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## OPINIONS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE 3 SOUTHERN BORDER PROVINCES ON THEIR LIVELIHOODS IN THE CURRENT SITUATION

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**Abstract:** The objectives of this research are to study opinions on the lifestyles and participation of children and youth and to compare the opinions of children and youth with various matters in their schools, homes and communities. The sample used in this research is comprised of 2,669 children and youth studying at the high school level in the three southern border provinces Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. The data were collected by questionnaire. The statistics used in data analysis were descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The levels of opinion on livelihoods and participation in matters of school, home and community were analyzed by relationships with personal factors of children and youth by category analysis. The research results found that most of the children and youth in the sample were female Muslim students from a school in Narathiwat Province. While studying, they lived at home with their father or mother. The predominant family characteristic was single or nuclear family. They agreed on their opinion levels concerning a good school environment, good teaching and learning, freedom of expression and rights and good

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home and community conditions. The relationships between personal factors and the level of opinions in four characteristics were that accommodations for children and youth while studying had associated to their opinions in all characteristics. The opinions of children and youth who stayed with parents were more in agreement than with others who did not stay with their parents. In addition, gender and family characteristics also were related opinions about good homes and community conditions.

**Keywords:** southern border provinces; juvenile participation and rights.

**2010 AMS Subject Classification:** 62P25.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The insurgency in the southern border provinces has continued to occur from 2004 until the present. There has been a large loss of life and property which affects the lives of children and young people in education, rights and society within the family and community. The areas of the highest levels of insurgency were in Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and some districts in Songkhla and Satun Provinces. Factors that contributed to unrest were ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic and ideological differences between Siam and Pattani and abuse of power in certain groups of states [1] Conflict and insurgency within the area occurred in various forms such as the destruction of government property, bombing and shooting government officers and even state school teachers, etc. Moreover, the problem of violence in the southern border provinces is still mainly due to the facts that children and youth in the area have not received a high quality education, their lack knowledge of Thai language in communication and an education system that does not instill in the local people the love and respect for the wealth of the community, such as schools, health centers and roads, as well as of other people who are valuable to the community.

According to government must support education, both ordinary and religious-based systems, in order to build good relations between states and communities in the three southern border provinces [2]. In the same way, [3] suggested guidelines for the development of the government's work in solving problems of Thai-Muslim youth regarding the development of educational personnel. This research called for supporting private Islamic schools that have the ordinary Thai

national curriculum in teaching and learning organization with cancellation of learning or dismissal of students for misconduct. Career development at the community level and raising children should emphasize growing in the correct way of Islam for the future. These studies show support for the education of children and young people. Promoting coexistence between different cultures in the 3 southern border provinces includes promoting coexistence within the family and community.

For this reason, the researcher realized the importance of child and youth development in the 3 southern border provinces by asking opinions and attitudes of children and youth in various areas such as the general condition of the school, teaching and learning, rights of children and youth and the environment within the home and community to guide the development of children and youth in the 3 southern border provinces and create a peaceful society. Therefore, the aim of this research is to study opinions on the lifestyle and participation and rights of children and youth and to compare the opinions of children and youth with various matters in schools, homes and communities.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### Data collection and Research Instrument

The sample used in this research is of 2,669 youths studying at a high school level in the three southernmost provinces. The research instrument was a questionnaire consisting of 3 parts Part 1: Preliminary information (9 items); Part 2: Opinions on life participation and rights of children and youth in the area totaling 40 items, divided into various areas, namely good school environments (11 items), good teaching and learning (13 items), freedom of expression and rights of children and youth (9 items), and good home and community conditions (7 items). The questionnaire used a rating scale. There are three levels, i.e. strongly agree, agree and disagree; and Part 3: general recommendations.

### Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the statistical package IBM SPSS statistics version 23. The statistics used for data analysis of this research were descriptive statistics to analyze general information

such as frequency values (Frequency), percentage (Percentage) and inferential statistics to test research hypotheses using the Chi-Square Test. If an expected number is less than 5 over 20 % of all cells, Monte Carlo Significance is used to indicate Asymptotic Significance. The variables used in this study consisted of personal factor variables namely gender, religion, school type, education level, place to stay while studying, parent status and family characteristics. The outcome variables were the level of opinions of children and youth in the southern border provinces on livelihoods and participation consisted of good school environment, good teaching and learning, freedom of expression and rights of children and youth and good home community condition.

