

Relationship between Religiosity and Prosocial Behavior of Thai Youth

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Abstract

Researches gradually suggest the importance of religious engagement as a developmental resource that guide youth to become responsible, caring, and civic-minded adults as well as enhances the youth's prosocial behaviors. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between religiosity and prosocial behavior in Thai youths. Data were obtained from the 2008 Survey on Conditions of Society, Culture, and Mental Health conducted by The National Statistical Office. This study selected only Thai youth aged 15 to 24 and being Buddhists as a sample. Findings support the theoretical notion that religiosity of youth influence prosocial behavior. Maintaining the five precepts and Applying doctrine to daily life increased the level of prosocial behaviors among Thai youth. The authors discuss implications for stakeholders to launch efficiently and effectively religious education program by encouraging youth to take part in religious activities to ensure that they aware of the importance of religious and prosocial behavior.

Key Words: Religiosity; Prosocial behavior; Thai Youth

Introduction

In the beginning of the 21st century, as a result of globalization, the cultural transformation has disseminated the materialism and consumerism through pervasive and persuasive advertising and mass media (NESDB, 2007). Thai youths also face the impact of globalization in several ways, both positive and negative ways. Nowadays, there are numerous negative behaviors that can be easily seen from daily media in Thailand. Prior studies indicated that Thai youth have dramatically changed in behavior and well-being. A lot of problems related to Thai youth's behavior have been increasing such as fighting, smoking, drinking, gambling, game addiction, internet addiction, luxurious lifestyle, school drop-out, rape, induced abortion, and suicide (Kittisuksathit, Mahaarcha, Gray, & Rakumnuaykit, 2006). From the finding of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Rajanagarindra Institute, the four main problems of Thai youth were violence, sex, drug, and suicide. During the past 10 years, the number of Thai youth in detention home is continuously increasing. Average age at first sexual intercourse of Thai teenagers, surprisingly, is youngest in the world. With the collaboration of house, temple, and school, good habits instilled at youth can be created, in turn, those youth may develop stronger community and then society (Buddhist Learning Club, 2012).

An increasing number of juvenile delinquency and deviant behavior among Thai youth are often blamed for the moral crisis. Since the morals and ethics in Thai youth have weakened, major institutions (e.g. family and religious institutions) were expected to nurture and retain the role extensively (NESDB, 2007). In Thailand, The fifth national youth policy and National Child and Youth Development Plan in the years 2002-2011 concentrated on encouraging teenagers to happily adapt for social change based on moral and ethical values (National Youth Bureau, 2002).

While young people have often been described as ecocentric and selfish, they acts of altruism are, however, plentiful (Santrock, 1996). Most of the studies have paid attention to problem behaviors extensively; contrary to prosocial and moral behaviors of youth have been much less studied. Prior researches are almost relevant to at least a considerable presence of

youth problem and risky behavior, such as smoking, drinking habit, and drug abuse (e.g., Joronen, 2005; Fabes, Carlo, Kupinoff, & Laible, 1999). A majority work has been done in the area of behavior among youth in which probably excludes the humanitarian functions of religion, such as altruism, empathy, and volunteerism (Erickson, 1992), although researches linking religiosity and youth behavior have typically emphasized the strong impact of religious involvement on negative behaviours (Johnson, 2009; Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Scholars, nonetheless, have become recently interested in studying the positive aspects of human nature rather than the negative aspects (Rich, 2003). It has recently turned the attention to explore another side of youth. This study also attempts to understand the relationship between humanitarian functions associated with youths' behavior.

Unlike the overwhelming majority of research on the role of religious importance among senior populations, the literatures have been seldom observed but to a lesser but growing extent to tie youth to the religion areas (Barry, Nelson, Davarya, & Urry, 2010; Erickson, 1992). Since religion might not be seen as an essential variable influencing youth development, almost young people rarely participate in church-related activities. Contrary to some popular images, religion plays a significant role in youths' lives and development (Erickson ; Regnerus, Smith, & Fritsch, 2003). Empirically, the US survey of happiness among youth found that being faith and spirituality are meaningful in pursuit of happiness (GMA Network Inc., 2007). Nonetheless, the bulk of published research studies on religious issues and youth's behavior within general youth have merely originated in the Western countries. Most available researches are drawn from white and Christian societies.

