

# Integration of Buddhist Doctrines to Promote and Develop Core Values of Third Grade Primary School Students of Wat Sukantharam School in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province, Thailand

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## ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were: 1) to study the results of integration of Buddhist doctrines to promote and develop the core value of the primary school students before and after participating in the activities for cultivating the core value; 2) to compare the levels of the core value of the students at Wat Sukantharam School in Talo Sub-district, Wang Noi District, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand, classified by the samples' personal factors (gender, family status and parental occupation). This study is Quasi Experimental Research carried out with 32 students in the mentioned school based on Purposive Sampling. The tools used in data collection were the questionnaire and in-depth interview form. The statistics used in quantitative data analysis included: Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test and f-test while that of qualitative research obtained from the key informants: school administrators, teachers and student parents is analyzed and synthesized based on descriptive analysis. The research results reveal that (1) the levels of the core values of the students before ( $\bar{x} = 4.55$ , S.D.= 0.210) and after activity participation ( $\bar{x} = 2.21$ , S.D.= 0.581) were statistically different with the significance level of .05. (2) The comparative results of the levels of core value of the students suggest that the students with differences in studied personal factors (gender, family status and parental occupations) have indifferent core values both in overall and aspect perspectives with the statistical significance level of .05. The research results suggests that Thai educational institutions should set a policy to promote inclusive participation of all sectors such as family institutions (parents), temples (religion), schools (educational personnel) or government agencies responsible for the service area take part in the development of student core values through systems and mechanisms that can conduct a systematic measurement and evaluation.

## Keywords

Core value; Buddhist doctrines; Primary school, Thailand

## Introduction

'Values' are behaviors of people expressing their identity in society [1] and most of them are desirable social behavior. For example, in Sri Lanka, the way of life of its citizens is associated with Theravada Buddhist culture. Buddhist values are promoted through teaching, learning and organizing activities [2]. The core values of Sri Lankan people are humility, respect for the seniors, honesty and responsibility for oneself and others and self-sufficiency life [3]. In Finland, the country with the least corruption for many years [4], the values of the people are linked between morality, ethics, education and society as the common tenets of ethics and values are rooted in religion and philosophy of life [5]. The family institution and the educational system play an important role in promoting these values. The family become a trainer of their children to be truly honest, to have self-discipline and take responsibility for their own actions. Focusing on equality of all primary and secondary schools throughout the country, therefore there is the same readiness in materials and equipment and the law in Finland prohibits physical punishment of children [4].

In Thailand, the development of the core values becomes more and more essential in developing the human capital. As the land of Theravada Buddhism, its teachings have been integrated into such operation [6]. For example, there is an application of Buddhist doctrines to prevent corruption in school [7]. The national proficiency test is an important mechanism to ensure that all schools have the same standards in line with the policies of the Office of the Education Council Secretariat on cultivating morality and

ethics, values and desirable characteristics, conducted based on its research results indicating four models for cultivating morality, ethics and four desirable values and characteristics: homes (family), temples, schools and communities. Therefore, social institutions play an important role in developing people's core values through participation in cultivating morals, values and desirable traits in children and young people.

The successful promotion and development of good value or the characteristics of the people in Thai society must be promoted and put into practice as a way of life. Therefore, the research team has paid attention to the issue of Buddhist principles that are conducive to human resource development that affect the promotion and development of 12 Thai people's values [8].

Figure 1. The 12 Core Values of Thais

## THE 12 CORE VALUES OF THAIS

1	A love of nation, religion, and monarchy
2	Honesty, sacrifice, patience
3	Gratitude and obedience towards one's parents, guardians and teachers
4	A pursuit of knowledge directly and indirectly
5	Preserve Thai traditions
6	Morality and kindness to others
7	Understanding a constitutional monarchy
8	Discipline, obeying the laws and respecting elders
9	Sensibility, knowing how to think, knowing what to do
10	Knowing how to live one's life under the sufficiency economy theory
11	A strong mind, not yielding to dark force
12	Working towards the common good rather than personal gain