### **3. RESULTS**

General information for 2669 children and youth studying in high school in the three southern border provinces (Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat) are presented in the Table 1. There are missing data in some of the variables. These missing data were not analyzed in this study.

From Table 1, there are 981 students from schools in Pattani Province, 656 in Yala Province and 1,032 in Narathiwat Province. Overall, most of the children and youth are Muslim female 2,593 (97.2 %), and they study in private religious schools, 2,483 (89.7%). The children and youth in Pattani Province and Narathiwat Province reside at home with their parents while studying, 698 (71.5%) and 701 (68.3%) respectively. Most of the children and youth in Yala Province stayed in dormitories outside school, more than was the case for the other provinces. Most of the parents lived together in Yala Province, representing 2,220 (83.5 %) and with single parent families of 2,186 (82.6%) predominating in Pattani Province and Narathiwat Province.

The opinions of children and youth in the southern border provinces on livelihoods and their participation were divided into four characteristics, namely good school environments, good teaching and learning, freedom of expression and rights and good home and community conditions. These four characteristics are analyzed as shown in Figure 1.

## OPINIONS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH ON THEIR LIVELIHOODS

**Table 1** General information of children and youth

Personal factor	Province of school location: Number (%)			
	Pattani (n=981)	Yala (n=656)	Narathiwat (n=1,032)	Total (2,669)
Gender				
Male	344 (35.1)	266 (40.6)	488 (47.7)	1,098 (41.3)
Female	636 (64.9)	389 (59.4)	534 (52.3)	1,559 (58.7)
Religion				
Islamic	980 (99.9)	354 (99.4)	959 (92.9)	2,593 (97.2)
Other	1 (.1)	2 (.6)	73 (7.0)	76 (2.8)
School type				
Private Religious	910 (92.8)	795 (99.4)	921 (89.2)	2,483 (89.7)
Public ordinary	71 (7.2)	120 (0.6)	111 (10.8)	186 (10.3)
Education level				
Secondary Education Year 4	353 (36.3)	256 (39.1)	264 (25.9)	873 (33.0)
Secondary Education Year 5	350 (36.0)	197 (30.1)	321 (31.5)	868 (32.8)
Secondary Education Year 6	270 (27.7)	202 (30.8)	433 (42.3)	905 (34.2)
Places to stay (residence) while studying				
Home with father or mother	698 (71.5)	396 (60.6)	701 (68.3)	1,795 (67.6)
Home with other people	41 (4.2)	24 (3.7)	39 (3.8)	104 (3.9)
Dormitory in school	206 (21.1)	163 (24.9)	199 (19.4)	568 (21.4)
Dormitory outside school	11 (1.1)	48 (7.3)	24 (2.3)	83 (3.1)
House for rent	20 (2.1)	23 (3.5)	64 (6.2)	107 (4.0)
Parental status				
Stay together	825 (84.5)	552 (84.3)	843 (82.0)	2,220 (83.5)
Separated	23 (2.4)	22 (3.3)	70 (6.8)	115 (4.3)
Divorced	49 (5.0)	27 (4.1)	35 (3.4)	111 (4.2)
Father or mother died	79 (8.1)	54 (8.3)	80 (7.8)	213 (8.0)
Family characteristics				
Single	770 (79.1)	541 (83.1)	875 (85.5)	2,186 (82.6)
Extended	150 (15.4)	85 (13.1)	112 (11.0)	347 (13.1)
Skipped generation	54 (5.5)	25 (3.8)	36 (3.5)	115 (4.3)

