with amount of people living in the same household and with the amount of older people whom they

associated with. The attitudes towards old adult of children in the central, and northeast regions relate significantly with strength of religious practices, whereas such the attitudes of southern children relate significantly with the amount of associated adults. As the economic crises are facing the country dramatically, the positive intergenerational relationships may be affected to a certain degree. How to maintain the positive relationships in the midst of the crises are the issue to be further investigated.

Introduction

Interpersonal relationships between children and adults during childhood play important role in forming one's personality. Negative relationships experienced with adults result in forming aggressive and insecure children. Those who grow up in negative environment would not learn to be lovable friends and parents. In contrast, those who have positive relationships with adults will grow up to be secure and well-adjusted children. Several studies in this field suggested that such person who experienced positive intergenerational relationships would possess desirable characteristics such as self-esteem, self worth (Erikson, 1963; Papalia & Olds, 1993, 1995; Vander Zanden, 1989). At the other end, adults who have positive relationships possess high level of morale and life satisfaction (Craig, 1991; Keawkungwal, 1997b; Viriyavejakul, 1995).

Papalia and Olds (1993,1995) stated that relationships with adults during late childhood, 7-12 years of age, is the most important part in child development. Relationships with others in late childhood period are more complicated than their precedent periods such that children at this age would set

their own standards and select to relate with adults rather than simply be passive receivers. Many child psychologists and educators also suggested that this period is the best time to form child characteristics in terms of social conformity, social concern, morality and mental stability (Craig, 1991; Erikson, 1964; Papalia & Olds, 1993, 1995).

At the other end, adults especially old-age adults also need positive relationships with younger generation. Many research studies in gerontology indicated that both intragenerational and intergenerational relationships are significant to well-being of the elderly (Lefrancois, 1993; Vander & Zanden, 1989). Erikson (1964) reported that intergenerational relationships would assist old people in feeling secured, understanding life cycle and death-acceptance. In fact, relationships between children and older adults create a sense of continuity of generation (Keawkungwal, 1991). Both benefit from one another such that the younger generation do not have to go through life by "trial and error" experiences whereas the older ones do not feel loneliness, especially in the critical and/or final stage of life. It should be noted, however, that negative

relationships might result in opposite direction (Papalia & Olds, 1995).

In this study, the researcher attempts to look at interpersonal relationships among Thai children towards young and old adults. Data were collected from five different regions in Thailand: north, south, northeast, central regions and Bangkok. It is believed that these regions represent different settings of cultural and psycho-social environment. The northern region in the high land is noted for its richness and attachment to religious culture. The southern region along the coast line is known for its autonomous characteristics and less adhere to traditional structure. Although people in the northeastern region attach to religious and social structure, but it represents the region with high mobility rate; most of the younger generation migrate to work at other regions throughout the country due to its lack of natural rich resources. The central region with its richness in agricultural resources is a combination between rural and urban area. Bangkok is the largest metropolitan city in the country with mixture of people from different socio-economic backgrounds; although it is influenced by western culture but it still maintains traditional beliefs and structure. These different psycho-social structure might affect intergenerational relationships within each region to some extent.

The purposes of the study are thus to investigate relationships and attitudes of Thai children towards young and old adults and to compare differences of relationships and attitudes

among the 5 regional groups. Furthermore, correlations between children's attitudes and some psycho-social variables are studied. The structure of children's families considered as psycho-social factors of interest included amount of old adults in household, religious practices (e.g., frequency of monastery/church attendance, frequency of meditation/praying), involvement in intergenerational activities.

Methods

Subject:

Children aged 6-12 in 5 regions were randomly selected to participate in the study. These children were all in primary schools. For the specific purposes of this study, two criteria are considered: (1) children are those from known average socio-economic family background; (2) they are Buddhists. It is believed that quality of relationships might differ by socio-economic and religious backgrounds in terms of discipline and practices about family and social values. Note that in this present study, the focus is on only Buddhist children as most of the Thai people are Buddhist. Another parallel study focused on a particular religious group in the country, Muslim, is discussed elsewhere.