The researcher recognizes the importance of developing students' core values so that this research is determined to

study the effects of integrating Buddhism principles to strengthen and develop core values of primary school students under the Office of Basic Education in Thailand. The activities for developing the core values of the third-grade primary school students at Wat Sukantharam School in Talo Sub-district, Wang Noi District, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand have been organized based on the integration of Buddhist principles. However, from 12 core values, there were only 3 items (1, 3, 8) selected for the assessment based on the ages of the samples. As this study is associated with the development of values of the people of the country, the government and related agencies such as the Office of Buddhism, Department of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Interior Ministry of Education or other departments get guidelines for setting policies or activities for the development of values of the people in Thai society.

### Research Objectives

The objectives of this research were: 1) to study the results of integration of Buddhist doctrines to promote and develop the core value of the primary school students before and after participating in the activities for cultivating the core value; 2) to compare the levels of the core value of the students at Wat Sukantharam School in Talo Sub-district, Wang Noi District, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, Thailand, classified by the samples' personal factors (gender, family status and parental occupation).

### Hypothesis

This study was carried out under the following hypotheses: (1) After the experiment, students who participated in the activities of integrating Buddhism principles to develop core values of primary school students in schools affiliated with the Office of Basic Education had higher values than before the experiment; (2) Primary school students with different genders, family status, and their parents' occupation had no different value levels before and after participating in the activities.

### Research Methodology

In this study, the researcher used the quasi-experimental research processed by using a pre- and post-experiment model to study the effects of integrating Buddhism principles to promote and develop core values of primary school students. The dependent variables were measured first, and the effects of integrating Buddhist principles were studied to strengthen and develop core values of primary school students under the Office of Basic Education before and after participating in the activity in order to compare the level of development of the samples, to study the effects of integrating Buddhist principles to strengthen and develop core values of primary school students before and after participating in the activity, to compare the core values of elementary school students, schools under the Office of Basic Education before and after participating in activities classified by gender, family status and the occupation of the parents. This study was carried out with 32 students,

selected by Purposive Sampling. The tools used in data collection are the questionnaire and in-depth interview form. The data analysis was divided into two types as follows. (1) Quantitative Research, the data were analyzed according to personal factors by the basic statistics: Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test and f-test. The practical levels of the core values of students were analyzed by finding Mean and Standard Deviation (SD.). The results were compared with the evaluation criteria as follows:

4.51 - 5.00 refers to 'Very Often'.

3.51 - 4.50 refers to 'Often'.

2.51 - 3.50 refers to 'Sometimes'.

1.51 - 2.50 refers to 'Rarely'.

1.01 - 1.50 refers to 'Never'.

(2) Qualitative Research, the data obtained from the in-depth interview was interpreted utilizing the Descriptive Analysis based on the principle of the Inductive Reasoning Method.

### Research Results

#### General Information of the Samples

The third-grade primary school students at Wat Sukantharam School in Talo Sub-district, Wang Noi District, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province were a total of 32 people, most of them were male (20), with the majority of their parents living together (17), and the parents were general employees (100%) with low incomes.

#### Levels of Core Values

**Table 1.** Core values of the samples' students before participating in the activities

Core Value	Level of Practice (n = 32)		
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level
1. Upholding the three main pillars: Nation, Religion, and Monarchy	2.52	0.328	sometimes
2. Being grateful to the parents, guardians and teachers	2.78	0.733	sometimes
3. Maintaining discipline, respectful of laws and the elderly and seniority	2.82	0.683	sometimes
Sum	2.71	0.581	sometimes

From Table 1, the level of the practice of the core values of the students before participating the activities was rated at 'occasional practice'. The third item on maintaining discipline, respectful of laws, elderly and seniority was the most practice, followed by that of being grateful to the parents, guardians and teachers and upholding the three main pillars: Nation, Religion, and Monarchy.

