

How does a Duty of Life Influence Happiness?

Case Study of Ban San Chok Pok, Dok Khamtai Sub-District Dok Khamtai District, Phayao, Thailand

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Abstract— In this study, two research questions “what is the level of villagers’ happiness?” and “which factors influence their happiness?” are posed. To address these two research questions, this study uses mixed-methods research approach. Field survey, interview, and questionnaire are performed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Final sample includes 155 people.

Unlike previous studies which classified their sample according to age and sex, this study classifies its sample into six groups according to their duty of life. The six groups include grandmothers, grandfathers, mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons. It is found that grandmothers are less happy when they have to take the role of the head of the family. Going to pray at the temple only increases the mothers’ happiness. Interestingly, there is contradictory evidence of the extent to which loan influences grandparents’ happiness. Having a loan makes grandmothers happier but grandfathers less happy. On the other hand, the greater amount of loan they have leads the grandmothers to be less happy but leads the grandfathers to be happier. Grandfathers’ happiness is also associated with family relationship and social activities. Interestingly, having hobby makes the grandfathers less happy.

Keywords— happiness, well-being, duty of life, Phayao, Thailand

I. Introduction

The definition of the word happiness is a broad concept and the degree of which people are happy is at many stages. Therefore, for the research context, many scholars have tried to narrow down the definition of happiness to be applicable to their studies. For example, the Department of Mental Health (2014) indicates that happiness occurs when people have a feeling of well-being. A feeling of well-being is a feeling of being healthy, comfortable, and happy. To report the world happiness, Helliwell, Layard and Sachs (2013) define happiness in two ways: an emotion (“Were you happy yesterday?”) and an evaluation (“Are you happy with your life as a whole?”). Kittisuksatit et al. (2012) developed the Happinometer, which is the happiness self-assessment. Their definition of happiness is the experience and the emotion which people are able to constantly manage and control as they thought, and which in turn lead the people to get pleasure from this experience and emotion without doing somebody any harm.

We cannot argue with a general sense that people’s happiness depends on their livelihoods and well-being. This seems to be the reason why many recent researches have primary focused on these two areas. Importantly, to develop countries, many governments (e.g. Bhutan) and organisations (e.g. the World Bank) have paid more attention to the study of how to improve people’s livelihoods and well-being. The World Bank has encouraged researchers to conduct the study of people’s livelihoods around the world. These researchers include, for example, Mukherjee, Hardjono and Carriere (2002) who used the SL framework to provide evidence for reducing poverty in Indonesia. Furthermore, Rafik, Richard and Francis Ato (2009) conducted the study of how to improve water security for sustaining livelihoods and growth in Tunisia. Moreover, Christie, Fernandes, Messerli and Twining-Ward’s (2013) study focuses on how Africa can have successful tourism develop that will help them achieve their growth and improve livelihoods.

Bhutan initially introduced the concept of gross national happiness that has been used as the key measure of their people’s well-being, e.g. the study of Ura, Alkire, Zangmo and Wangdi (2012). Other studies of people’s well-being are, for instance, the World Bank’s (2005) study of Ethiopians; Dell’Aglia, Cunnungham, Koller, Borges and Leon’s (2007) study of youth well-being in Brazil; and Haque and Packard’s (2014) study of well-being from work in the Pacific island countries.

It is true in a general sense that people’s views on happiness seem to vary from an individual to an individual. Therefore, the definition of happiness is highly debatable. This study narrows the broad definition of happiness down to the one at community level. This narrow definition of happiness may help the policymakers see happiness thoroughly. It will help the policymakers to focus more on what Thais really want rather than what they should want. Consequently, they may devise the effective and efficient plans for bringing happiness to applicable criteria that follow.

II. Measurement of happiness

How to measure Thais’ happiness is difficult. Many studies use 11-point-scale (e.g. Mahaarcha and Kittisuksathit, 2007 and Gray, Chamrathirong, Pattaravanich and Prasartkul, 2013). Many studies use 3-point scale (e.g. Guillen-Royo, Velazco and Camfield, 2013). 3-point scale of happiness seems to be easier than 11-point scale of happiness. This is because the wide range of scale may be difficult for the villagers to consider the extent to which their levels of happiness are. For example, Gray, Kramanon and Thapsuwan (2008) study the happiness among people with ages 20 years and older. They report that the average happiness of their sample is at 5.7-5.8. They interpret that this is consistent with Buddhist teaching of avoidance of the two extremes of happiness and sadness.

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However, this study argues against this interpretation. The 11-scale of happiness may be difficult for the villagers to consider the extent to which their levels of happiness are. Therefore, they are more likely to select 5 or 6 which is in the middle of the scale. In addition, using the measurements developed by western studies in Thai context (e.g., Nanthamongkolchai, Tuntichaivanit, Munsawaengsub and Charupoonphol, 2011) may lead to the invalid findings. This is because the difference in culture and other institutional factors. Importantly, a very long questionnaire may take long time. This may make the interviewees bored, thereby not giving the real answers. Unlike these previous studies, this study uses Andrews and Withey’s (1976) seven pictures of happiness. This is because they are easy for the villagers to understand.

