

The objectives of this study were (a) to assess the public understanding of science and basic research; and (b) to chart the future of science and basic research in Thailand. This 6-month study used a combination of focused group discussions and questionnaires. The 475 respondents, about 40% males and 60% females, were from different professions and 2/3 were trained in science. They were found to be highly familiar with popular scientific terms. Based on their responses, Thais were generally optimistic about a better future in science and basic research. Science was found to have been useful to the development but mildly degrading to Thai society. On basic research, Thailand should intensify her effort in areas of relevant to the country. Particular emphasis should be put on training the future scientists. While they wished to see various improvements in the support and management of science and basic research in the next decade, most were unsure about their roles in bringing about the desired changes. This may reflect the dominance of leader-dependent culture in Thai society.