**Table 2.** Core values of the samples' students after participating in the activities

Core Value	Level of Practice (n = 32)
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	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level
1. Upholding the three main pillars: Nation, Religion, and Monarchy	3.97	0.733	often
2. Being grateful to the parents, guardians and teachers	4.63	0.187	very often
3. Maintaining discipline, respectful of laws and the elderly and seniority	4.51	0.164	very often
Sum	4.55	0.210	very often

From Table 2, the level of the practice of the core values of the students before participating the activities was rated at ‘very often practice’. The second item on being grateful to the parents, guardians and teachers was the most practice, followed by that of maintaining discipline, respectful of laws and the elderly and seniority, upholding the three main pillars: Nation, Religion, and Monarchy. It is to say that the research results reveal that (1) the levels of the core values of the students before ( $\bar{x} = 4.55$ , S.D.= 0.210) and after activity participation ( $\bar{x} = 2.21$ , S.D.=581) were statistically different with the significance level of .05. (2) The comparative results of the levels of core value of the students suggest that the students with differences in studied personal factors (gender, family status and parental occupations) have indifferent core values both in overall and aspect perspectives with the statistical significance level of .05.

## Discussion

The study results indicated that the mean core value level of the students of Wat Sukantharam School (Sukantha Wittayakarn), Talo sub-district, Wang Noi district, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya after participating in the activities as a whole was higher than before participating in the activities with the statistical significance level of 0.05, consistent with the set hypotheses. It is shown that the integration of Buddhist doctrines curriculum to promote and develop core values of the students has efficiency and quality suitable for magnifying an outcome in developing the core values of students accordingly. The study results confirmed that after participating in the activities, the participants had the mean values as a whole at the very frequent level. Before participating in the activities, the participants had the mean values as a whole at the occasional level only. Based on the study results, it can be noticeable that the adoption of the principles of Bhavana 4 (4 aspects of self-development) to the process of developing the core values of the students produced efficiency and effectiveness. A study conducted by Phrapalad Nopphadol Hattamano (Phlaikaew) [9] on “Child Development in accordance with Bhavana IV :A Case Study of Training Center for Children under Compulsory School in Thungkru District, Bangkok”, which offered guidelines related to child development in accordance with Bhavana 4 as follows: Physical development - the Training Center for Children under Compulsory School should provide training and regulations in promoting health and hygiene in students by working in

collaboration with temples and other agencies to ensure students have good health and well-being; Moral development – the Training Center should work in collaboration with religious organizations in promoting ethics and instilling observing religious precepts in students; Emotional development – the Training Center should give parents an opportunity to participate in performing spiritual cultivation or allow organizations to participate in such activity; Intellectual development – religious organizations or temples should have a policy on enhancing intelligence to students on a regular basis by testing Buddhist knowledge constantly. It is consistent with a study conducted by Phra Putthinan Boonreuang [10] on “Sustainable human resource development in Buddhist approach”. The study results revealed that a lot of Buddhist doctrines could be applied to human resource development such as virtues conducive to benefits in the present, virtues conducive to benefits in the future, path of accomplishment, the path leading to the cessation of suffering, impurities or lustful desires or known as Trisikkha (The Threefold Training). Human resource development is the framework that helps humans develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge and abilities. These Dhamma principles can be applied to human resource development appropriately and effectively. Four major goals of the development are physical development, moral development, emotional development and intellectual development. Meanwhile, Phra Somsak Sanattawajo (Sonthikul) [11] conducted a study on “Human resource development in Buddhist model according to Phra Brahmaganabhorn P.A. Payutto”. The study results showed that human resource development in the conceptual model of Theravada Buddhism is divided into 4 aspects as 1) behavioral development – to govern body and speech to have moral precepts, 2) development of 6 internal sense fields; to keep one’s manners, speech and thoughts under control, 3) strengthening emotional development to be able to work efficiently and 4) intellectual development to have knowledge and understanding for behaving oneself to all things. It is consistent with a study conducted by Pitchayarat Boonchuay [12] on study of the process of constructive four aspects of self-development (Bhavana 4) through the threefold training (Trisikkha). The findings from the study revealed that Trisikkha is an education system that focuses on self-training procedurally on the basis of a harmonizing process until reaching the cessation of suffering. It starts from keeping one’s manners, speech and thoughts under control not to be occupied by lustful desires and not to exploit other people. Once body, speech and mind calm down from external emotion, mindfulness can be practiced to achieve a state of consciousness, not to be shaken by 5 hindrances. In this regard, intellect can be used to consider characteristics of existence (Dhamma) that appear at present time until three marks of existence literacy of internal and external things occurs actually and the enlightenment with the four noble truths is attained, making people be able to abstain from lustful desires that are the cause of suffering. In addition to those research studies, the principles of Bhavana 4 are used for human resource development in various agencies and organizations; for example, a study conducted by Akaranant Charoenkijjarat [13] on human resource development in accordance with Bhavana 4 of Combat

