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THE STATUS, ROLES AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF ELDERLY THAIS

By

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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation : The Status, Roles and Quality of Life of Elderly Thais

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The objectives of this study were as follows: to study the change of status and roles of elderly Thais and compare the status and roles of the elderly living in urban and in rural areas, to study factors influencing the roles of the elderly at the family and the community level, and to study the impact of the status and roles affecting quality of life of the elderly.

The quantitative study came from the collected secondary data and survey. The sample group in this study consisted of the elderly who were 60 years and older that could be representative of the elderly living in Khon Kaen and Mahasarahkam Provinces. In total, 640 elderly got involved in the survey; 320 elderly were from urban areas and another 320 of them were from rural areas. Sampling techniques were simple sampling and multi-stage sampling. Data analysis was performed by frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation with the method of multi-variate analysis, like multiple regression and path analysis. The purpose was to analyze the factors affecting the roles of the elderly in family and community level and the impact of the status and roles affecting the quality of life of the elderly.

The result of the study found that the status and roles of the elderly have not changed from the past to present. Specifically, for the status and roles in family, most elderly still had high family status and roles such as work status, owner of dwelling status and household heads status. From past to present the change in the status and

roles of the elderly is that the increasing trend of a one-person household head will increase, and the rate of single-head household head of the elderly females will be higher than that of elderly males.

The roles of elderly Thais have changed from the past to present. The role involving political issues has changed. As for the political role and role of transmission of knowledge and experience, most of the elderly gave more importance in taking part in local and national politics, such as voting or being elected to a political position, like a senator. There was an increase in the role of transmission of knowledge and experiences and the role of doing good for society.

The study of comparing the status and roles of the elderly in urban and rural areas found that most of the elderly were females with marital status. The rural elderly had higher marital status, householder status, work status and family status, especially for advisory role and role of taking care of children than the urban elderly. For economic status of the elderly both in urban and rural areas, these elderly Thais did not have enough income to cover their expenses.

Concerning the status in their society, it was found that most of the elderly still had work status in the community's development and as members of a club for elderly and public participation, in community committees. The rural elderly had higher status than the urban elderly. For the roles of the elderly in community in urban and rural areas, the rural elderly had more advisory role, role of transmission of professional knowledge and role of religion and tradition than the urban elderly. But the urban elderly had more role of doing good for society than the rural elderly. Both the urban and rural elderly gave importance to political roles.

The study of factors influencing the roles of the elderly at the family and the community level found that all of the independent variables can explain the variance of dependent variables or the roles of the elderly in the family and the community by 46%, 20% respectively. It was found that age, marital status, work, living with

children, residence and information had significantly affected the roles of the elderly in the family ($p<0.05$ or $p<0.01$). The variables which had significant relation to the roles of the elderly in community ($p<0.05$ or $p<0.01$) are sex, age, work, residence, information.

The result of the study on the impact of the status and roles affecting the quality of life of the elderly found that the direct effect of the independent variables is significantly ($p<0.05$ and $p<0.01$) related to quality of life in terms of as sex, income, residence, health, the role of the elderly in family and in community, family relationships, and participation in social activities.

This research suggests that the government should promote participation in community activities to the elderly so they could be of benefit to helping and developing their society, and all of that would bring about higher status and roles and better quality of life for the elderly. Moreover, the government and private sector should develop and promote the local wisdom of the elderly in all areas to get more income and jobs for the elderly which would improve their quality of life. Further study should concentrate on the local wisdom of the elderly in relation to the quality of life or the effect of civil society in relation to the quality of life of the elderly.

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