Instrumentation :

A Semantic Differential Subtest (SD) adapted from CATE - Children's Attitude Toward the Elderly (Seefeldt, 1984) was employed in this study. Seefeldt & Keawkungwal (1986) indicated that the SD was developed and

widely used to measure attitudes of children towards young and old adults in both American and other culture. The subtest is short, easy to administer and requires less effort which suitable for children. SD is composed of 10 pairs of 5-scales psycho-social factors: good-bad, happy-sad, right-wrong, terrific-terrible, beautiful-ugly, friendly-unfriendly, clean-dirty, rich-poor, healthy-sickly, helpful-unhelpful. Its reliability and validity are explained thoroughly in Jantz, Seefeldt, Galpher & Serock (1980). The test-retest correlation for young adults is .81 and for old adults is .84. Correlations between young and old adults range from .48 to .76. This subtest was translated into Thai and retranslated back to English to confirm its validity in Thai culture (Seefeldt & Keawkungwal, 1986). The same 10 pairs of characteristics were used to measure attitude of children both towards young adults aged 25-60, and old adults aged above 60; however, the pairs in each set were arranged differently. Score for each pair of characteristics ranges from 5 (positive) to 1 (negative); total score of the subtest is the sum score of rating for all 10 pairs. Besides SD, other demographic information was collected by administering a short questionnaire.

Statistical Analysis :

Data were collected by trained research assistants. The SD and questionnaire were administered directly to groups of students in primary schools. The students were randomly selected by school teachers from grade 1 to grade 6. The research assistants would explain

the methodology and clarify any problems/concerns that might occur (e.g. dialect language) during instrument administration. Complete data were collected from 660 children in 5 regions: 168 northern, 152 central region, 112 Bangkok, 114 south, and 114 northeast regions. The data were then analyzed by performing descriptive statistics, paired comparison t test, analysis of variance, and pearson correlation.

Results

Descriptive Information :

Most children in all regions lived with both of their parents; only a few lived in a single parent family. It should be noted, however, that compared to other regions higher percentage of divorced/separated parents (22%) was shown in the Bangkok region. There appeared to be differences in terms of parents' occupations in each region. Most parents in north and central regions worked either in government or business sectors whereas most parents in south region were either farmers or laborers. Most parents in northeast region were farmers but those in Bangkok distributed in all kinds of work except farmers.

In terms of religious practices, it was found that most children did not frequently go to the monastery/church; children in the north region appeared to frequently go the most (26%) whereas those in Bangkok the least (13%). Children in north and south regions reported as being more frequent prayers (63-67%) whereas children in other regions were less frequent prayers (50-58%).

More than 90% of children in all regions had known and related to older relatives one way or another. Percentages reported as having known and related to other older people who were not relatives varied: 84% among southern children, 74-77% among middle and northeast children, and 65-66% among northern and Bangkok children. However, more than 50% of central region and Bangkok children have older people lived in the same

household while less than 40% of south, north, and northeast children had elderly people live in their family. When considering intergenerational activities, it was found that more than 90% of children in the north and central regions reported as having some kinds of activities with older people whereas about 80% of southern, northeast and Bangkok children did the same kind of activities.

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Children as Tabulated by Region

	North (168)	Central (152)	Bangkok (112)	South (114)	Northeast (114)
<i>Sex:</i>					
Male	79(47%)	75(49%)	46(41%)	56(49%)	55(48%)
Female	89(53%)	77(51%)	66(59%)	58(51%)	59(52%)
<i>Parents' marital status:</i>					
Living together	130(77%)	126(83%)	82(73%)	91(80%)	100(88%)
Divorce/Separated	23(14%)	16(11%)	25(22%)	9(8%)	7(6%)
Dead	14(8%)	9(6%)	5(4%)	13(11%)	8(4%)
Father's occupation					
Government work	70(42%)	56(37%)	17(15%)	0(0%)	2(2%)
Business	16(9%)	31(20%)	31(28%)	0(0%)	3(3%)
Farmer	11(7%)	13(9%)	1(1%)	49(43%)	78(68%)
Labour	35(21%)	22(14%)	26(23%)	53(47%)	16(14%)
Others	36(21%)	30(20%)	37(33%)	12(10%)	15(13%)
Mother's occupation					
Government work	66(39%)	36(24%)	6(5%)	1(1%)	0(0%)
Business	27(16%)	57(37%)	59(53%)	3(3%)	7(6%)
Farmer	85%	8(5%)	1(1%)	54(47%)	77(68%)
Labour	29(17%)	12(8%)	11(10%)	46(40%)	14(12%)
Others	38(22%)	39(25%)	35(31%)	10(8%)	16(14%)
<i>Frequency of monastery attendance</i>					
Often	44(26%)	26(17%)	15(13%)	22(19%)	22(19%)
Rarely	117(70%)	124(82%)	90(80%)	90(79%)	77(68%)
Never	4(2%)	1(1%)	6(5%)	1(1%)	12(11%)

Table 1 (con.)