Engineer Battalion 4 Nakhon Sawan province. The findings from the study revealed that 1) officials of the Combat Engineer Battalion 4 Nakhon Sawan province had opinions towards the human resource development in accordance with Bhavana 4 as a whole at the highest level. Consideration of details in each aspect found that officials of the Combat Engineer Battalion 4 Nakhon Sawan province had opinions towards the human resource development in accordance with Bhavana 4 at the highest level in all aspects, 2) the comparison of opinions of officials of the Combat Engineer Battalion 4 Nakhon Sawan province towards the human resource development in accordance with Bhavana 4, divided by person factors like age, level of education, length of government service, hierarchical ranks and monthly income found as a whole no differences in all variables. Therefore, the research hypotheses were rejected, 3) problems, obstacles and suggestion for the human resource development in accordance with Bhavana 4 of the Combat Engineer Battalion 4 Nakhon Sawan province were (1) high ranking commanders must be a good role model in working and living a life since the best human development requires the process of socialization or known as “organizational culture” which is the best crucible, (2) commanders should prepare their own personnel development plans to be consistent with organizational policies and strategies. The development plans must be implemented to comprehensively cover all positions, fields of work and levels by using a process of development and training needs survey in a correct manner to obtain data in preparing a human resource development plan that meets requirements and necessity of the organization to ensure personnel in the organization are efficient, (3) a study should be conducted on a point related to the application of Buddhist doctrines to the operation or development of personnel potential so that obtained results can be used to improve the efficiency of personnel in all levels accordingly, (4) a study should be conducted on factors affecting human resource development of different levels of personnel in the Combat Engineer Battalion 4 Nakhon Sawan province, (5) a study should be conducted on factors associated with how to retain good employees in the organization, (6) a study should be conducted on factors affecting success in human resource development in an era of change management. Patcharin Jangim [14] conducted a study on development of teachers’ quality of work life according to Bhavana 4 principles in Tha Tako district, Nakhon Sawan province, Master of Arts Program in Buddhist Studies. The study results found that teachers had opinions towards the development of teachers’ quality of work life according to Bhavana 4 principles in Tha Tako district, Nakhon Sawan province at a high level as a whole. Consideration of details in each aspect showed that a high level of opinions towards the development of teachers’ quality of work life according to Bhavana 4 principles were given to all aspects regardless of gender, age, level of education, length of government service and the size of school. Therefore, the research hypotheses were rejected. Divided by personal factors, i.e. gender, age, level of education and length of government service, there was no statistical significance at the level of 0.05. Thus, the research hypotheses were rejected. With regard to personal factor related to age, in terms of

intellectual development, there was statistical significance at the level of 0.05. Therefore, the determined hypothesis was accepted. With regard to personal factor related to level of education, in terms of intellectual development, there was statistical significance at the level of 0.01. Therefore, the determined hypothesis was accepted. With regard to length of government service, in terms of intellectual development, there was statistical significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the set hypothesis was accepted. With regard to the size of school, in terms of physical development, there was statistical significance at the level of 0.01. Therefore, the determined hypothesis was accepted.

