

Henpeckedness in Relationships of Students of a University of Thailand

Kittisak Jernsittiparsert and Warrawat Theansri
Faculty of Political Science, College of Government,
Rangsit University, Lak Hok, Thailand

Abstract: This study intended to measure and compare the degrees of henpeckedness in relationships of students of a Thai university by individual factors, namely, field of study, birthplace, income and family role model and examine the relationship between the henpeckedness and flirtatiousness of the students by collecting data from 400 male undergraduates enrolled in the first semester of academic years 2016 with a questionnaire. Data analysis utilised statistics of frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-statistic, one-way ANOVA, Tukey's pairwise comparison and Pearson's correlation coefficient at a significance level of 0.05. The students were found to be henpecked at a moderate level. Students with different family role models and incomes had different degrees of henpeckedness in relationships whereas different fields of study and birthplaces did not affect henpeckedness.

Key words: University students, family role model, flirtatiousness, henpeckedness, wife-worshipping, incantation

INTRODUCTION

"Peaceable as they are Thais are unafraid of ghosts but of their wives", a message was sent by a viewer to Quote of the Day segment of Keb Tok tv programme on 31 October 2008. It was essentially a reflection of Thai society where most Thai men are "afraid of their wives" (Wright, 1989; Wongsurawat, 2006) to an extent that a former national leader was teased by the media as the "President of Tamed Husbands Association" while an ex-prime minister also the former's brother-in-law, admitted in acquiescence that "everything must be backed by the wife" without her "all my achievements would never have gone even halfway through" so he never minded being called "a henpecked husband".

Empirical data highlighting this culture of power interaction between Thai family members, namely the husband and the wife, apart from an analysis through a proverb "elephant front legs-hind legs" (Jernsittiparsert, 2016) commonly exist in forms of contemporary codes of culture such as a talking picture "Glua mear" (lit. afraid of wife) written by Luang Anurak Rattakarn, premiered in 1963 (later rebooted in 1971 with Khun Wichitmatra (Sanga Kanchanakphan as the director) "wife-worshipping incantation" which whilst its origin is vague has been adapted into music, sang by at least three groups such as Phloen Phromdaen, Thai National Artist in Performing Art (country music) of 2012,

Chokdee Dandumnern under the title "wife worshipping chant" and most recently, the Jan under "wife worshipping 2017" (Fig. 1 and 2).

The reasoning behind such submissiveness mainly can be rooted back to the very nature of Thai families in the past as they were not only extended but also matrilocal that is the males tend to move into the abode of their wives after marriage in order to carry on the female's family names. Being amongst relatives such way of life allowed the wives to be impervious to self-assertion of the husbands as the elders would back and assist them whenever they want. Along with higher roles in economic production and contribution under a system where men were liable to 6 months of corvee labour a year since the Ayutthaya era, the wives thus became the ones overseeing the household affairs and welfare being the superior power over the husbands or equally thereof at the least (Jernsittiparsert, 2016).

Then came economic and societal changes, dated back as early as the issuance of the 1st national economic and social development plan (1961-1966) have greatly influenced Thai families (Buarapha *et al.*, 2007) leading to narratives here and there that "Thai families now a days have changed from what they once were" (Podhisita, 2009). For instance, the significance of marriage is being challenged, new forms of cohabitation have emerged, notably among students of urban universities who are allowed to live away from their parent's watchful



Fig. 1: “Glue mear” talking picture

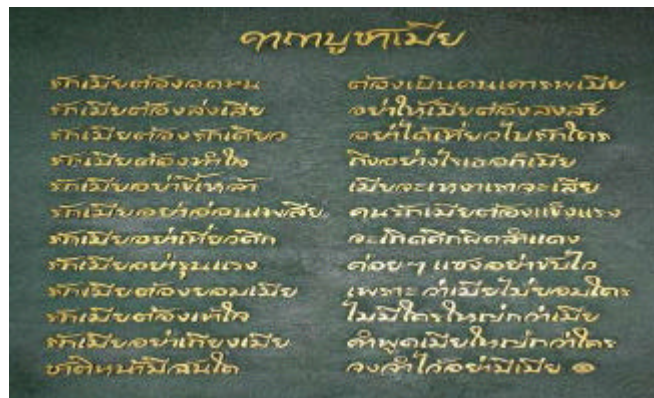


Fig. 2: Wife worshipping chant

eyes and able to act to the freedom of their own will (Podhisita, 2009) like engaging in love and/or having sex (Promma *et al.*, 2013).