III. Method

To give a clear view of happiness, especially from the views of the villagers, two research questions “what is the level of villagers’ happiness? and which factors influence their happiness?” are posed. Both qualitative and quantitative data are collected to address these two research questions. The processes of data collection and analysis are as follows. First, to identify the village’s key problems, field survey and the interview with the headman of the village were performed and the interviews with the villagers were randomly conducted. Second, as concluded by Kittiprapas, Sawangfa, Fisherm Powdhavee and Nitnitiphрут (2007) that the best way to understand people’s happiness is to listen to what they are saying. The interviews with the villagers to listen to their talking about their happiness were conducted again. From the interviews, the factors which influence their happiness were identified. A questionnaire was then developed based on the results of the interviews.

Third, the data were conducted again by the questionnaire with the semi-structured interviews. The interviews were done with the villagers whose age is over 30 years old. According to the interviews, youths whose age is below 20 years old have different happiness from adults. Additionally, the adults whose age is between 21-30 years old migrate to other provinces in order to find jobs. The final number of the population is approximately 350. The number of the samples is computed by Yamane’s formula and the number of the sample size is about 190. The author visited the village, randomly knocked the doors and asked for the interviews. The village has approximately 230 households. Therefore, only one person from each household was selected by luck. The interviewees were asked to select the picture of happiness. They were also asked about 19 questions. The data from the questionnaire are tested by univariate and multivariate tests. This is to identify the factors that influence the villagers’ happiness.

To further identify the factors that influence the villagers’ happiness, this study uses the ordered logistic model which is based on Cameron and Trivedi’s (2010) the concept of ordered outcomes. The regressand is 7-level of happiness

according to Andrews and Withey’s (1996) seven pictures of happiness. The tests were performed by each group of the villagers: grandmothers, grandfathers, and mothers. The numbers of fathers, sons, and daughters are very small; therefore, the regression analysis of these three groups is unable to do. The developed model is as follows.

$$Pr(Happiness_i) = \beta_1 Marital1_i + \beta_2 Marital2_i + \beta_3 Marital3_i + \beta_4 Marital4_i + \beta_5 Marital5_i + \beta_6 Incomeex_i + \beta_7 Numbered_i + \beta_8 Headoffam_i + \beta_9 Childstudy_i + \beta_{10} Childunem_i + \beta_{11} Childem_i + \beta_{12} Grandchild_i + \beta_{13} Childliveother_i + \beta_{14} Childvisit_i + \beta_{15} Disease_i + \beta_{16} Excercise_i + \beta_{17} Hobby_i + \beta_{18} Temple_i + \beta_{19} Socialin_i + \beta_{20} Elderlysch_i + \beta_{21} loan_log_i + \beta_{22} Loan_i + \beta_{23} Typeofincome_i$$



Figure 1. Levels of Happiness

where Happiness is the level of the villager’s happiness and is indicated by Andrews and Withey’s (1996) seven pictures of happiness: which 7 is “Delighted”, 6 is “Pleased”, 5 is “Mostly satisfied”, 4 is “Mixed”, 3 is “Mostly dissatisfied”, 2 is “Unhappy” and 1 is “Terrible”; Marital1 is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent is single and 0 otherwise; Marital2 is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent lives as a couple and 0 otherwise; Marital3 is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent gets a divorce and 0 otherwise; Marital4 is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent gets a separation and 0 otherwise; Marital5 is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent is a widow or widower and 0 otherwise; Famstatus1 is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent is a grandma or grandpa and 0 otherwise; Famstatus2 is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent is a mother or a father and 0 otherwise; Famstatus3 is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent is a daughter or a son and 0 otherwise; Incomeex codes as 1 if the respondent’s income is not enough for his or her living costs, 2 if the respondent’s income is equal to his or her living costs, and 3 if the respondent’s income is greater than his or her living costs; Numbered is a number of years which the respondent had education; Headoffam is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent takes the role of the head of the family and 0 otherwise; Childstudy is the respondent’s number of children who are studying; Childunem is the respondent’s number of children who graduated but have not been employed yet; Childem is the respondent’s number of children who graduated and have been employed; Grandchild is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent has to take care of his or her grandchildren and 0 otherwise; Childliveother is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent has children who migrate to other provinces and 0 otherwise; Childvisit is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent is happy about his or her children’s frequent visits and 0 otherwise. Disease is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the

¹ According to the staff from the village’s health centre, the number of villagers is 885. The number of the villagers whose age is over 30 years old is 556. However, the head of the village gives us the fact that about 200 people migrated to other provinces in order to find jobs.

respondent suffers from disease and 0 otherwise; Exercise is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent does an exercise every day and 0 otherwise; Hobby is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent has a hobby and 0 otherwise; Temple is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent always goes to pray at the temple and 0 otherwise; Socialin is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent always goes to have a chat with his or her neighbors and always attends the village's special occasions e.g. wedding ceremony and 0 otherwise; Elderlysch is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent joins the elderly school and 0 otherwise; Loan_log is a natural logarithm of loan; Loan is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent has a loan and 0 otherwise; and Typeofincome is a dummy variable that is equal to 1 if the respondent's income is certainty (e.g. permanent employment) and 0 otherwise.

IV. Information about the village

San Chok Pok has 230 households with 418 females and 429 males. 202 of all households were farmers. Their average income was Bath 29,000 (\$ 800) per annum. 50 of all raise ducks and chickens for sales with an average income of Bath 30,000 (\$ 820) per annum. 5 of all raise pigs for sales and had average income of Baht 35,000 (\$ 960) per annum. Many of them also have set up their own group in order to make some extra income. Each group makes their products, for example, basketworks, handmade rugs, and potteries.