Concerned about religion issue in Thailand, youth still believe in doctrine rather high; however, in practice, they have less likely to make a merit (Sethaput, Varangratana, & Boonchaivatana, 1998). Several scholars mentioned religion is principally about social control. Research gradually suggests the importance of providing youth with opportunities to enhance prosocial behaviors that guide them to become responsible, caring, and civic-minded adults (Wilson, 2001). While the majority of studies so far

concentrate on the positive aspects of youths, this study try to explore youth's religiosity. The findings are expected to particularly beneficial for quality youth development or guideline for strengthening youth program. It will enable them to better understand and tailor programs to that youth's experience and environment. The central aim of this study is to examine whether religiosity influence on prosocial behavior among Buddhist youths in Thailand.

Concept and Theoretical Perspectives of Religiosity

The definition of religiosity can refer to various factors, including religious belief and religious practice. Miller and Thoresen (2003) have identified the operationalized religiosity by using religious beliefs and practices terms. Many researchers have identified religiosity in terms of different aspects of religious commitment or religious identity. The component of religious commitment mainly comprise with personal faith, participation in organized religious activities, and identification with a particular religious denomination. Correspondingly, dimension of religious identity refer to the subjective assessment of spirituality in one's life, religious practice, and communal affiliation. The overlap among these two conceptions recommend that the differentiation among ritual practice, religious affiliation, and a personal sense of one's religious belief in defining religious commitment or identity is need. Only investigating participation or affiliation probably underestimate the importance that religious identity has in one's life. For the measurement, various studies measure religiosity by typically range from not at all to very religious by using survey items with response categories (Schneider, Rice, & Hoogstra, 2004).

According to religiosity and spirituality can be considered as closely related constructs. Religiosity identified as commitment to, identification with and involvement in a religion or system of religious belief, or individual's relationship with a particular faith tradition or doctrine about a divine other or supernatural power. Also, it is associated with institutional organization and affiliation, adherence to moral beliefs, dogma, or creed, and ritualistic participation in organized or individual worship or sacred practices (Boswell

& Boswell-Ford, 2010; Hardy & Carlo, 2005). On the other hand, spirituality is identified as the intrinsic human capacity for self-transcendence, which the self is embedded in something greater than the self, including the sacred and which motivates the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose, and contribution (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003). Regarding measurement of religiosity in previous work, Barry and colleagues (Barry, Nelson, Davarya, & Urry, 2010) operationalized religiosity in terms of religious beliefs and practices which is best represented by individual beliefs and practices.

Study on religious concern of Thai youth has revealed that Thai students understand the concept and meaning of five precepts. Though, some of precepts may difficult to follow so that they may break the precept in terms of killing mosquitoes or other pests, cheating on exams, copying their friends' assignments, lying to parents, as well as drinking alcohol. Particularly, few of them break the third precept by cheating on their partners (Tapontong, Napompech, & Kukuan, 2005)

Conceptualization of Prosocial Behavior

Theoretically, prosocial behavior represents a broad category of acts generally made with the intention of benefiting others being hallmarks of social competence in childhood and youth. It is manifested by so-called "self-sacrifice," minimal concern for personal desires, or devotion to others pertained positively to altruistic moral reasoning whereas it is costly to the individual (Bekkers & Dirk de Graaf, 2005; Wentzel, Filisetti, & Looney, 2007). These voluntary behaviors include a broad range of activities in terms of both instrumental and emotional support, such as helping others in both an emergency and a non-emergency; sharing, comforting, rescuing, donating time, effort, or money; volunteering; and cooperative form of behavior rather than competing (Williams, 2007).