The guideline for the development of teachers’ quality of work life according to Bhavana 4 principles in Tha Tako district, Nakhon Sawan province consists of physical development, moral development, emotional development and intellectual development. Educational institutions have duties and responsibilities in assigning teachers to perform the assigned tasks using Bhavana 4 to consider their tasks and working process as well as their everyday life. With regard to physical development, they are healthy enough to work constantly. Moral development is they can perform their tasks correctly by strictly adhering to rules and regulations. Emotional development is they are determined to perform their tasks and intellectual development is they are smart and witty in working, knowing how to deal with unexpected situations carefully and thoroughly. When a good operational process is available, operational performance will be good and educational institutions will receive benefits from the operations of their teachers. Finally, educational institutions give remuneration or rewards to teachers who are attentive at work in the form of salary adjustment, promotion to a higher hierarchical rank or position, etc. At the end, when teachers are rewarded from educational institutions, they will be more attentive at work and work harder to be a role model for other teachers. In this regard, educational institutions will receive positive effects from those attentive teachers as well. In the meantime, what Thai society needs to give more importance to is employing the process of human development based on religious principles as a tool to drive numerous social activities. As of today, it can be seen that many studies are conducted on integration of religious principles in social development. For example, a study conducted by Somsook Nithiuthai [15] on the development of the youths according to the Buddhist way in Thai societies. The study results revealed that the development of the youths according to the Buddhist way is to study the meaning of the youths’ behaviors. The cause of undesirable behaviors comes from craving. The goals to develop the youths consist of 3 stages, namely, 1) the present goal, 2) the future goal and 3) the ultimate goal. The beginning point of the development of the youths according to the Buddhist way is *Sammādiṭṭhi*. *Trisikkha* is used to promote the youths’ desirable traits according to the Buddhist way and social institutions are *Paratoghosa* that helps develop the youths. The development of the youths in Thai societies begins with studying youths’ behaviors that can be measured. The goals of the youth development cover 4 sides as 1) not to exploit oneself, 2) not to exploit other people, 3) be responsible for one’s duty, 4) to develop oneself and help develop others and societies. The causes of

undesirable behaviors are from family, economy and environment. The starting point for youth development is to have positive attitude towards desirable behaviors and let the youths follow those behaviors. Desirable behaviors for the youth development to be promoted are development of discipline in oneself, development of emotional intelligence and development of analytical thinking. Roles of social institutions play a part in teaching and being a role model to the youths to ensure they have desirable behaviors. Based on the study, the following approaches are found: the meaning of youths' behaviors according to the Buddhist way in Thai societies, the causes of undesirable behaviors according to the Buddhist way in Thai societies, the beginning point of the development of the youths according to the Buddhist way in Thai societies, the goals of the development of the youths according to the Buddhist way in Thai societies, the promotion of desirable behaviors according to the Buddhist way in Thai societies and the roles of social institutions in promoting the development of the youths according to the Buddhist way in Thai societies.

Based on the study results, the mean level of the core values of the students after participating in the activities with regard to love of nation, religion and king was higher than before they participated in the experiment with the statistical significance level of 0.05, consistent with the hypothesis. It shows that the students had knowledge and understanding until they are aware of their roles and duties to the country, Buddhism and kings through studying multifarious duties of King Rama 9 (King Bhumibol). He eliminated suffering and brought happiness to and elevated quality of life of his people with his meritorious actions, smart wisdom and abilities including his far vision. He devoted himself to the progress and development of the country and happiness of his people. He gave more than 4,000 initiative projects in relation to public health, agriculture, irrigation, land development, education, religion, society and culture, transportation including economy for the happiness of people in rural areas. Meanwhile, he also mitigated problems and trouble of people in urban areas; for example, traffic problem, flood problem and polluted water problem. He initiated the elephant support and conservation project. The government marks the 5<sup>th</sup> December of every year to be Father's Day in Thailand. It is the King Rama 9's birthday and marked as the National Day of the country as well. Though after the passing of King Bhumibol on 13 October 2016, people are grateful to the Great King of the Land and are committed to do good deeds for him. After participating in the activities, the students had the mean core value in relation to the love of nation, religion and king at the frequent level. Before participating in the activities, the students had the mean values as a whole at the occasional level only. This is consistent with the information obtained from interviewing relevant persons that revealed that before participating in the activities, the students would stand for the national anthem to pay respect every time the anthem is played but they did not feel grateful to the nationness. They stood because it is a routine activity and their class mates did the same thing. After participating in the activities of the integration of Buddhist doctrines to promote and develop core values of Prathomsuksa students in accordance with the policy of NCPO, they were grateful to the benevolence of

