

## The Youth Behaviors of Using Mobile Phone in Nakhon si Thammarat

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study youth behaviors in using mobile phone in Muang District, Nakhon Si Thammarat (NST) Province. The sample of this research was youths chosen from 5 educational institutes—2 large high schools, 2 vocational schools (1 private and 1 government vocational schools) and 1 non-formal and informal educational institution—in Muang District, NST Province. 127 youths divided into 2 groups, 61 performers and 50 general informants, chosen by using purposive sampling method. Data was collected by using interview, observation, and focus group discussion. Data was analyzed by using triangulation technique. Then results were presented by using descriptive analysis.

The research shows that there were 3 aspects of youth behaviors in using mobile phone in NST Province. The first was an aspect of communication behavior. Language mostly used in everyday conversation was both polite and impolite. To text faster on mobile phones, short words or Baew language (language used to act cute or innocent) was used to text and receive messages to their friends, family members, and parents. For internet searching, they mostly used chat room to chat with their friends or boyfriends/girlfriends rather than chatting with their parents or teachers. In some case, they had phone sex with their boyfriends/girlfriends at night. They also sometimes used the mobile phones for learning reason. The second was an aspect of entertainment behavior. They used the mobile phones to send, receive, and make video clips for improving their knowledge and for entertaining. To entertain, they liked watching porn clip videos, listening to music, playing games— teenage boys generally liked playing violent games that could make them meet the challenge— watching cartoons or Korean series, buying and selling products online. For the third aspect, modernity behavior, modern and well-decorated mobile phones which could present the social status were likely to be prior choices for the youths in making decision to buy the new one. They changed their mobile phones every 1-2 years for showing the modernity. The other choices were color, decoration, interesting additional services such as receiving news or information from network SMS service, downloading calling melody, sending text and voice messages.

**Keyword :** Behaviors, Mobile Phone, Youth

## Background and Significance of the Study

Cultural monitor is an important process to protect and solve problem and deviant behaviors. The cultural dimension will be used to integrate with all sectors in the society to operate in proactive and defensive ways. Cultural monitor can be conducted by analyzing problem conditions and situation to make guidelines to protect and solve problems accurately in theoretical and practical aspects. Moreover, building network of cultural monitor, campaigning and publicizing to spread cultural knowledge and information, including producing good cultural media as a model to publicize to the society are the tools used to deal with this problem. Cultural monitor is divided into 2 aspects. The first aspect is the objective and subjective monitor of cultural deviance including the aspect of art and culture and culture of life. It is considered based on the belief that culture has the meaning in positive dimension like a virtue, value and esthetic. Culture encompasses language, literature, fine arts, architecture, performing arts, historical sources, and culture of life which are thought, belief, value, custom and tradition, ritual, etc. The second aspect is the monitor of main issues. This is to monitor the inappropriate behaviors or cultural deviance in the society, for examples; moral degeneration in the society, negative values, language crisis. This is also to monitor causes or factors influencing the cultural deviance, for example; behaviors of consumerism, a lack of cultural knowledge and understanding, public media, cultural diffusion, diffusion of cultural deviance, etc. (Ministry of Culture, 2007: 22-24)

The influence of modern facilities in the globalization affects widely the deviance behavior of culture. Mobile phone is a modern tool and basic element used for communicative and other purposes such as taking photos, making videos, watching movies, listening to music, sending voice messages, sending text messages, sending e-mails, using Facebook and chatting through Line Application. Mobile phones are like mobile computers that meet the demand for convenient solutions that can help to simplify our lives. They are also used to play games, to prophesy, to gamble, to buy online products or services, to watch video clips. However, if the youths thoughtless use mobile phones or if family and educational institutes do not pay attention to their children, it will exacerbate the problem. The youth behaviors in using fast and modern technology to video call, to buy and sell products and services conveniently influence Thai values. This is the sign of social and cultural weakness and this problem is becoming worse. This situation is consistent with the survey of Child Watch Project through the Thailand Research Fund. The survey found that there has been an upward trend of Thai teenagers in using computer, internet and mobile phones. This technology is controlling the young people's life with 6-7 hours a day on average—especially the online social media. It is playing a big part in young people's everyday life. (Khemmanat Mingsiritham, 2013:72)

Although Nakhon Si Thammarat (NST) is a city of cultural original, there are many crimes, cases of personal security in public, maltreatment (Justice System Development Center, 2014:7). There are also negative news reflecting the deterioration in the city such as video clips of student fighting and porn clips of high school students. Moreover, there is the social phenomenon of inappropriate behaviors in using mobile phones. Young people spend too much time on their mobile phones. This is a barrier to build relationship with other people and to be attentive in their studies. They are lazy, they wake up late, they are not disciplined and they live with negative values and attitudes. With the reasons mentioned this research aim at studying youth behaviors in using mobile phones in NST. It will be useful to know and understand the real behaviors and problems. The research results will be useful for the whole society and be brought to publicize to all related sectors to monitor culture and to help our teenagers with appropriate socialization.