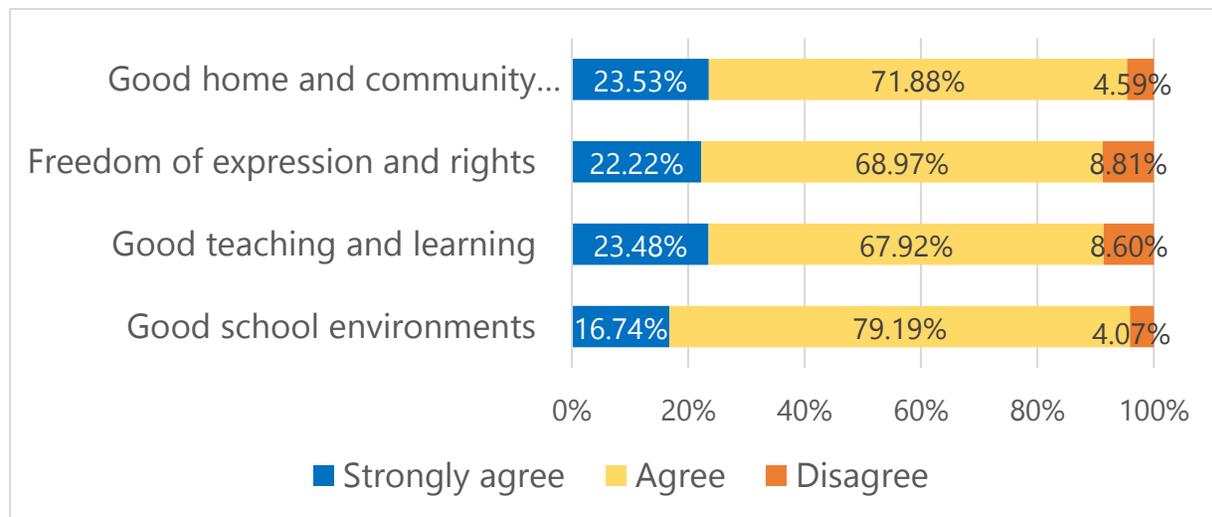
**Figure 1** The opinions levels of children and youth on livelihoods and their participation

Figure 1 shows the level of opinions of children and young people on livelihoods and their participation. Most of them (79.19%) generally agree with good school environments. The majority of the schools have people who are role models for children and young people. The school controls its students with strict discipline. Children and young people can express their opinions on subject matters in the school and are taught listening skills, etc. For good teaching and learning, children and young people (67.92%) also agree. Mostly, opinions are taught according to need or ability. There was development of computer technology skills, career skills, business skills, writing skills and listening skills. In addition, children and youth have opportunities to participate in classroom activities such as reading books with friends in class and exchanging opportunities to learn from different cultures and religions, etc. The majority of children and young people (68.97%) agree with the freedom of expression and rights. Most of them have the opinion that children and youth have opportunities to participate in decision-making, organizing activities or solving problems. They can distinguish informational facts from social media, and they are motivated to achieve life goals and other forms of achievement. Children and young people are protected from all forms of harassment and violence. In addition, children and young people (71.88%) agree that good home and community conditions are supportive of their educational achievement. Most of them have the opinion that children and young people can express their

## OPINIONS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH ON THEIR LIVELIHOODS

opinions about things at home. There was no list of arguments and violence between the people in the household. There are people who are role models for children and young people and good neighbors or acquaintances in the same community who are culturally diverse, such as from different religions. Children and youth could be involved in solving problems in the community. Since this study examined the associate between opinions of the four aspects of children and youth and their personal factors. These factors were tested as shown the results in Table 2.

**Table 2** The associate between the four opinions of children and youth with personal factors

Personal factors	Opinions: Chi-square ( <i>p</i> value)			
	Good school environments	Good teaching and learning	Freedom of expression and rights	Good home and community conditions
Gender	2.194 (.334)	2.885 (.236)	4.057 (.132)	18.844 (0)*
Education level	3.374 (.497)	7.957 (.093)	14.577 (.006)*	3.692 (.449)
Place to stay (residence) while studying	38.584 (0)*	14.578 (.045)*	19.177 (.014)*	21.448 (.006)*
Parental status	10.619 (.388)	5.265 (.873)	13.155 (.215)	17.931 (.056)
Family characteristics	4.363 (.359)	7.773 (.1)	1.487 (.829)	10.053 (.040)*