Buddhism Roots of Prosocial Behavior

For centuries, philosophers have mentioned the basis of prosocial and moral behaviors. Generally, philosophical concepts of prosocial behavior

and sympathy have their roots in religious doctrine. The most fundamental Buddhist code of ethics is the Five Precepts that define what kind of conduct should be avoided; (1) kill no living being, (2) never take that which is not freely given, (3) avoid sexual misconduct, (4) no lying, and (5) refrain from taking intoxicants (Instilling Goodness School, 2012). The “*via positiva*” of Buddhism outlines the virtues essential to reach ultimate happiness (Nirvana), including giving (Pāli: Dana), kindness (Pāli: Metta), sympathetic joy (Pāli: Mudita), as well as compassion (Pāli: Karuna). In addition, there are dharma principles of the four sublime states, called the Four Brahma Viharas, which is a series of four Buddhist virtues and meditation practices; (1) Loving kindness or benevolence (Pāli: Metta) is the wish that all sentient beings be happy without exception, (2) compassion (Pāli: Karuna) is mercy or special kindness shown to those who are suffer, (3) sympathetic joy (Pāli: Mudita) is being happy for others without a trace of envy, and (4) Equanimity (Pāli: Uppekha) is the ability to accept others as they are (Nyanaponika, 2012).

Religiosity Pertaining to Prosocial Behavior

Many reasons explain why religiosity has an influence on youth prosocial behavior. The increasing abstract thought and searching for an identity of young people draw them to religion and spiritual matters (Santrock, 1996). Religion is a form of social capital, acts as a source of social control, provides reinforcement for prosocial behavior, and punishment in case of lack of altruism (e.g., Hardy & Carlo, 2005; King & Furrow, 2004). Religiosity provides youth with moral directives to lead their decisions and behaviors (Smith, 2003).

Although these conceptual linkages have only been minimally investigated, religiosity and spirituality have been linked to altruism, sympathy, helping, and other prosocial behaviors. Religious involvement or religious importance are positively associated altruism and service (e.g., Furrow, King, & White, 2004; Smith & Denton, 2005). The study revealed religiosity was a significant predictor of youth behavior. Religious adolescents were related to more frequent volunteer work, and spent more

time on extracurricular activities, as well as less likely to engage in risky behaviors (e.g., smoking, drugs, and alcohol use (Schneider, Rice, & Hoogstra, 2004).

Regarding the type of religious orientation individual, the link between religiosity and prosocial behavior may differ. There are three types of religious orientation: persons with an extrinsic religious orientation regard religion as a means to other ends (e.g. social status); people with intrinsic religious orientation view religion as an intrinsically motivating end in itself; and those with quest religious orientation see religion as process involving questioning and re-examining values and beliefs (Batson & Grey, 1981). Previous studies of adolescences have found religious practice correspond to different levels of youths' happiness (Francis, et al., 2004; Mahaarcha, 2010).

Even these conceptual linkages have merely been minimally explored, religiosity has been related to humanitarian functions (e.g., altruism, sympathy, helping, prosocial behaviors, etc.). Given most religious doctrine have teaching that stress care and compassion with others, religiosity is a strong positive impact on youth prosocial behavior. In general, religious individuals are higher in prosocial behavior, as most religious institutions stress the significance of performing altruistic acts. Most studies, which have examined links between religiosity and prosocial behavior identically, found higher religiosity to be associated with higher rates of prosocial behavior (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Previous studies examining prosocial behavior both self-reported volunteering and actual volunteering show that intrinsic religiosity may better predict helping behavior than extrinsic religiosity. It can be explained that extrinsic religiosity refers to gaining more social and personal rewards than on following individual's religious commitment, whereas intrinsic religiosity is based on a religious system that internally guides individual's behavior (Hansen, Vandenberg, & Patterson, 1995).