	North (168)	Central (152)	Bangkok (112)	South (114)	Northeast (114)
Frequency of meditation/pray					
Often	106(63%)	85(56%)	65(58%)	77(68%)	57(50%)
Rarely	59(35%)	58(38%)	44(39%)	30(26%)	48(42%)
Never	3(2%)	7(5%)	3(3%)	4(4%)	5(4%)
Related with older relatives					
Yes	166(99%)	151(99%)	103(92%)	112(98%)	110(96%)
No	2(1%)	1(1%)	8(7%)	2(2%)	3(3%)
Yes	110(65%)	113(74%)	74(66%)	96(84%)	88(77%)
No	55(33%)	38(25%)	37(33%)	18(16%)	23(20%)
Living with older people in the same household					
Yes	71(42%)	87(57%)	62(55%)	43(38%)	44(39%)
No	97(58%)	65(43%)	49(44%)	70(61%)	69(61%)
Having intergeneration activities					
Yes	153(91%)	144(95%)	98(88%)	92(81%)	95(83%)
No	14(8%)	8(5%)	13(12%)	20(18%)	16(14%)

Comparisons of attitudes of children towards young and old adults:

A variety of patterns of relationships and attitudes towards young and old adults were shown among Thai children in different regions. As shown in Table 2, when comparing attitudes of children towards young adult and old adults, it was found that the children rated each characteristic for young and old adults differently ($p < .001$). It should be noted that old adults were rated higher in 5 characteristics: good-bad, right-wrong, clean-dirty, rich-poor, healthy-sickly. On the other hand, the young adults were rated higher for another five characteristics: happy-sad, terrific-terrible, beautiful-ugly, friendly-

unfriendly, helpful-unhelpful. In comparing attitudes towards young and old adults in each region separately, it was found that the ratings for all pairs of characteristics were in the same direction but were not all statistically significant. Children in the middle region, rated young and old adults differently for all pairs but children in the north region and Bangkok rated differently for all pairs except rich-poor. Southern children rated all pairs of characteristics differently except rich-poor and friendly-unfriendly. Northeast children did not rate the two groups of adults differently in terms of happy-sad and friendly-unfriendly.

Table 2 : Comparisons of Attitudes of Children Towards Young and Old Adults

Characteristics	Attitudes Young towards Adults		Attitude Towards Old Adults		t
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
Good-Bad	2.88	1.10	3.96	1.30	-15.9*
Happy-Sad	3.65	1.26	2.91	1.27	10.2*
Right-Wrong	2.90	1.01	3.53	0.95	-11.3*
Terrific-Terrible	3.13	0.96	2.17	1.20	15.4*
Beautiful-Ugly	3.12	1.17	2.77	0.86	6.1*
Friendly-Unfriendly	2.74	1.30	2.17	1.32	8.16*
Clean-Dirty	2.49	1.25	3.56	1.24	-14.7*
Rich-Poor	2.86	0.83	3.06	0.99	-4.9*
Healthy-Sickly	2.04	0.90	3.04	1.23	-17.8*
Helpful-Unhelpful	3.24	0.83	2.55	0.99	-13.2*
Total	29.04	3.46	29.73	3.47	-3.7*

*p < 0.001

Comparisons of attitudes of children towards adults among children in different regions:

Attitudes of children towards young adults as compared among those resided in different regions revealed that there were statistical significance in 4 pairs: happy-sad, rich-poor, healthy-sickly, helpful-unhelpful (Table 3). Children in northeast region rated significantly lower score in terms of happy-sad for young adults as compared to those in north, middle and Bangkok; the northeast children rated significantly higher score than the later three groups in terms of rich-poor and healthy-sickly. Similarly, southern children rated significantly higher score for rich-poor when compared with those in the northern and central regions; and rated higher score for healthy-unhealthy than those in the north. For the pair of helpful-unhelpful, southern children rated significantly higher score than children in the central region and

Bangkok whereas north children rated significantly higher than those in the central region.