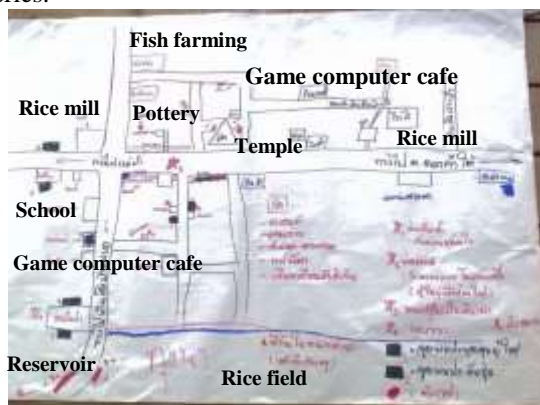


Figure 2. Map of San Chok Pok drawn by youths from the village at the Youth Camp as of 3 May 2015

Figure 2 is the map of San Chok Pok drawn by the five youths from the village. It describes the village's important places. From the map, the village is separated into two parts by the main road "Phayao - Dok Khamtai - Chiang Kham". There are many places on the upper half of the map, such as, Don Chai Temple, a pottery factory, two rice mills, a game computer café, and a fish farming. Another game computer café, a reservoir, and a school are on the lower half of the map.

v. Result

A. Village's key problems

As of 4 April 2015, the author conducted the field survey and the interviews with 18 households. The interviews were aimed at identifying the villagers' problems. Their key problems found are as follows.

1) Poverty among the elderlies

Poverty is the big problem of the villagers, especially elderlies. From the observations and interviews, it is found that even though the government subsidises the elderlies with Bath 500 (\$ 15) per month, many elderlies still have to do work for their livings. For example, a 66-year-old female elderly does needlework with an uncertainty of her income. A couple of elderlies do not have their own accommodation and land. They do a labor work for living wage.



Figure 3. A couple of elderlies do work for their living (Picture was taken by the author as of 8 February 2015)

Elderlies whose children give them financial support less suffer from the poverty. A male elderly, who is a barber, seems not to worry about his living costs because his child, who is a teacher, supports him. The elderly sold all of his rice fields. Similarly to the old barber, a 72-year-old male elderly is supported by his child who does a labor work in a construction site. Therefore, he does not need to work anymore. In addition, a 66-year-old lady does not have any financial difficulty because her child sends money to her every month.

2) Lack of their own land for agriculture

Many households do not have land for rice farming. To have land for rice farming, they have to pay the rent. For example, the household of the 72-year-old male elderly has to pay the rent of Bath 12,000 (\$ 330) per annum to have 5.6-acre land for rice farming. A 44-year-old lady has 8-acre land for rice farming but 6 of 8 acres are from the rent. She gives the landlord some rice that she produces in exchange for the rent. A 65-year-old female elderly does not have any land, she does a labor work in rice field for living wage of Bath 300 (\$ 8). She sometimes helps her neighbors grow garlics and onions in return for getting some garlics and onions.

3) Insufficient water supply to agricultures

Farmers generally cultivate rice twice a year. The cultivation of the dry-season rice starts from January to May while the cultivation of the wet-season rice starts from August to December. The cultivation of dry-season rice deals with the drought during the period from January to March. Many interviewees complain about the drought. A family of a 72-year-old male elderly rents 5.6-acre rice field from the landlord and they have to pay the yearly rent of

Bath 168,000 (\$ 4,600). However, the shortage of water led his family can only grow wet-season rice. A 30-year-old woman, who works as a government officer, complain that the shortage of water during dry season rice cultivation led her family to spend a lot on fuel consumed by a water pump.

Shortage of water is sometimes caused by the villagers themselves. A 45-year-old woman believes that when the villagers sold their rice fields, the fields were filled in by soil and were transformed into the land for building houses. Some ponds were then disappeared.

4) How to boost sales of their local products

Some villagers have set up their own group and produce local products with the hope for earning extra income. However, they are disappointed when they cannot make more sales on their products. A 67-year-old lady is the member of the group that produces handmade rugs. She earns nearly Bath 1,000 (\$ 30) per month from selling her rugs. She believes that her group will make more sales if there will be one(s) who will help them boost their sales. Another two old ladies, who are also the members of this group, suggest that to boost their sales, there should be the permanent place where the tourists can visit and buy their products.

There is a sad story about a group of the villagers who produce “Kheng”. Kheng is a round crate made from bamboos and is generally used for packaging fish. An old lady, who is a member of this group, indicates that her group sells all Kheng to the middleman. Her group does not have bargaining power to increase the selling prices. She highlights that the prices of Kheng have been fixed for many years. The prices of 18-inch Kheng and 20-inch Kheng are Baht 1.7 (\$ 0.05) and Bath 2 (\$ 0.06), respectively. Interestingly, the author found out that Kheng costs the fishmonger around Bath 5 (\$ 0.14) each. This poses the question why the middleman’s prices are very cheap.

Some of the interviewees blame the government for not helping them boost sales of their products. For example, a 30-year-old woman, who used to be the member of organic rice group, underscores that the government encourages the villagers to produce the local products but they never help the villagers seek the markets.

5) Health problems

The map of the village reporting health problems surveyed by the local health centre shows the health problems of each household by marking with the different colours and shapes of the circles. From the map, 45 households are healthy. 25 households have, at least, one of their family members who suffer from high blood pressure. 16 households have, at least, one of their family members who have bone and muscle problems.

The interviews also provide evidence of health problems among elderlies. For example, owing to her health problem, a 60-year-old lady has to go to see the doctor at the Phayao hospital once a month. A 66-year-old lady suffers from high blood pressure and diabetes.