### **Research Objectives**

The purpose of this research was to study youth behaviors in using mobile phones in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province.

### **Scope of the Research**

The research studied 3 aspects of youth behaviors in using mobile phones, communication behavior, entertainment behavior, and modernity behavior.

### **Research Methodology**

The research was qualitative research. Data related to the study and filed data were mainly collected (Lertgrai, P. & Nilakan, L. 2016) by using observation, interview, and focus group discussion. To record the data, filed data was organized and checked by using triangulation method (Babbie, E. 2013). Document and related research theories were used to analyze the data by classifying according to the purpose of the research. Then results were presented by using descriptive analysis.

### **Research Area**

Five educational institutes were chosen as the research area. The reasons of choosing the educational institutes were as follows; 2 large high schools were chosen because their students mostly use mobile phones; 2 vocational schools (1 private and 1 government vocational schools) and 1 non-formal and informal educational institution were chosen because they have different social classes of students.

### Population and Sample

The population of this research was people who are related to the youths (the sample) which were government sector, private sector and communities located in Muang District, NST. The sample was 127 youths studying in 5 educational institutes. They were chosen by using purposive sampling method. 127 youths were divided into 3 groups which were;

#### Key Informant:

This group was expected to inform in-dept data. The group consisted of 16 key informants. Six of them were from the government sector (1 probation officer of Juvenile Observation and Protection Centre and 5 teachers of each school in research area). Five key informants were from the private sector and 5 key informants were from community sector.

#### Casual Informant:

This group consisted of 61 casual informants who monitor cultural disorganization and deviant behavior and youths who use mobile phones. Sixty one casual informants were divided into 3 groups. The first group was the casual informant chosen from the government sector which was 1 cultural officer of Provincial Cultural Office who is in charge of monitoring culture. The second group was 10 teachers chosen from 5 educational institutes (2 teachers from each school). The third group was 50 youths who use mobile phones chosen from 5 educational institutes (10 students from each school).

#### General Informant:

This group consisted of people who use and do not use mobile phones but these people are close to 50 youths. General informant was divided into 2 groups, 30 general youths and 20 general publics.

### Research Instrument

Field data was collected by using different research instruments (Lertgrai, P. & Nilakan, L. 2016) consisting of observation guide, participant observation and non-participant observation. These research instruments were used to observe general conditions in the research area and routine activities of the youths who use mobile phones, key informant, casual informant and general informant. Interview guide, formal and informal interview developed according to the conceptual framework and the research objective were used to collect data of youth behaviors in using mobile phones. Besides, the diary was also used to observe in this research.

### Data Management and Analysis

Data collected by studying documents, related researches and fieldwork were put together and classified according to the research objective and research question. Checking primary data was operated throughout the research process including after the finish of field data collection. Data collected by using the record form, interview and sound recording was

brought to make a transcript. Photos taken throughout the research were collected and classified according to the research objective. All data was studied by using theoretical analysis (Lertgrai, P. Muenhat, S. Nilkarn, L. 2017). Then the results of data analysis were presented by using descriptive analysis.

## Results

### **An aspect of communication behaviors in using mobile phones**

From the study of youth behaviors in using mobile phones in term of communication behaviors under the concept of using mobile phones as a bridge to connect all networks together (Manlae, W. 2016), the research shows that all youths used mobile phones to communicate with their family members such as father, mother, sibling, or cousin. They also used mobile phones to talk with other people in the society such as friends or boyfriend/girlfriend about love or fashion including playing games. For an aspect of educational benefit, they used mobile phones as a tool to do their homework or to discuss with their friends and teachers. They used Line Application (App), Facebook, including interesting packages to make and receive phone calls.

Language used in everyday conversation:

To talk to their friends, the youths mostly spoke both of Central Thai and Southern Thai dialects. Language mostly used was polite and impolite. They created their own words or language to chat among their friends through Line App. Language styles used to chat through Line App were short language, ellipsis, short sentences, Baew language (language used to act cute or innocent), grammatical or spelling errors. To text with their friends, they used short and slang words that were typically restricted to a particular group of them, for example, terms of endearment for lovers; Teng for Tua-eng (Ya for You), Teerak (Honey), Ai Look Moo (My piglet) or Ai Auan (My chubby). Baew language was widely spoken by both male and female youths. They thought there was no one not understanding their language.

