

Abstract

Relationships and attitudes of children towards adults form the basic foundation for child development in all aspects e.g. physical, emotional, social and cognitive. This study surveys the patterns of relationships and attitudes of Thai Buddhist children towards both young (25 - 60) and old adults (60 - up). Children are 6 - 12 years of age (late childhood) from 5 parts of the country : north, middle, Bangkok, south and east. Attitudes in this study are limited to ten variables : good - bad, sad - happy, right - wrong, terrific - terrible, beautiful - ugly, friendly - unfriendly, clean - dirty, rich - poor, healthy - sickly, helpful - unhelpful.

Purposes in this study are to investigate : (1) relationships and attitudes of Thai children towards young and old adults as a whole group; (2) differences of 10 variables of children's attitudes towards young and old adults; (3) differences of relationships and attitudes of 5 regional groups of children towards young and old adults; (4) correlations between children's attitudes and some demographic variables : existence of old adults in household, frequency of church attendance, frequency of praying, and involvement in activities with old people.

Hypotheses in this study are : (1) there are differences in attitudes towards young and old adults of all groups of children; (2) there are differences in attitudes towards young and old adults in each group of children; (3) attitudes of children towards young and

old adults in those ten variables differ; (4) there are correlations between some demographic variables and attitudes towards young and old adults.

subjects in this study are 660 children from elementary schools in Chiangmai, Petchburi, Bangkok, Trang, and Jayabhum. The instrument used in this study is the Semantic Differential Subtest. Its reliability and validity are explained thoroughly in Jantz, Seefeldt, Galper and Serock (1980). The test - retest correlation for young adults is $(r) .81$ and for old adults is $(r) .84$. Correlations between young and old adults range between $.48$ to $.76$. Data collection is done in classroom. The data are analyzed by descriptive statistics, paired comparison t test, F test and Pearson correlation.

Results of this study show a variety of patterns of relationships and attitudes of 5 groups of Thai children towards young and old adults. As examples, children of all groups feel that old adults differ from young adults in these variables: good - bad, right - wrong, terrific - terrible, beautiful - ugly, clean - dirty, healthy - sickly, and helpful - unhelpful. Children in the north, Bangkok and the south feel that young adults are happier than old adults, but the east children feel that they are not different in happiness. South and east children feel that young and old adults are not different in being friendly; but north, Bangkok, and middle children feel that young adults are more friendly than old adults. East children feel that old adults are richer than young adults, whereas south and north

children feel no differences exist between young and old adults in this aspect. Children of the whole group have more positive relationships and better attitudes towards the old adults than young adults.

Though this study aims at investigating relationships and attitudes of Thai Buddhist Children towards young and old adults by measuring only ten variables, the results support the basic concepts in psychology --- that geographical, cultural, socio - economics, and family patterns determine the types of relationships and attitudes of children towards the adults. The results do reflect differences of socio - economics and cultural patterns of the country.

In all, the results of this study indicate rather close relationships between Thai children and adults, but some changes are occurring as Thai society becomes more urbanized and nuclear - type families increase.