\*significant at 0.05

The results of the associate between personal factors and the opinions of children and youth on the good school environments showed that gender (Chi-square = 2.194, *p* value = .334 (education level (Chi-square = 3.374, *p* value = .497( parental status (Chi-square = 10.619, *p* value = .388) Family characteristics (Chi-square = 4.363, *p* value = .359) were not associated to the opinions of children and youth on good school environments at a statistical significance level of .05 However, having a place to stay while studying had a statistically significant relationship with their opinions about good school environments (Chi-square = 38.584, *p* value = .000). For the results of associate between personal factors and opinion levels of children and youth on good teaching and learning, it was found that gender (Chi-square = 2.885, *p* value = .236), education level (Chi-square = 7.957, *p* value = .093), parental status (Chi-square = 5.265, *p* value = .873) and family characteristics

(Chi-square = 7.773,  $p$  value = .100) had no effect on the level of opinions of children and youth on good teaching and learning at a statistical significance level of .05. However, the place to stay while studying was associated to the opinion levels of children and youth on good teaching and learning at a statistical significance level of .05 (Chi-square = 14.578,  $p$  value = .045). The associate between personal factors and opinion levels of children and youth on the freedom of expression and rights, it was found that gender (Chi-square = 4.057,  $p$  value=0.132) parental status (Chi-square = 13.155,  $p$  value = .215) and family characteristics (Chi-square = 1.487,  $p$  value = .829) had no effect on the opinions concerning freedom of expression and rights at a statistical significance level of .05. However, education level was associated to the opinions of children and youth at a statistical significance level of .05 (Chi-square = 14.577,  $p$  value = .006). In addition, the place they stayed while studying was related to the opinions of children and youth on the freedom of expression and rights at a statistical significance level of .05 (Chi-square = 19.177,  $p$  value .014).The analysis of the associate between personal factors and the level of opinion of children and youth on good home and community conditions indicated that education level (Chi-square = 3.692,  $p$  value = .449) and parental status (Chi-square = 17.931,  $p$  value = .056) had no effect on the opinion level of children and youth on good home and community conditions at a statistical significance level of .05. However, gender (Chi-square = 18.844,  $P$  value = .000), places they stayed while studying (Chi-square = 21.448,  $p$  value = .006) and family characteristics of children and youth (Chi-square = 10.053,  $p$  value = .040) were associated to the opinions of children and youth on good homes and community conditions at a statistical significance level of .05.

From the analysis overall of associate between the four aspects of children and youth and personal factor were found that place to stay while studying had associated with opinion of all the four aspects as shown in Figure 2.