Attitudes of children towards older adults as compared among those resided in different regions revealed that there were statistical significance in 7 pairs: good-bad, right-wrong, friendly-unfriendly, clean-dirty, rich-poor, healthy-sickly, helpful-unhelpful (Table 3). Children in north and southern regions rated significantly higher score than the northeast and Bangkok children in terms of good-bad of the old-aged people. Northeast children rated significantly lower score than those in the north, central, and south in term of right-wrong. Both northeast and southern children rated significantly higher score than the northern children for friendly-unfriendly and higher than all other groups for rich-poor; however, they both rated significantly lower score than those in the north and Bangkok for clean-dirty. On the other hand, children

in the north region rated significantly higher score than those in the central region for healthy-sickly, but rated

significantly lower score than the south and northeast children for helpful-unhelpful.

Table 3 : Comparisons of Attitudes of Children Towards Young and Older Adults as Tabulated by Provinces

Characteristics	North \bar{X} (SD)	Central \bar{X} (SD)	Bangkok \bar{X} (SD)	South \bar{X} (SD)	Northeast \bar{X} (SD)	F	
<i>Attitudes Toward Young Adults:</i>							
Good-Bad	2.82(1.16)	3.03(1.02)	2.83(1.05)	2.93(1.12)	2.75(1.12)	6.04*	
Happy-Sad	3.87(1.25)	3.65(1.28)	3.78(1.25)	3.67(1.29)	3.16(1.13)		
Right-Wrong	2.89(1.00)	2.98(1.02)	2.76(0.98)	2.99(1.05)	2.88(0.97)		
Terrific-Terrible	3.12(1.06)	3.11(0.95)	3.19(0.93)	3.11(0.93)	3.14(0.87)		
Beautiful-Ugly	3.14(1.24)	3.03(1.32)	3.29(1.04)	3.08(1.15)	3.11(1.12)		
Friendly-Unfriendly	2.57(1.33)	3.03(1.32)	2.80(1.34)	2.60(1.25)	2.68(1.15)		
Clean-Dirty	2.55(1.24)	2.57(1.35)	2.37(1.23)	2.56(1.21)	2.38(1.17)		
Rich-Poor	2.70(0.83)	2.64(0.69)	2.79(0.78)	3.05(0.86)	3.25(0.85)		13.41*
Healthy-Sickly	1.90(0.86)	1.93(0.73)	1.90(0.87)	2.24(0.95)	2.33(1.05)		6.93*
Helpful-Unhelpful	3.36(0.91)	3.05(0.73)	3.09(0.82)	3.44(0.83)	3.25(0.80)		5.41*
<i>Attitudes Toward Old Adults:</i>							
Good-Bad	4.26(1.21)	4.01(1.34)	3.55(1.37)	4.22(1.09)	3.58(1.33)	9.07*	
Happy-Sad	2.76(1.33)	2.79(1.33)	3.12(1.21)	3.02(1.23)	3.00(1.15)	4.31*	
Right-Wrong	3.61(0.94)	3.64(0.90)	3.52(0.94)	3.61(0.95)	3.21(0.99)		
Terrific-Terrible	2.04(1.17)	2.14(1.19)	2.29(1.23)	2.08(1.18)	2.38(1.23)		
Beautiful-Ugly	2.77(0.92)	2.69(0.87)	2.92(0.82)	2.68(0.91)	2.83(0.74)		
Friendly-Unfriendly	1.89(1.29)	1.97(1.29)	2.16(1.38)	2.41(1.27)	2.61(1.27)		6.98*
Clean-Dirty	3.92(1.17)	3.71(1.25)	3.74(1.27)	3.24(1.21)	2.96(1.05)		14.13*
Rich-Poor	2.84(1.01)	2.83(0.93)	2.87(0.89)	3.24(0.96)	3.70(0.81)		20.33*
Healthy-Sickly	3.21(1.23)	2.72(1.31)	3.05(1.27)	3.06(1.21)	3.16(1.05)		3.62**
Helpful-Unhelpful	2.25(1.02)	2.55(0.98)	2.46(0.97)	2.81(1.03)	2.84(0.80)		8.82*

*p < 0.001

**p < 0.05

Correlations between children's attitudes and psycho-social variables :

In considering relationship of children's attitudes towards young and old adults with selected psycho-social variables, the focus was on four fundamental psycho-social factors including amount of people living in the same household, strength of religious practices, amount of older relatives and non-relatives with whom children associated, and amount of involvement in intergenerational activities (Table 4). It was found that southern children's attitudes towards young adults significantly related with amount of

people living in the same household and with amount of older people with whom they associated. However, no relationships between attitudes towards young adults and other variables were found for other groups of children. When considering children attitudes towards old adults, it was found that attitudes of children in the central and northeast provinces significantly related with strength of religious practices. Again, southern children's attitudes towards the elderly adults significantly related to amount of older people with whom they associated.