6) Waste management

From the survey, it is found that waste was dumped everywhere as shown in Figure 4. This finding is supported by the interviewees. Most of them raise the issue of waste management. A 44-year-old lady complains that Dok Khamtai Subdistrict Administrative Organisation does not

have any waste management system. They do not have waste collection vehicle. The villagers therefore do not have the place for disposing of their wastes. She adds that some of them burn the waste which leads to the problem of acrid smoke.



Figure 4. Waste is dumped everywhere (Picture was taken by the author as of 8 February 2015)

7) Drug use and addiction

Two interviewees point to the problem of drug use and addiction. A 44-year-old woman tells that some of teenagers do not go to school and they have drug addiction. In addition, a 45-year-old woman mentions the problems of drug use among the labors. There is only a 67-year-old man who denies that his village has the problems of drug use and addiction by now. Interestingly, a man, who lives in the next village, reveals that there is an old man in San Chok Pok who is a drug dealer. The man also tells about the place where they sell and buy drugs.

B. Factors influencing the villagers’ happiness: Qualitative evidence

To further explore the villagers’ views on happiness, 33 interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted randomly and the interviewees were asked about their happiness. Table 1 shows the list of the interviewees.

Table 1. List of the interviewees

Age	Males	Females	Total
31-40 years old	2	2	4
41-50 years old	3	6	9
51-60 years old	7	2	9
Over 60 years old	3	8	11
Total	15	18	33

The findings are as following.

1) Duty of life

The duty of life is the key factor that leads the interviewees to the different perspectives on happiness. As a wife and a mother, the happiness of the women is to take care of their families. A 36-year-old woman has a lovely family. She works as a government officer and her husband is a policeman. They have a 10-year-old son. She told that her happiness is her family’s happiness. As a wife and a mother, she is happy when she looks after her husband and son. Her statement is that

“...Normally, I take care of everybody in my family. After work, I do cleaning, washing and cooking for them... (A 36-year-old wife working as a government officer)”.

A 48-years-old mother has worked at a rice mill for more than 10 years. She lives with her husband and two daughters. One of her daughter graduated while another daughter is studying at the school, where is close to her village. Her life is very busy with her work everyday. She told that

“Normally I go to work around 8 in the morning and I am back home at 5 in the evening. My only day off is Sunday...At the rice mill, I am so tired when we have a lot of orders... We have a lot of orders everyday. I am also responsible for delivering many bags of rice to our customers. It seems to be a hard word. But I get used to it now... At home, I have to do all housework... (A 48-year-old woman working in a rice mill)”.

For men and women who take the role on the head of the family, they work hard with the belief that money is the key factor of their happiness. 37-year-old woman has married for more than 15 years but has no child. The authors feel that she rarely talks about her husband and that she takes on the role of head of the family. This is her life story

“...I used to work in the factory (in another province). When my father died, I returned home to take care of my mother. I am responsible for all of my family expenses. I have a small grocery store and a small rice mill. I also do pig farming and used to do fish farming. (A 37-year-old wife having a small grocery store)”.

Similarly to the 37-year-old woman, a 48-years-old single woman, who used to work as a video editor in another province, had to return home when her parent become older. Now she works as a cleaner a primary school, where is close to the village. She also has a small grocery shop.

Two 40-year-old men gave different views on happiness. One of them is married and has a child, who is studying. He seems to be a rich man because he is the owner of the rice mill. He believes money can bring him happiness. Another man is single. He lives with his father and older sister. He and his sister have to work hard to support their father. He does many jobs to earn money as much as he can. He told that

“... I boil buffaloes' feet, (which is for making the local foods), and then takes them to the market for sales. Sometimes I get the orders of from the customers. To earn more cash, I do many additional jobs such as architectural drawing, an insurance broker... (A 40-year-old bachelor)”

A 57-year-old man is a daily worker at a pottery factory. He is from another province. He came to the village to get a job. He divorced and his son lives with his father at his hometown. He told that

“I have worked at the pottery factory for more than 10 years. I earn Bath 200 (\$ 5) per day. Every month, I have to send money to my children and my father... I live at the factory. My boss gives me a free accommodation...I rarely go back to my hometown. (A 57-year-old man)”.

Parent are happy to see their children have a good education and get a good job. This affirms that the traditional Thai belief that having higher education will lead to the prosperity and happiness. A 46-year-old man has his own garage. He lives with his wife and child. His child is studying in Grade 3 of the secondary school. His happiness is to see his child growing up day by day. His statement is that

“...I think what me makes happy is my boy. I just want him to concentrate on his studying. I believe that a good education will bring him a bright future. You know. I am happy to see him growing up day by day and I am happy to see him being a good person in the future. I don't need anything (A 46-year-old husband)”.

A 60-year-old father works as a farmer and a welder. He lives with his wife and three children. All of his children are studying. He therefore works hard to support them.

When he has days off, he and his family travel to other provinces. He told that if he were rich, he would stop working and he would just go praying at the temple like other elderlies at the same age.

2) Family time

Spending time with families also makes fathers and mothers happy. 48-year-old man works as a policeman and he also grows rice. He has a child. He is happy because his wife cooking for him and all members of his family sit and eat together every day.

A 54-year-old man has worked as a temporary staff at the local government office for more than 30 years. His life seems to be happy.

“According to my work of constructing weirs, I have to go for work at other villages for a month... Once I return home, I help my wife grow rice. Sometimes I asked for days off to stay with my family. (A 54-year-old man)”.