Recently, the interdisciplinary field of positive youth development has regarded religious engagement as a developmental resource that promotes positive behavior and diminishes risk behavior (Scales & Leffert, 2004). Theoretically, religion is about motivation to refrain from participating in

risk behaviors. Chamratrithirong and colleagues (2010) found positive & indirect associations of spirituality of parents & teens within a family & the prevention of adolescent risk behaviors. Wallace and Williams (1997) proposed that for youth, religion is a secondary socialization influence together with school and peers, whereas family is regarded as the merely primary one. Religion can shape youths' behavior by affecting youths' beliefs, attitudes and behaviors through the mechanisms of social control, social support and values or identity. Besides, he also remarked that the family which is the primary socialization is shaped by religion as well. Another perspective is focused on religion motivate youth behavior directly. Smith (2003) argued that religious belief and experience are the stuff that prompts youth to act, meaning that religion motivates youth behavior directly. One of religion and youth research found that religion is the social control that push youth promptly toward conformity with social and legal norms influence youth to associate with significance others (e.g., family and friends) who hold such conformity standards (Bahr, Hawks, & Wang, 1993). In other words, religion is the mechanism that stimulates youth to follow or hold the social and legal norms of the family and peers. In sum, all of these perspectives depict religion that works through to shape youth behavior by the mechanism of social control and social learning.

Using path analyses to examine the mediation between religious socialization and prosocial behavior, Kyoung (2010) found that the relationship between religious socialization by parents and prosocial behavior and peer competence were fully mediated by religious identity. On the other hand, religious identity was partially mediated the relationship between religious socialization by friends and prosocial behavior and peer competence. With received greater religious socialization by parents, youths with low religious identity displayed higher in externalizing behavior problems.

In Thailand, there are some researches on youth's behavior and religious concern. Several characteristics of youths (i.e., age, gender, household size, education, and region of residence) influence the participation in Buddhist religious activities, except for work status (Suankhem, 1994). Sriboanum

(2007) examined what factors affect the factor effecting virtue of lower secondary school students in Bangkok. Characteristic of student, family and school environment, religious activity and media perception were found to be the factor influencing virtue level. It was also found that students of lower secondary school in Bangkok showed a high level of virtue and moral reasoning in the universal ethical principle orientation in all aspects except the discipline and the law and order orientation aspects. A study of the impact of integrated house, school, and psychological trait in Thai student marked that students who have Buddhist life style, following the religious teaching in daily life, report higher responsible for themselves and family (Yodrabum, 2005).

Additional evidence of the study of prosocial behavior in Thailand has focused on many kinds of actions (i.e., material donation, monetary donation, art and science donation, verbal support to make understanding and friendship, physical support, as well as giving with sympathy). Similar to western societies, female students, students who have higher-educated parents, as well as students from wealthier family found more prone to prosocial behavior than those who are not. Thus, we might conclude that transference, attitude, and value toward prosocial behavior, love and supportive child-rearing, and reasoning child-rearing, together with empathy could predict students' prosocial behavior (Nimtonkam, 1992).

Based on the theoretical perspective and literature reviews, it is hypothesized that religiosity affect prosocial behavior of youth, controlling with demographic characteristics of youth (namely gender, age, marital status, educational level, studying status, number of household asset, residential area, and living arrangement).

Material and Method

Data

Data for analyses were drawn from the 2008 Survey on Conditions of Society, Culture and Mental Health conducted by National Statistic Office of Thailand. In this survey, the population in the survey covered all aged 13 years and over who resided in the sample households. In this study, the

youth population of the analysis were limited to the aged 15 to 24 years and being Buddhist. The reason was some parts of questionnaire asking above 15 years and most of respondents were Buddhists (91%).