Table 4: Correlations of Attitudes of Children Towards Adults with Other Variables

	North	Central	Bangkok	South	Northeast
<i>Attitudes towards young adults with:</i>					
Amount of people in house	-0.102	-0.022	0.024	-0.211*	-0.041
Religious practices	-0.055	-0.073	0.113	0.009	-0.023
Related with old relatives	0.061	-0.003	0.002	-0.055	-0.098
Related with old people	0.020	0.026	-0.192	0.192*	0.103
Intergeneration activities	0.064	0.075	-0.019	0.103	0.065
<i>Attitudes towards old adults with:</i>					
Amount of people in house	0.007	0.013	0.112	0.065	-0.129
Religious practices	0.092	0.180*	0.039	-0.053	0.184*
Related with old relatives	-0.018	0.030	-0.068	0.159	0.158
Related with old people	-0.016	0.065	0.021	0.181*	0.0
Intergeneration activities	0.026	0.023	-0.002	0.139	0.058

* p < .05

Discussion

Thai family structure:

The results of the study indicate that almost all children lived with both parents in their families; only a few percentages was reported as living in broken families. Most children's families were reported as having young and old adults lived together in the same household. It should also be noted that about half reported as having grandfathers lived in the families. Furthermore, for about 70% having grandmothers shared the same household. This indicates the common noticeable assumptions that women tend to live longer than men (Craig, 1991; Papalia & Olds, 1993; Keawkungwal, 1997b).

The structure of Thai family in general is noted that intergenerational relationships exist since most children did have activities with their older relatives and non-relatives. Even though most children in other provinces lived in their families with older people shared the same household, fewer percentages of those in the south and northeast were reported so. This may be due to the fact that older people in the south tends to possess strong autonomous characteristics and rather detach from their descendants, whereas many Thai families in the northeast tend to migrate to different provinces for economical reasons while leaving the elderly at their hometowns (Keawkungwal, 1997c).

In terms of strength of religious beliefs and practices, it was found that most children reported few visitations to the monasteries/churches. This may be

due to the fact that most parents nowadays rarely take their children to participate in any religious practices. In considering each province separately, it confirms the common assumptions that northern Thai families are much more religious. The northern provinces usually have numerous cultural religious events, thus northern children have more chances to go to monasteries and are reinforced to conduct more meditation/praying practices. Children in central and Bangkok provinces were shown as less monastery attendance. This may be due to the fact that they are in rather less cultural and religious oriented provinces; their families pay much more attentions to make a living and/or they have different values and life style. Interestingly enough, though children in the southern province reported less monastery attendance but they were high on meditation and praying. This result may accord common assumptions in Thailand that southern people are less adhere to traditional practices or norms even though they are religious (Keawkungwal, 1993; 1997c).

Attitudes towards young adults :

In all children reported young adults as better than older adults in terms of happy-sad, terrific-terrible, beautiful -ugly, friendly-unfriendly, and helpful -unhelpful. Children perceive young adults as happier and much better looks. In addition, young adults appear to be much more terrific, friendly and helpful to them. Comparing to other regions in which children rated young adults as somewhat very happy,

northeast children rated young adults as happy at moderate level. The explanation may be that children perceive young adults in other provinces as more relax compared to those in the northeast who have to work harder in order to compensate for the less available natural resources in the region. This finding is somewhat contrast to the other finding that the northeast rated young adult's health status significantly higher than those in the north, central, and Bangkok regions. Even though the northeast rated young adults as not very healthy but the other three groups rated as much less healthy. Similarly, most young adults in the south were rated significantly higher score for healthy-unhealthy than those in the north. It is possible that health perceptions might be related to type of young adults' occupations. Since most parents (e.g., young adults) of those children in the northeast and south work in the farm, they thus appear to be somewhat stronger and in good conditions when compared to those who work in other settings in other provinces.

For the pair of helpful-unhelpful characteristic, southern and northern children rated young adults as more helpful whereas children in the central region and Bangkok rated them at moderated level. This finding confirms other studies that adults in metropolitan or big cities tend to spend less time with their children (Keawkungwal, 1993; Papalia & Olds, 1993). It is thus quite interesting to investigate further in terms of differences between quantity and quality time spent among parents and

children in different social and cultural settings.