3) Taking care of their grandchild

For grandparents, taking care of their grandchild makes them less lonely. 41-year-old housewife has a son and a daughter. Her son has a child and she takes care of his child. Her daughter is still studying. She told that

“My son has to go work everyday; therefore, he does not have time to take care of his daughter. I do take care of her for him. I take her to school in the morning and collect her from the school in the evening...When my niece goes to school, there is nothing to do. I just watch television... At weekend, I spend most of time on looking after my niece... (A 41-year-old housewife)”.

A 53-year-old woman does not have to work anymore. She only takes care of her grandchildren because her daughter works in Chiang Rai. She told that

“...I rarely go out. I only go shopping at the superstores in the city... What I do every day is to take care of my nephew...We love watching TV together, especially we love watching TV dramas in the evening... (A 53-year-old woman)”.

A 54-year-old man is a farmer and lives with his wife, daughter, son-in-law, and grandchild. His happiness is to take care of his grandchild.

4) Health problems

Health problems seem to make the villagers at all ages less happy. A 47-year-old woman has a small grocery shop. She has two sons and a daughter. Her health problem seems to make her less happy because she has diabetes.

A 52-year-old unemployed man lives with his daughter, son-in-law, and nephew. His life story is that

“Everyday, I don't have many things to do. I just stay at home, sleep, eat, and go for a walk... I ever never travel to other province ...I am not very well because I used to have back operation. Therefore I cannot walk properly. When I walk a lot, I will get leg pain and waistline pain. (A 52-year-old unemployed man)”.

5) Exercise and hobbies

Doing exercises and having hobbies make men happier and healthier. A 48-year-old man is a garage mechanic. He has a son and a daughter. Working at the garage keeps him busy, thereby not having time to do activities with his family. He told that doing gardening is his happy time.

“...I love gardening. I do it for relaxation. I think it is also good for my physical health because I can get much exercise. (A 48-year-old husband)”

A 64-year-old man works as a mechanic at the garage. He told that

“Actually I work seven days a week... Like today which is my day off, I still come to help my nephew to fix this stuff at the garage. If I have day offs, I usually do gardening or spend my time for watching TV. I grow vegetable for eating. I believe that gardening help me do some exercise... (A 64-year-old man)”.

A 67-year-old man just stays at home to take care of his disabled wife. He told that

"I live with my wife. She is disabled; therefore, I have to take care of her. I do housework and cooking for her. Our children and their families live in Bangkok...Normally they come to see me when they have days off like New Year holiday and Songkran holiday I have a good health because my friends and I do cycling every evening... Cycling makes me feel good because I can meet my friends and have a chat with them. (A 67-year-old man)".

6) Social activities

Spending time with the neighbor make elderlies less lonely. A 54-year-old woman is a seller at the morning market. She has two children. One works in Chiang Rai meanwhile another one works in Rayong.

"...I don't have many things to do every day. In the morning, I just go to the market and sell my stuffs. After that I spend time with my neighbor. (A 54-year-old woman)".

Going to pray at the temple and attending the village's social events make elderlies to have more social interaction. A 63-year-old woman works as a farmer. She told that

"Normally I stay at home. But I always go to the temple and attend the village's religious ceremony and other celebrations... (A 63-year-old woman)".

A 63-year-old woman sells her own cooked foods at the market. She suggested that

"... I think it would be great if we set up a group of elderlies...It would be also great if we do group activities together...Elderlies in this village are good at many skills. For example, we should make Thai sweets during the daytime and then there should be someone who has responsibility for selling them. In the evening, we should do some exercises like dancing. These activities may help the elderlies to have less feeling of loneliness. (A 63-year-old woman cooking foods for sales)".

A 71-year-old woman lives with her daughter, who has her own restaurant. Her daughter supports her living expense; therefore, she does not need to work. However, she still feels lonely when she stays alone at home. She loves going to the temple and going for a walk.

A 77-year-old woman suffers from diabetes and needs to see the doctor every 2-3 months. She told about her life that

"...When there are religious activities, I always attend these activities. This is because I can have a chance to meet other people and chat with them... (A 77-year-old woman)".

Attending the elderly school also makes elderlies happier. A 67-year-old man just stays at home to take care of his disabled wife. He added that

"... Now Sub-district Administrative Organisation established the elderly school at the temple. We have class every Tuesday. I am really happy to join the class because I can meet my friends. I learn a lot from the school, especially I learn how to produce local products that can be our additional job...I feel less nervous. (A 67-year-old man)".

7) Their children's visit

Most of adults whose age is between 21-30 migrate to other provinces to get jobs. Therefore, their parents are happy when they come back to the village and pay their family a visit during a long holiday. A 52-year-old man, who works as a farmer, told about his happiness that

"... We have two sons. Both of them graduated and have worked in Bangkok. We don't want to live with them. We just go there to pay them a visit but not frequently. Bangkok is not good for us to live because it is noisy and has crowd of people. (A 52-year-old man who is a farmer)".

A 61-year-old woman works as a farmer and does needlework as her hobby. She lives with her husband. She told that

"My daughter married and then migrated to her husband's hometown. My husband and I pay my daughter's family a visit once every 2-3 months... I am happy when I pay them a visit and when they pay me a visit because I can spend time with my grandchild... (A 61-year-old woman)".

A 67-year-old woman has her own small business, which produces chili paste. Her life seems to be happy. She told that

"...My children often pay me a visit. They come to see me every long holiday... At that time, I am very happy because we stay and do activities together... (A 67-year-old woman)".