Talking to parents or guardians and siblings:

Most youths used mobile phones to talk politely to their parents by speaking both of Central Thai and Southern Thai dialects. Topics of talk were mainly related to tuition fee, asking after students who stay in dormitory with deep concern. For youths who stay with their relatives instead of parents, topics of talk were mainly about daily life, education, financial, homework or health. The youths got some rewards for doing good deeds or getting good grades. They mostly asked for new mobile phones with latest and high priced models. The youths who stayed at home often used their mobile phones to contact with their parents in taking them to school and arranging meeting points for picking up after school. This was an advantage of having mobile phones. It was easy for parents, youths and siblings to contact each other. Moreover, the members of family usually chose and used the same network because of good, economical and worthy promotion provided by the mobile network.

Talking with their girlfriends/boyfriends:

Most youths used their mobile phones to speak politely to their girlfriends/boyfriends. Some used impolite language but they just used like teen slang including interjection and swear word. However, there were some youths using double-meaning words and words related to sex. Most students of high school told that they spoke very politely to their lovers; for examples, they called their lovers “Honey”, “Auan or My chubby”, “Wan or Four eyes”, “Ta-eng or Ya”. To talk with their teachers, most youths used formal language to discuss about teaching and learning; for examples, asking to leave class, asking about grades, contacting to take exams and doing activities assigned by the teachers. For the youths studying in vocational schools and non-formal and informal educational institution, they usually used mobile phones to talk about the education. They were confident to talk informally to their teachers by using polite language.

Talking to other people:

Most youths used polite language to communicate with other people. Friends and lovers was the most important group which the youths talked to. The next below was parents, guardians, teachers and other people, respectively. They always carried mobile phones with them. They used mobile phones without considering time and places and used secretly mobile phones in “No Cell Phone” areas.

Texting and Receiving Messages:

Short message is brief text messages send to and receive free from a mobile phone subscriber through Line Application and Facebook. The youths mostly bought the app that they liked to talk with friends. They didn't often use short message service (SMS) through mobile phone's network in daily life. However, SMS was frequently used to send to TV programs and to predict the match's results. Most youths sent messages to contact with other people. Some of them sent messages by typing words as they pleased without considering the grammatical structure. They always sent messages to their friends and lovers and text messages were mainly about love. Besides, messages to friends and lovers were festival messages. The youths mostly sent festival messages to other people such as relatives or acquaintance. They were also interested in sending messages to radio stations for participating activities or giving their opinion, for examples, sending SMS to vote their favorite singers to be chosen or to win the contest. Male youths mostly sent SMS to predict the match's results depending on their own preferences.

Searching information on the internet:

Searching information on the internet is very important especially for the youths who are studying. Their life is increasingly running by internet network because it is convenient and fast to search information, sell and buy products or services, transfer money, pay bills, etc. The youths usually shared new information and talk together among their friends. Information search time on mobile internet depended on the topics that youths were studying and interested. The expense of searching online through mobile phones mostly

depended on the appropriate and reasonable internet packages. Most parents thought that using internet was a private matter and they didn't have time to monitor or check. Moreover, some parents didn't know about how to use modern mobile phones. Due to inappropriate behaviors with mobile phones usage in the classroom, teachers and students needed to create classroom rules together for each class period. Most youths used mobile phones to search and chat with their friend or lovers instead of searching information for learning. They had no specific time to uses mobile phones. They just sent messages to their friends in the chat room to kill boredom or look for lovers. Besides, they also used mobile phones to watch porn clips, watch TV series, listen to music or watch music videos on Youtube, sell and buy online products.

### **An aspect of entertainment behaviors in using mobile phones**

Most of youths used mobile phones to send and receive video clips. They liked sending, receiving, and making video clips. They also shared video clips to their friends. The video clips could be downloaded from the internet or internet shop. Sometimes they made the video clips by themselves and sent to their friends. Youths who could find interesting video clips will felt accepted by their friends. They mostly watched video clips for entertainment purposes. Male youths mainly played games and watched porn clips through their mobile phones. On the other hand, female youths mainly used their mobile phones to watch fashion and Japanese or Korean series, including selling and buying online products. The youths mostly used mobile phones for entertainment purposes because it was very convenient and easy for them to download, upload, send and receive video clips.

#### Music:

Mobile phones have functions to support free music online or internet radio. Modern mobile phones have functions to support free music online like MP 3. The favorite songs are downloaded into the mobile phones. Then the owners of mobile phones can use these songs to meet their expectations such as using for conversation ringtones, using for message ringtones and listening for enjoyment. The youths mostly used their mobile phones to listen to music. From interview and group discussion, most parents and relatives gave the same information—their youths always used earphones either for talking on the phones or listening to music. They didn't care about anything.