## OPINIONS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH ON THEIR LIVELIHOODS

**Figure 2** The associate between the level of four aspects of children and youth and the place to stay while studying

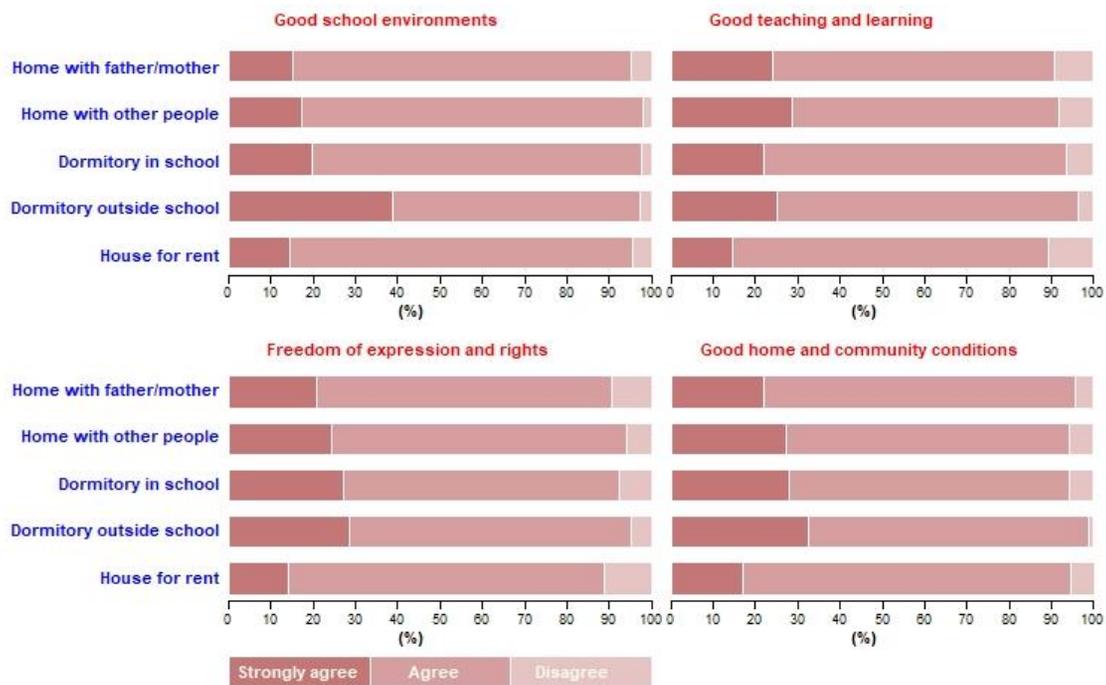


Figure 2 were shown that the children and youth who stayed with their father or mother, stayed with the other people, stayed in dormitories in school or in dormitories outside school and stayed in house for rent had different level of opinions. The most children and youth who stayed with their father or mother agree on the good school environment, good teaching and learning, the freedom of expression and rights and good home and good community condition whereas the children and youth who stayed with other people, in school dormitories or in dormitories outside schools were in general agreement. In addition, the children and youth with an education level in secondary education year 4, secondary education year 5 and secondary education year 6 have different levels of opinions on the freedom of expression and rights. The children and youth studying secondary education year 5 (72.35%) had more opinions on the freedom of expression and rights than other education levels. For levels of opinion on good home and community conditions, it can be said that males and females have different levels of opinion on good home

and community conditions. Males tended to express less agreement, but females strongly agreed on good home and community conditions. Moreover, the children and youth who were with a single or nuclear family agreed more than for other family characteristics. Those in homes which skipped generations of the family or with extended families agreed on the importance of good home and community conditions.

#### **4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The results of the study of children and youth in the three southern border provinces found that most of the children and youths adhered to Islam. The children and youth studied at the high school levels 4, 5 and 6 in equal proportion. Most children and youth stayed at home with their parents, and the parents lived together as a single, nuclear family.

Most children and youth agreed very strongly on the good school environment. Children and youth could express their opinions on things in the schools. The schools had good role models for children and young people. Schools controlled students through discipline. For good teaching and learning, children and youth generally agreed. They were taught according to their needs. They developed computer skills, occupational skills, writing skills and listening skills. Children and young people had the opportunity to participate in classroom activities and to learn about a variety of cultures and religions. In addition, children and youth had moderate opinions on the livelihoods and participation of children and youth in their homes and communities. Most children and young people felt they had an opportunity to express their opinions about the conditions in their home and community. They felt they were able to participate in decision-making to solve problems in the community. Children and young people were protected from ridicule and all forms of violence. Their homes, communities and schools were safe to live in.

For the results of testing the associate between personal factors and the level of opinion of children and youth on livelihoods and participation in four characteristics, it was found that the majority of children and young people living in their parents' homes were associated to opinions on good school environments, good teaching and learning, the freedom of expression and rights, and good home and community conditions. In addition, the children and youth who studied in secondary education years 4, 5 or 6 had different opinions on the freedom of expression and rights.

Secondary year 5 students more strongly agreed on the importance of a good home and community conditions than did secondary education year 4 and 6. The majority of children and youth who lived in single, nuclear families were more in agreement on the importance of a good home and community conditions.

From the study results, it can be seen that places where they resided while studying is associated to the opinions of children and youth in the current situation. That is to say, children and youth who live with their parents will enjoy their well-being. Children develop good thinking, and they are assertive and reasonable. The nature of the family is close. There is love and sacrifice of parents for children [4]. Children and youth are instilled with good role model characteristics by their parents, and they understand life and are able to adapt to today's society. This finding is consistent with the research of [5, 6]. Therefore, family factors and family relationships are significant factors that are important for the development of children and youth, both physically and mentally. Children learn to follow and practice discipline that will continue to be the cornerstone of society and the nation.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

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#### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

The author(s) declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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