As is the case with the body of knowledge on transformation of Thai family and household structure on the whole which are still vague and unclear on many aspects from lack of supporting reasoning and habitual reliance on narratives without collecting substantiating data, quantitative studies and evaluation have become necessities (Podhisita, 2009). Understanding “henpeckedness” under contexts of relationships among university students at present is thus academically significant to an extent as a culture of power interaction of Thai society’s new form of cohabitation which must be quantitatively observed and analysed to a tangible degree.

Objectives: This research intended to measure and compare the degrees of henpeckedness in

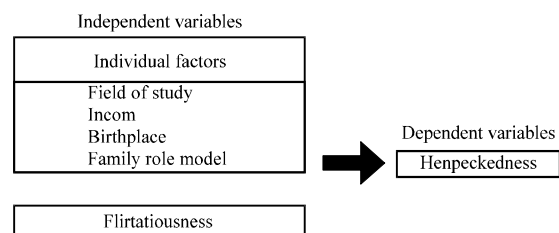


Fig. 3: Individual factors of independents and dependent variables

relationships of students of a Thai university by individual factors, namely, field of study, birthplace, income and family role model and examine the relationship between the degrees of henpeckedness and flirtatiousness of the students.

Conceptual framework: Individual factors of independents and dependent variables (Fig. 3).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Population and sample: The population herein comprises of male undergraduates enrolled in the first semester of 2016 academic year of a private university in Patum Thani Province, Thailand, employing Cochran’s infinite population formula to calculate sample size for a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, resulting in a population of 400.

Utilising probability sampling of multistage sampling, primarily clustering fields of study into Health-science, technology-engineering, humanities-social sciences, economics-business and Art-design then randomly selected two faculties from each discipline cluster, a total of 10, namely, medicine, science, engineering, aviation, liberal arts, political science, accountancy, tourism and hospitality, digital art and music, respectively. Sample proportion was determined at 40 per faculty, a total of 400 samples.

Data collection: The researchers began collecting data in November, 2016 using a questionnaire derived from literature reviewing, composed of 3 sections: four articles of individual factors; field of study, birthplace, income and family role model; five articles of flirtatiousness adapted from “5 traits of flirts” by Temwuttikarn (2013) namely, stirred up at first sight of pretty girls being singly but not always single, habitually saying love words being casanova of casanovas and dating girls is rewards of life.

Twelves articles of henpeckedness, tailored for the relationship contexts of modern thai university students from “wife-worshipping chant”, namely, patience is a good boyfriend’s quality, telling girlfriend before buying new shoes, always getting permission before going out with friends not commenting on photos of girls on facebook, keeping silent while being scolded is always a good strategy, quickly comply when being called home, never rush a woman while shopping, clearly letting girlfriend know the time you will be back, walking separately is acceptable for your girlfriend*, start eating first is acceptable*, siding with girlfriend, whatever the case and wishing you were single sometimes (denotes negative options).

Data analysis: The researchers used statistical software for data analysis with statistics of frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-statistic, one-way ANOVA, Tukey’s pairwise comparison and Pearson’s correlation coefficient at significance level of 0.05 and interpreted the correlation coefficients by Hinkle *et al.* (2003).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Individual factors: A sample group comprised of male students from 5 fields of study, 80 per field, mostly were

from Bangkok and vicinity (28.8%) had monthly average incomes of 10,000-14,999 baht (37.8%) and non-henpecked father as role model (61.5%).

Flirtatiousness of university students: In overall, flirtatiousness of the university students was at a moderate level (mean = 3.47). By response options, students who got stirred up at first sight of pretty girls (mean = 3.95) and thought dating girls is rewards of life (mean = 3.57) were high in total while being casanova of casanovas (mean = 3.42) being singly but not always single (mean = 3.24) and habitually saying love words (mean = 3.17) were moderate.