#### Games:

There are many popular games for teenagers nowadays. The youths liked playing games because they were fun and entertained. The games were also useful for practicing meditation and making decision. However, playing games could make an immersion and caused behavior problems such as game addiction affecting their school performance. The youths used their mobile phones to play games after school or when they had free time or while waiting for bus or their friends. There were different kinds of games but the popular games were fighting games. Young people felt enjoy and were likely to become "addicted" to them. There were both free and paid games. Paid games were purchased by using credit card

or True money cash card. Some games had fantastic images. The youths could find and download popular games on the internet. Most male youths liked playing violent games because they felt happy and fun. They also met the challenge when playing these violent games. They spent their after-school hours or holidays to play games.

TV series and Japanese Cartoons:

The research shows that the youths used their mobile phones to watch TV series and Japanese cartoons. Most of them knew and watched Korean and Japanese series. Female youths liked watching Japanese series through their mobile phones when they could not watch live TV programs broadcasted by television or internet. They watched TV series such as Chief Kim, Introverted Boss, Two cops, Criminal Mind, Descendants of the sun, or Strong Girl Do Bong-Soon through their mobile phones when they had free time. Both male and female youths liked watching Japanese cartoons. The popular and unfinished cartoons were One Piece and Naruto. Thus, keeping up with social trends or being up to date on what is happening to socialize with friends was one of factors to increase the youths' interest in watching TV series and Japanese cartoons.

#### **An aspect of modernity behaviors in using mobile phones**

Mobile phones are kind of fashion nowadays. They indicate the modernity, social class, and potential of the owner. Many mobile packages are provided to fit lifestyles of different careers and levels. Generally people from all social classes including the youths who are not able to earn their living can buy mobile phones to use because there are different types and brands from low to high price. Instead of using for making and receiving phone calls, modern mobile phones have more functions for multitasking. The youths thought that mobile phones were kind of accessories to present their financial status, a symbol of wealth and prosperity. Most youths often changed their mobile phones every 2 years to show the modernity and to use after the fashion of their friends. They tried to keep up with fashion trends of using mobile phones and mobile phone cases. They also thought that new and modern mobile phones with many functions could support their use like making a phone call, chatting, texting through Line app, and downloading apps. Mobile phones advertised as the best camera phones with a large amount of RAM could persuade the youths to buy.

Most youths used modern mobile phones with attractive design advertised by mobile brands. Firstly parents bought mobile phones to their children according to their economic capacity to contact within the family. After that the youths saved their money to buy new mobile phones. Some teenagers did part-time jobs. Youth behaviors after getting new mobile phones were not different from using their old one. They just used their mobile phones to make and receive phone calls, to play Facebook and Line app, and take photos. But they wanted new and modern mobile phones like their friends. The research shows that the youths preferred to use modern mobile phones such as Iphone, Samsung, Huawei, or Vivo due to their multi functions, large amount of RAM, best camera or high-resolution image. Some families supported their children to buy high-priced and multifunction mobile phones



because the children have education plans to study in Informational Technology or Video Game Design.

Behaviors in choosing additional services of mobile phones

There are variety of additional services of mobile phones in information & news and entertainment services, for examples; short messages, image and voice messages, photo & music downloading, horoscope, or apps. To use these additional services, people have to use modern mobile phones which can support advanced technology for examples, support systems of SMS, MMS, photo & music downloading, game downloading, watching movies online, listening to music online, taking photos, making videos or clips, and high speed internet. Although the youths preferred to use free apps like Line, Facebook, and Video, they often bought games and Line stickers that they liked. Moreover, the youths preferred to use additional services to present the image of new generation. They used variety of additional services to show their identities. They also chose the popular mobile phones including beautiful cases. They set screen backgrounds by using their own photos or lovers. They chose their favorite ringtones and calling melodies.