kings and ancestors who devoted their lives to the country, they were grateful to uniqueness of the country and identity of Thailand. They adored love and unity, they love environment and behaved themselves to be useful for themselves, school, community and the society to reciprocate benevolence of the country. The students participated in religious activities and behaved themselves in the way their religions teach. The students participated in activities related to royal institution.

The study results can respond to the objectives of the research study and are consistent with the 1<sup>st</sup> hypothesis as it is found that after the experiment, the students participating in the activities integrating Buddhist doctrines to develop the core values of students had a higher level of the core values than before the experiment. It shows the good quality and efficiency of the curriculum of the integration activities. The model of the activities in the curriculum is based on Bhavana 4 principles, starting from physical development that allows students to learn how to make contact and get involved with external things using 5 controlling faculties (confidence, energy or effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom or understanding) and treat those things in a beneficial way not a dangerous way; let meritorious action grow healthily, let sins disappear, relationship development between physical environment and behavioral characteristics according to the desirable core values; moral development consists of cultivation of moral practices, being disciplined, not to disturb oneself and not to disturb other people, being able to live with other people peacefully, helping and supporting each other through the process of learning and being intelligent to understand the value to things; emotional development consists of being mentally strong with morality such as the ability to feel compassionate and be kind to others, being diligent, patient, concentrated and joyful and intellectual development consists of allowing students to learn and understand things the way they are, cultivation of wisdom, being able to free the mind, to let go and to build happiness, purifying oneself from craving and suffering, solving arising problems using wisdom. A study conducted by Phraraj Vachira Methi [16] on human resource development according to Bhavana 4 principles of Military Circle 31 Command. The study results found that opinions towards the human resource development according to Bhavana 4 principles of Military Circle 31 Command were at a high level in all aspects. It shows that the integration of Bhavana 4 principles with human resource development is efficient and makes the levels of core values of Prathomsuksa students in this study come out good. The summary of comparison results of the levels of students' 12 core values, before and after participating in the activities, classified by general information found that students having difference in gender, family status and parents' careers had a higher level of the 12 core values, as a whole and in each aspect, without difference, which is consistent with all specified hypotheses.

### Recommendations

Educational institutions should set a policy to promote inclusive participation of all sectors such as family institutions (parents), temples (religion), schools

(educational personnel) or government agencies responsible for the service area take part in the development of student core values through systems and mechanisms that can conduct a systematic measurement and evaluation.

Educational institutions should have ongoing follow-up on projects or activities related to the development of student core values as the research results suggested that after participating in an activity, students have greater core values than before participating in the activity. This behavior should be surveyed continuously to find ways to promote and develop students' core values.

Educational institutions should adopt a pattern and method of cultivating the values of patriotism, religion, the monarchy in respect of gratitude to parents, teachers, and discipline, respect for the law, respect for adults into projects or teaching activities to develop the values of students at other educational levels.

Schools under the Office of Basic Education should have a system and mechanism for integrating Buddhism principles to promote and develop the core values of students and to seek guidance for organizing seminars, brainstorming of Buddhist scholars and other agencies involved in the development of people's values in the country.

Government and related agencies such as Office of Buddhism, Department of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Interior Ministry of Education or other departments should use the results of the research as a guideline for policy formulation or activities for the development of values that depend on the will of people in Thai society of all ages.

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