Henpeckedness of university students: In overall, henpeckedness of the university students was at a moderate level (mean = 3.36). By response options, most students thought that patience is a quality of good boyfriend (mean = 4.18) followed by never rush a woman while shopping (mean = 3.78), keeping silent while being scolded is always a good strategy (mean = 3.69) and always getting permission before going out with friends (mean = 3.54), respectively. The option siding with girlfriend whatever the case was the lowest pick (mean = 2.63).

Comparison of henpeckedness of university students by individual factors

Field of study: Comparison of henpeckedness of the university students by field of study with one-way ANOVA showed no significant differences in henpeckedness between groups (Table 1).

Birthplace: Comparison of henpeckedness of the university students by birthplace with one-way ANOVA showed no significant differences in henpeckedness between groups (Table 2).

Income: Comparison of henpeckedness of the university students by income with one-way ANOVA revealed differences in henpeckedness between different groups of

Table 1: Comparison of henpeckedness of university students by field of study

Field of study	Number	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Health-Science	80	3.42	0.42	2.131	0.076
Technology-Engineering	80	3.41	0.40		
Humanities-Social sciences	80	3.36	0.42		
Economics-Business	80	3.32	0.37		
Art-Design	80	3.27	0.35		

Table 2: Comparison of henpeckedness of university students by birthplace

Birthplace	Number	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Bangkok and vicinity	115	3.34	0.45	0.591	0.669
North	62	3.40	0.37		
Northeast	59	3.30	0.38		
Central	102	3.35	0.40		
South	62	3.39	0.42		

Table 3: Comparison of henpeckedness of university students by income

Incomes	Number	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Lower than 10,000 Baht	42	3.15	0.41	3.619	0.003**
10,000-14,999 Baht	151	3.37	0.38		
15,000-19,999 Baht	135	3.35	0.37		
20,000-24,999 Baht	38	3.40	0.33		
25,000-29,999 Baht	25	3.52	0.35		
Over 30,000 Baht	9	3.51	0.79		

**0.01

Table 4: Pairwise comparison of henpeckedness of university students by income

Mean	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.15	-	0.021*	0.055	0.050*	0.003**	0.131
3.37	-	-	0.998	0.996	0.438	0.899
3.35	-	-	-	0.937	0.308	0.837
3.40	-	-	-	-	0.838	0.978
3.52	-	-	-	-	-	1.000
3.51	-	-	-	-	-	-

*0.05; **0.01

Table 5: Comparison of henpeckedness of university students by family role model

Family role model	Number	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Henpecked fathers	154	3.41	0.36	2.374	0.018*
Non-henpecked fathers	246	3.32	0.41	-	-

*0.05

incomes (Table 3). Using Tukey's pairwise comparison, students with average incomes lower than 10,000 baht (mean = 3.15) had lower degrees of henpeckedness than those with average incomes of 10,000-14,999 baht (mean = 3.37) 20,000-24,999 baht (mean = 3.40) and 25,000-29,999 baht (mean = 3.52), respectively (Table 4).

Family role model: Comparison of henpeckedness of the university students by family role model with t-statistic revealed differences in henpeckedness between different groups of family role models; students whose fathers were henpecked (mean = 3.41) had higher degrees of henpeckedness than those with non-henpecked fathers (mean = 3.32) (Table 5).

Relationship testing between henpeckedness and flirtatiousness of university students: Analysis of correlation coefficient between henpeckedness and flirtatiousness of university students by Pearson's showed a weak positive relationship (correlation coefficient = 0.357) (Table 6).

Not only the findings suggested that the university students in any field of study, coming from any region, all had relative degrees of henpeckedness this research also discovered a trend that could possibly answer at least three crucial questions in the society.

Firstly, the comparison of henpeckedness of the university students by income did not only pointed out that students having average monthly incomes lower than 10,000 baht showed less extent of henpeckedness than 3 from 5 groups of those who had higher average monthly incomes in a statistically significant manner. It also

Table 6: Relationship between henpeckedness and flirtatiousness of university students

Variables	Correlation coefficient	p-value	Strength of correlation
Flirtatiousness	0.357	0.001**	Weak