A 78-year-old woman has been unable to use her left leg for 5-6 years. This is because the left leg's nerve was destroyed. She received the wheelchair and staff for free from Sub-district Administrative Organisation. She told that

"...I live with my daughter and she takes care of me. Another child lives in Lopburi. He and his family come to see me every long holiday like New Year holiday and Songkran holiday. Sometimes we drive to the sea and have yummy seafood... I think it is my happy time when they come to visit me. (A 78-year-old woman)".

A 82-year-old woman just stays at home and only does housework. Raising chickens, watching TV, and gardening are her hobby. She has two sons and a daughter. One of them lives next door. Meanwhile others live in other provinces.

"My children and their families come to see me only when they have days off during the New Year holiday and Songkran holiday. I am lucky that my older son lives next door; therefore, I am not lonely. (A 82-year-old woman)".

A 65-year-old man works as a farmer. He lives with his wife. His children and their family migrated to other provinces. He told that

"I don't want to move to my children's places because I love my house here. I just want them to pay me a visit sometime ... Staying at home, having what my wife cooks for me, and seeing my children's family are my happiness. (A 65-year-old man)".

8) Financial difficulty

Financial difficulty makes the villagers at all ages less happy, especially elderlies who do not receive financial support from their children. Some of the villagers have to borrow money from their neighbors. Some of them have to work hard. A 47-year-old woman lives with her mother, her daughter, and her nephew. Her daughter is still studying. She takes the role of the head of her family. Profits from her small local shop is only one source of her family's income. She spoke about her life that

"I have sold flowerpots and handmade rugs for four years. This is only one source of my income. For the first few years, I could make a lot of sales but now the sales have decreased...Normally my income is enough to support everybody in my family. Sometimes it is not enough to do so, I have to borrow money from my neighbours... A pyramid scheme is the way I save my money. (A 47-year-old woman working as a local merchant)".

A 59-year-old man works as a farmer. He lives with his wife and the older son. His older son finished his master degree and has work as a teacher at the secondary school. Meanwhile his younger son has got the scholarship to do PhD aboard. He told that

"My son doesn't send me any money. When I don't have enough money, I have to borrow it from my neighbor or the village fund... (A 59-year-old man)".

C. Factors influencing the villagers' happiness: Quantitative evidence

The questionnaire is developed based on the results of the interviews and data were collected again by the questionnaire with the interviews. For the data collection at the last stage, 155 respondents or 82% of all sample size were reached. The results of data analyses are as follows.

1) Descriptive statistics

As shown in table 2, 82 of all 155 respondents (53%) are grandparents while 58 of all (37%) are parents. 52 of all grandparents (63%) are female while 41 of all parents (71%) are mothers. The respondents were asked to select one of seven pictures to show their happiness. 43% of 155 respondents report that they have a pleased feeling. 23% of all have a delighted feeling.

Table 2. Villagers' happiness

Happiness	Family Status						Total	%
	Grandma	Grandpa	Mom	Dad	Daughter	Son		
Terrible	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Unhappy	4	1	0	1	0	0	6	4
Mostly dissatisfied	2	4	0	1	0	1	8	5
Mixed	7	3	2	1	1	1	15	10
Mostly satisfied	6	9	3	2	2	1	23	15
Pleased	19	7	24	9	5	2	66	43
Delighted	13	6	12	3	2	0	36	23
Total	52	30	41	17	10	5	155	

The average age of the interviewees is approximately at 58 years. This indicates that San Chok Pok has become an elderly community. The average age of grandmother, grandfathers, mothers, fathers, daughters, and sons are 64, 68, 50, 54, 44, and 48 years, respectively. This shows interesting evidence that the average age of males is longer than females. 103 of 155 respondents (67%) live with their couple. 8 of 30 grandfathers have separation while 18 of 52 grandmothers are widow. In general, males take the role of the head of family except for the widows. On the average, the villagers finished 6 years of educations (Po. 6). The grandparents spend 4 years (Po. 4) in school. The mothers finished 6 years of education (Po. 6) while the fathers and the sons finished 9 years in school (Mo. 3). The daughters finished 12 years of education (Mo. 6).

On the average, mothers and fathers have one child who is studying. Grandparents have two children who graduated and have been employed. 78 of 140 respondents' (50%) children migrate to other provinces in order to get jobs. 72 of them (93%) are happy with their children's frequent visit. 44 of 82 grandparents (54%) have to take care of their grandchildren.

The respondents' main source of income is from high uncertainty of income like agriculture, daily worker, and financial support from their children. 31 of 155 respondents (20%), especially grandmothers and mothers, earn from agricultures. Most of grandparents are survive with the government's old age allowance and financial support from their children. 72 of 155 respondents (47%) told that their income is just enough for their living costs. On the other hand, 17 grandmothers and 14 mothers told that their income cannot cover all their living costs. 62 of 155 respondents (40%) got some loan with the average of Bath 71,500 per person. Fathers have the highest average of loan which is Bath 197,000 per person. Grandmothers and grandfathers have the average of loan at approximately Bath 43,500 and Bath 60,000 respectively.

For the villagers' information about their health and social activities, it shows that 103 of 155 respondents (67%) are suffering from chronic disease. High blood pressure and high blood cholesterol seem to be the big health problem in this village. 68 of all respondents (44%) report that they do exercise every day. Walking and cycling are their regular exercise. 106 of all respondents (69%) have their own hobbies. For social activities, 127 of all respondents (82%) always go to pray at the temple. 121 of all respondents (78%) report that they normally spend time on morning and

evening chat with their neighbours and that they always attend the village's special events like wedding ceremonies and burial. Surprisingly, 23 elderlies have attended the village's elderly school.