It is noticeable that no relationship between attitudes towards young adults and other selected psychosocial variables were found for other groups of children except those in the southern province. Southern children appeared to relate more with older adults, both relatives and non-relatives, thus their attitude towards young adults significantly related with amount of people living in the same household and with amount of older people with whom they associated. This finding confirms the notion that interpersonal relationships affect attitudes towards other people in either positive or negative directions (Craig, 1995; Papalia & Olds, 1995).

Attitudes towards old adults:

Overall, children reported old adults as better than young adults in terms of good-bad, right-wrong, clean-dirty, rich-poor and healthy-unhealthy. Children perceived old adults as being better and doing more righteous practices. Old adults are perceived as richer, cleaner and more healthy. This might be due to the fact that children in later childhood period see older adults as significant figures (Papalia & Old, 1995). In this study, most children were those lived in smaller provinces compared to Bangkok metropolitan. It is thus explained that older adults especially those in rural areas tend to have much more free time to spend with their children. Therefore, most younger children reported more closely related to older adults than to young adults.

In comparing attitudes of children towards older adults among those resided in different regions, the results were shown that children in the northern and southern provinces rated the old-aged people as very good whereas the northeast and Bangkok rated as good. It was also found that children in the north and south provinces rated old people as doing more righteous things whereas those in the northeast rated it at moderated level. This confirms what was previously discussed that children in the former two regions might have stronger relationships with both young and old adults in comparing with children in other provincial settings. It should be noted, however, that the northeast children rated old adults as friendly and helpful at moderated level.

In terms of other significant characteristics of older adults as perceived by children in different provinces, the north and Bangkok children rated old adults as very clean but those in the south and northeast rated cleanliness of old adults at moderate level. Children in all provinces were not much different in perceiving health status of the elderly. However, children of the northern province as well as those in other provinces rated old adults as moderately healthy, whereas children in the central province rated as moderately unhealthy.

Interestingly, children in the northeast rated old adults as somewhat rich despite the common assumption that the northeast is rated as the most economical deficiency region of the country. In contrast, south children

rated old adults as moderately rich while the north and Bangkok children rated as less rich. In fact in this study, we attempt to control for children with moderate socio-economic status. However, it may be due to the fact that a large percentage of both young and old adults in the northeast and south provinces owned land as they were predominantly farmers; and thus were perceived as rich.

In considering correlations between children's attitudes towards old adults with selected psycho-social factors, the results also confirm the notation previously discussed that relationship with and attitudes towards any aspects are quite related. As Papalia & Olds (1993) suggested that if we know children's attitudes, we can predict type of their socialization with adults. Again, the results reveal that south children's attitudes towards the elderly adults related significantly with amount of older people with whom they associated. Furthermore, cultural and/or religious practices also affect attitudes of children to a certain degree as have been shown in this study. That is, attitude of children towards the adults in the central and northeast provinces significantly related to the strength of religious practices.

In all, the results of this study indicate rather close relationships between Thai children with both young and old adults. Thai children appear to maintain positive attitudes towards young and old adults in many aspects based on their respective familial, socioeconomic and cultural settings. However, it is currently noted among

psychologists and sociologists that all provinces in Thailand tend to be influenced by westernized culture and values. All provinces become more urbanized; the structure of Thai family becomes more of a nuclear-type (Viriyavejakul, 1995). The present economic situation in Thailand causes the psychosocial crises that affect the attitudes of children towards young and old adults as well as intergenerational relationships. It is doubtful whether strong bonds between children and adults can still maintain its positive outcomes. Should there be any change, what are they? If the bonds between adults and children become weaker, what kinds of psychosocial problems that Thai society will face? The changes will certainly affect the adults' attitudes towards children as well as their mental health. Also, up-date research studies in psychology confirm the findings that positive intergenerational relationship does enhance the morale of both adults and children. Both sides gain the advantages from such the relationships.

For examples, the social need for rootedness of the adults has been fulfilled, children do not have to go to many processes of trial and error to solve their life problems. Children understand and accept the processes of life cycles easier. Thus, they can adjust to life changes faster and well than those who do not have any adult to relate to, to identify with and to be their models. Most studies found that these children are secure, well-adjusted, and loveably (Keawkungwal, 1997b; Lefrancois, 1993; Strom & Strom, 1990).

Although this study aims at investigating relationships and attitudes of children towards adults by measuring only ten pairs of variables, the results also demonstrate differences in cultural and socioeconomic patterns of 5 regional provinces of Thailand. These patterns influence types of intergenerational relationships and attitudes of Thai children towards the young and old adults of Thailand in those five regions.

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