## Conclusion and Discussion

### 1. Communication Aspect:

The purpose of this aspect was to study youth behaviors in using mobile phones in 3 parts, language used to make conversation, text sending and receiving, and internet searching. The research finds that most youths had behaviors in using mobile phones to communicate with their friends, boyfriend/girlfriends, parents, teachers, and other people in the society. This finding accord with the research findings of Saowapak Lampetch (2016 :116). She studied behaviors and effects in using online social media of high school students in Nonthaburi Province. Her research found that the students used Facebook as the most popular online social media. Line was ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Instagram took the 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

The popular objective of using mobile phones was to chat with friends about daily life talk. The second was to chat with friends about learning and doing homework. The youths used time in chatting for 7.30 hours on average. The least was 45 minutes a day. The youths mostly used polite language to make conversation but there were some youths who spoke habitually of impolite language. Swear word and vulgar language were often used to speak to their friends. Sometimes they used swear word and vulgar language in public. They also used Baew Language to talk with their friends. Some male youths had phone sex with their girlfriends at night. To send and receive messages, most youths wrote or texted words as they pleased without considering Thai grammatical structure. For internet searching, most youths did not often search academic information. They liked watching their favorite programs. These findings accord with the research findings of Bussayamat Sangchan (2012 : 4). She studied teenage behaviors and attitudes on chat language in Bangkok. Her study found that most teenagers chatted by using the homophone and onomatopoeia that were not found in

dictionaries for examples, *Ter* (Ya) for *Ther* (You) or *Paw* for *Praw* (Do you?). They changed final consonant because they wanted to text faster. They changed to use other words for making words seem not as impolite as it actually is when they wanted to use vulgar language, for example, *Kak* (sucky or ghetto). They also chatted by using icon symbols to express their emotions.

### 2. Entertainment Aspect:

This research aimed at studying youth behaviors in using mobile phones in Muang Districk, NST in term of sending, receiving and making video clips, listening music, playing games, watching cartoons and TV series. For sending, receiving and making video, the research finds that most male youths liked watching video clips. Some of them have ever sent and received porn clips. They have always shared these porn clips to their friends. For listening to music, most youths listened to music brought by radio stations and MP3. Most of them often listened to music by using earphones. This behavior was a barrier for family members and intimate to communicate each other. For playing games, some male youths liked playing violent games such as fighting games, car racing games, or sport games. For watching cartoons and TV series, most youths liked watching Japanese cartoons and Korean and Japanese series. These finding accord with the research findings of Panuwat Kongrat (2011 : 4). He studied teenage behaviors in using online social media in Thailand: a case study of Facebook. His research found that inappropriate behaviors, excessive enthusiasm and social media addiction were caused by perceived enjoyment and social influence. This meant that teenagers admired and enjoyed using online social media. They also went with the flow. Moreover, the findings accord with basic viewpoints of anthropologists who criticized that consumerism was the main reason to destroy the diversity of consuming culture. Consumerism have controlled life meaning and taken a place of social relationship such as family relationship. The findings also accord with concepts of social and cultural change which emphasize on environmental influences on social and cultural evolution (Steward). Cultural ecology is the way to study and analyze the relationship between environment and production technology. Thus, this is the main factor of cultural change and effects of technology change on culture.

### 3. Modernity aspect:

This research aimed at studying youth behaviors in using mobile phones in term of choosing and buying modern mobile phones and using additional services. The youths mostly used modern mobile phones because of social values. They thought that mobile phones could present their class or financial status. This finding accords with the concept of German and Austrian anthropologists. Fritz Graeb and Wilhelm Schmidt provided the concepts of culture circle. This concept explains that there are many centers of culture. Each center will spread its own culture on all sides like a circle. This concept suggests that most people in the society are not quite creative. They do not know to invent a new thing. They just often imitate what other people do. (Yod Santasombat, 2013:31)

## Suggestions

Youth behaviors in using mobile phones in NST present positive dimensions of life. This is the study which is useful for educational purposes. Moreover the findings help us realize the importance of finding solutions of deviant behaviors. This is the major issue that all related sectors—family, educational institutes, and other institutes—must take part to monitor youth behaviors in using mobile phones. Ways to monitor youth behaviors in using mobile phones are as follows;

1. Inculcating critical thinking: Youths should be instructed to set their goals for life. Parents, guardians, relatives and teachers have to suggest them in every step to achieve their goals. Youths should be guided to use mobile phones more frequently for educational purposes. Using mobile phones in appropriate ways is very useful for the youths.

2. Improve in-depth awareness: Youths should be instructed to create new values in using mobile phones. They should not live extravagantly by using mobile phones to keep up with social trends or to use after the fashion of their friends. Mobile phones should be used for useful purposes not for fashion. It's important for the youths to clearly define roles and responsibilities. They have to pass good social culture down to the next generation besides being attentive in their studies.

3. Adjusting lifestyle: Parents, guardians, or relatives should be a role model in living sufficiently. The philosophy of sufficiency economy should be applied to live economically.

4. Most youths imitate behaviors persuaded by advertisement in mass and social media due to advertising effects on teenagers from a social learning theory perspective. Thus, mass media should be used to monitor the deviant behaviors in using mobile phones. It is also used to guide the youths to used mobile phones appropriately for getting the most out of it.

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