2) Pearson correlation matrix

The two-tailed test is used to consider the correlation. At p-value 0.05, it is found that the respondents' level of happiness has positive correlation with the dummy variable of being married, the dummy variable of being parent, the number of children who are studying, and the dummy variable of whether the correspondent has social interaction. However, it has a negative correlation with the dummy variable of being grandparent and the number of children who are employed. Males are more likely to take the role of the head of the family.

3) Multivariate tests

Table 3. Multivariate tests

Happiness	Expected sign	Grandma		Grandpa		Mom	
		Coef.	p-value	Coef.	p-value	Coef.	p-value
Marital1	n/a	-4.5543	0.197	omitted		omitted	
Marital2	n/a	0.7985	0.306	-0.3077	0.930	-3.257	0.215
Marital3	n/a	1.1459	0.711	-12.4503	0.212	1.5836	0.588
Marital4	n/a	20.6908	0.992	omitted		omitted	
Marital5	n/a	omitted		omitted		omitted	
Incomeex	+	0.8536	0.153	-1.4669	0.411	0.7696	0.268
Numbered	+	0.2243	0.187	-2.4947	0.132	0.334	0.052
Headoffam	-	-1.6428	0.037	5.6521	0.290	-1.4895	0.457
Childstudy	n/a	-0.5295	0.702	14.8314	0.050	-0.5208	0.678
Childnem	-	1.0676	0.644	-2.9222	0.451	-4.3151	0.096
Childem	+	-0.2445	0.387	0.1252	0.923	-1.6117	0.330
Grandchild	n/a	-0.6666	0.367	-9.0813	0.178	-1.1917	0.527
Childveother	n/a	-2.3091	0.225	4.6245	0.653	24.3936	0.990
Childvisit	+	1.9708	0.278	19.6216	0.041	-24.8187	0.990
Disease	-	-1.5512	0.128	8.4381	0.125	-0.3179	0.816
Exercise	+	-0.8926	0.173	18.0838	0.103	-0.3145	0.801
Hobby	+	-0.5542	0.421	-11.6371	0.048	2.3751	0.145
Temple	+	1.1216	0.235	-31.1943	0.117	3.8625	0.048
Socialin	+	0.3222	0.744	18.4351	0.045	0.094	0.942
Elderlysch	+	-1.2505	0.187	5.8437	0.129	2.5327	0.277
Loan_log	-	-0.8407	0.044	4.7097	0.023	-0.591	0.431
Loan	-	4.691306	0.017	-25.383	0.025	6.3046	0.109
Typeofincome	+	-0.4283	0.627	11.89851	0.138	-1.116	0.530
LR statistics		31.41		71.47		36.87	
Log likelihood		-69.1652		-13.3122		-23.0481	
Pseudo R2		0.1851		0.7286		0.4444	
N		52		30		41	

The results of the multivariate test are shown in table 3. For the variables that are able to be predicted their signs, one-tailed test is used. On the other hand, for those that are unable to be predicted their signs, two-tailed test is used. The prediction is based on the results of the interviews. At p-value 0.05, from the three groups of the villagers, only grandmothers are less happy when they have to take the role of the head of the family. Going to pray at the temple influences only mothers' happiness. It increases their happiness. There is the contradictory evidence of the extent to which loan influences happiness. Having a loan makes the grandmothers happier but the grandfathers less happy. However, the greater amount of loan they have leads the grandmothers to be less happy but leads the grandfather to be happier. For the grandfathers, they are happier when their children come to visit them and when they participate in social activities. Interestingly, having hobby makes them less happy.

VI. Conclusion and implication

San Chok Pok is a small village with 230 households. The main road divides the village into two parts. Most of the villagers are farmers and some of them earn extra income from producing local products. The village has become the elderly society. The average age of the villagers is about 58 years. They live with their couple. Most of elderlies finished 4 years of educations but other groups finished 6 years of

education. Parents have one child who is studying. Grandparents' children migrate to other provinces to get jobs when they graduated. They still return to the village to pay their parents a visit. Some of them leave their children with their parents. Some of them also send money to their parents every month. The villagers' main source of income is from their high uncertainty of income like agriculture, daily worker, and financial support from children. Most of elderlies survive on the government's old age allowance and financial support from their children. Half of the villagers report that their income is just enough for their living costs; therefore, they make a loan. Suffering from chronic diseases, especially high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol seem to be the big health problem in this village. This may be due to the evidence that they do less regular exercise. The villagers always have social interactions like having morning and evening chat with their neighbours and attending the village's special events.

This study contributes new evidence to the literature of happiness. There is qualitative evidence that the duty of life as well as marital status and gender influence the interviewees' perspectives on happiness. As a wife and a mother, the happiness of the women is to take care of their family. For men and women who take the role of the head of the family, they work hard with the belief that money is the key factor of their happiness. Fathers and mothers are happy to see their children have a higher education and get a good job. This affirms the traditional Thai belief that having higher education will lead to the prosperity and happiness. Spending time with families also makes fathers and mothers happy. Grandparents are happy when their child's families pay them a visit. Taking care of their grandchild, going to pray at the temple, spending time with the neighbor, attending the elderly school make them less lonely. However, health problems make them less happy. Therefore, they have to do exercises and do some hobbies. Some elderlies earn from their hobbies. Financial difficulty makes the villagers at all ages less happy, especially elderlies who do not receive financial support from their children. Some of the villagers have to borrow money from their neighbors. Some of them have to work hard.