**0.01

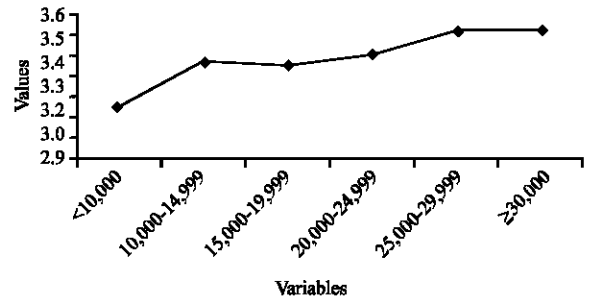


Fig. 4: Trend of Henpeckedness of University students by income

revealed a trend showing the degree of henpeckedness increased with higher average incomes from a mean of 3.15 for students having average monthly incomes <10,000 baht to a 3.51 for students having average monthly incomes over 30,000 baht. This could lead to an assumption that economic factors are related to henpeckedness. The wealthier one gets, the more henpeckedness follows, like a shadow (Fig. 4).

Secondly, the result showing students whose fathers were henpecked have a tendency to be more henpecked than those with non-henpecked fathers substantiated the concept of positive behavioural influence of a father to his child in terms of manhood (Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2016) and under male-female relationship in a form of family, corresponding to Goldberg and Carlson (2014). Therefore, this showed that intergeneration transmission of culture of power interaction between cohabiters of traditional and modern forms in Thai society can be maintained as is.

Lastly, the result presenting a positive relationship between degrees of flirtatiousness and henpeckedness of the university students can answer certain questions that keep emerging in Thai society such as "are those scared of wives actually philandering?"

"Is it true that flirty men are afraid of their wives?" (Kawpoon unambiguously with quantitative data that these hypotheses correspond to the reality or at least in the case of Thai university students).

CONCLUSION

The relationship test revealed a weak positive correlation between the degrees of flirtatiousness and henpeckedness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Nevertheless, since this research gathered only cross-sectional data of Thai university students enrolled in the first semester of 2016 academic year, not time-series data of henpeckedness of university students. Not to mention Thai society on the whole while the researcher has incorporated family role models as a variable to represent an element of intergenerational cultural transmission, it still fails to reflect the “transitions” of a culture being critically questioned by Podhisita (2009, 2011) solidly to a satisfactory extent.

Due to characteristic limitation, the data as far as the researcher seen have never been found to be systemically compiled in any form of quantitative data. A study and comparison using household as base unit to represent data for each generation (e.g., grandfather, father, son) might be the best possible concept for the near future to expand existing body of knowledge by revealing the changing trend between generations.

REFERENCES

- Buarapha, H., K. Weeranathanaphan, C. Mina, T. Mungthaneer and J. Tanwattanakul *et al.*, 2007. Influence of changes in economy, society, cultures and families on teenage relationships: Case study of a Khon Kaen Village. Master Thesis, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand.
- Goldberg, J.S. and M.J. Carlson, 2014. Parent's relationship quality and children's behavior in stable married and cohabiting families. *J. Marriage Family*, 76: 762-777.
- Hinkle, D.E., W. Wiersma and S.G. Jurs, 2003. *Applied Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, Massachusetts, ISBN: 9780618124053, Pages: 756.
- Jermittiparsert, K., 2016. Culture of elephant front legs-hind legs: a debate on the actuality of sexual politics in Thai society. *Soc. Sci.*, 11: 20-28.
- Podhisita, C., 2009. What has Happened to Families?. In: *Population and Society 2009: Thai Families in the Social and Demographic Transitions*, Podhisita, C. and S. Thaweesi (Eds.). Mahidol University, Salaya, Thailand, pp: 1-15.
- Podhisita, C., 2011. Thai Family and Household Changes: What We Don't Know?. In: *Population and Society 2011: Thailand's Population in Transition: A Turning Point for Thai Society*, Punpuing, S. and M. Sunpuwan (Eds.). Mahidol University, Salaya, Thailand, pp: 23-41.
- Promma, N., J. Suphab, K. Chamroonsawasdi, P. Taechabunsermsak and S. Tansakul, 2013. Factors predict intentions to have premarital sexual amongst freshman college male students. *Naresuan Phayao J.*, 6: 157-167.
- Temwuttikarn, V., 2013. 5 tips stop firties. *Secret*, 6: 84-85.
- Wongsurawat, K., 2006. *Men are the Forelegs, Women are the Hind Legs of Elephants*. Matichon Public Company Limited Media Company, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Wright, M., 1989. Feminism or goddess worshipping. *Silapawattanatham*, 10: 88-91.