This study also contributes quantitative evidence from the small village to literature on happiness. 65% of the villagers here are quite happy. They have a pleased and delighted feeling. There is evidence that, among grandmothers, grandfathers, and mothers, only the grandmothers are less happy when they have to take the role of the head of the family. This evidence is inconsistent with that of Klasen, Lechtenfeld and Povel (2011). By using the amount of money each household spend in each day as the measure of the consumption (or wealth), Klasen et al. (2011) provide evidence that female-headed households in Burirum, Ubon Rachathani, and Nakhon Phanom are richer than male-headed households. They are also able to resist the shock exposure of uncertainty events as well as male-headed households. This inconsistency may be due to the different contexts of the study. This study provides evidence from the small village in the northern Thailand and participants are classified in the six groups according to their duty of life. On the other hand, Klasen et al.'s (2011) study provides evidence from two provinces in northeastern Thailand and one in central Thailand. Therefore, there may be other

factors, e.g. culture, beliefs, leading to the different evidence.

Thais' happiness seems to be associated with their Buddhist beliefs. Gray (2014) suggests that during the difficult time, Thais, who always follow the Buddhism's five precepts and meditation, are happier than others. This study's findings also highlight that in general, going to pray at the temple influences only the mothers' happiness. It increases their happiness.

In the last quarter of 2015, Thai government injected money into the economy in order to alleviate the economic recession. One million Thai baht was distributed to each village fund. The village fund then lent this money to the villagers. This led to 40% of the villagers who took out a loan. However, taking out a loan influence only grandparents' happiness and there is contradictory evidence between grandmothers and grandfathers. Having a loan makes the grandmothers happier but the grandfathers less happy. On the other hand, the greater amount of loan they have leads the grandmothers to be less happy but leads the grandfathers to be happier. This indicates the different thoughts and attitudes among the elderlies in this village. Most of grandmothers are widow and some of them have to take the role of the head of the family. Therefore, they are happy to get a loan for living. However, a large amount of loan may lead them to worry about the repayment of the loan and turn to be unhappy.

Most of the adults in this village migrated to other provinces to get jobs. Some of them left their child with their parents and pay them a visit during long holidays. Only for grandfathers, they are happier when their children come to visit them. This finding is inconsistent with that of Nanthamongkolchai, Tuntichaivanit, Munsawaengsub and Charupoonphol (2009). They found that family relationship is one of the key factors that influence happiness of elderly females in Rayong.

Only grandfathers are also happier when they participate in social activities, for example going to have a chat with their neighbors and attending the village's special occasions e.g. wedding ceremony. This is different from Nanthamongkolchai et al.'s (2011) finding that social activity participation is one of the crucial factors that influence the success ageing among both elderly females and elderly males in Rayong. Interesting, having hobby makes the grandfathers less happy. This is because some of them earn money from their hobbies e.g. producing local product for sales. The local product they made is, for example, Kheng, which need a lot of effort and energy. This in turn may lead them to suffer from muscle pain.

To make the villagers happier, this study suggests that

- The local governments must pay close attention to the following problems. First, most of elderlies suffer from poverty and health problems. Therefore, there should be action plans to help the elderlies overcome these two problems. Second, to solve the villager's poverty, the local governments may need to deal with the problems like the villagers' lack of their own land and insufficient water supply for agriculture during dry season. There is also a need to help the villagers seek for the markets for local products they have made. In addition, the local governments should monitor

drug use and addition in the village. The village’s waste management issue is the most urgent problem to which the local governments should pay close attention.

- Elderlies should be educated with the village fund’s terms and conditions of a loan. This is to avoid the misunderstanding that they do not have to repay their loans. Importantly, they should be educated about how to make money from their loans. This would help them less worry about the repayments of the debts.
- The local governments should also have religion events, and social events and activities that promote the family relationships and social interactions for people at all ages. These events and activities will give the adults chances to come back to the village to pay their parents a visit.

The limitations of this study are as follows. First, Andrews and Withey’s (1976) seven pictures of happiness are used to measure the villagers’ happiness. Therefore, the validity of the quantitative test depends on the effectiveness of this simple measurement. Second, the villagers may hide their real feelings when they were asked to indicate the extent to which they were happy. This may lead to the invalid findings. Third, there are small number of fathers, sons, and daughters who responded to questionnaires. Therefore, the test for factors that influence the happiness of these three groups of the people is unable to do.

Future studies should further explore the following focuses. First, the study of self-esteem among the elderlies in this village may be of interest. This is to investigate the association between a level of self-esteem and a level of happiness. Second, this study’s findings indicate that elderly females and elderly males in this village have different thoughts and attitudes. Therefore, there is a need to find the explanation for the reason of these differences. Third, the study of happiness across villages is of interest, especially the villages where have extremely different circumstances. This is to identify other factors at a community level that may influence the villagers’ happiness.

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About Authors:



The narrow definition of happiness may help the policymakers see happiness thoroughly. It will help the policymakers to focus more on what Thais really want rather than what they should want.



The duty of life is the key factor that leads the interviewees to the different perspectives on happiness.



Most of the adults in this village migrated to other provinces to get jobs. Some of them left their child with their parents and pay them a visit during long holidays. Only for grandfathers, they are happier when their children come to visit them.