Measures

Dependent variable: Prosocial behavior

It was measured as a continuous variable and assessed using youth reports about frequency of the actions in one-year period before the survey, measuring the extent to which they did in such behavior as (1) helping others even not your relatives, (2) showing gratitude to the one who help you, (3) giving a chance to others first, (4) forgiving sincerely to others who feel remorse. Items are measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (always). (5) donating financial/ material/ food support, this item is measured on a 3-point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 2 (always). In addition, frequency of the actions in one-month period before the survey includes; (6) helping other when you have a chance, this item is measured on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 3 (A lot). Researcher created a prosocial behavior score by using the 6 items which having totally 21-point scale.

Independent variables: Religious practice and religious belief

1) Religious practice

Researcher measured frequency of youth practice in several the activities during the previous year (i.e., chanting, offering food to monk, offering gift to monks, maintaining the five precepts, and meditation). The 10-point response format for individual items ranges from 0 (never) to 10 (everyday/ almost everyday). Then, the total score were created by summing the responses. Score for these 5 items were summed so that higher values reflect greater level of religiosity of youth.

2) Religious belief

As subjective measure of religiosity, researcher used 4 indicators to measure level of religiosity of youth. Youths were asked ‘whether religion is necessary to your living’: 0 (necessary), 1 (not sure), and 2 (unnecessary), ‘in case of facing life or work problem, do you apply doctrine to overcome’ and coded 0 (never) to 4 (always), and assessed ‘the levels of religious of

youth' and 'whether youth follow the doctrine' which were coded 0 (not at all) to 10 (totally).

Other variables

Other variables include socioeconomic characteristics of youth. As indicators of socio-economic characteristics of youth, gender, age, marital status, educational level, studying status, number of household possession, residential area, and living arrangement were analyzed. For marital status of youth, those youth who are single were coded as one. All others (i.e., married, divorced, and separated) were coded as zero. Education level of youth was categorized into uneducated, kindergarten, primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary/ vocational education, undergraduate education, and postgraduate education. Studying status can be classified by in or out of school. Out of school was coded as 1, while youth who are in-school was coded as 0. Household possession was defined to the ownership of four particular household items, namely computer with internet access, washing machine, air conditioner, and car/ pickup/ van. As they are not highly common asset of the household, these items were selected to be the criterion. Area of residence where youth live are coded between rural (0) and urban (1). Living arrangement was assessed from household roster which indicates respondents live with parent in the household was operationalized as living arrangement. Four dummy variables were created; (1) Living with both parents, (2) Living with father only, (3) Living with mother only, and (4) Not living with parent. Each category may or may not include the others (i.e. relatives, non-relatives).

Method

Since the independent variables are continuous variables, this study employed Multiple Regression Analyses to investigate the relationship between religiosity and prosocial behavior.

Results

The results are presented in three parts: a descriptive analysis of youth's characteristics, prosocial behavior by gender and studying status,

and an analysis of the relationship between religiosity and prosocial behavior of youth in regression models.

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of all variables. Most samples were female (61.4%). Mean age of youth were 19.5 years. One-third of youths were ever married. Almost half of youths had lower secondary education and 45.6% were still in-school. 32.4% of youth did not have any item of household asset. Two-third of youths was living in urban area. Most of youths did not live with parent in the household. Thai youth reported low level of religious belief, while reported moderate level of religious belief and prosocial behavior.

Table 1 Percentage, mean, and number of the youths by characteristics

Variables	N	Percentage/ Mean	S.D.
Sex			
Female	1,368	61.4	
Male	859	38.6	
Mean age	-	Mean = 19.5	(2.9)
Marital status			
Single	1,558	70.0	
Ever married	669	30.0	
Education level			
Never study	27	1.2	
Kindergarten	19	0.9	
Primary education	333	15.0	
Lower secondary education	979	44.0	
Upper secondary/ Vocational education	747	33.5	
Undergraduate education	121	5.4	
Post graduate education	1	0.0	
Studying status			
In-school	1,015	45.6	
Out-of-school	1,212	54.4	

Number of household possession			
0	722	32.4	
1	697	31.3	
2	358	16.1	
3	215	9.7	
4	235	10.6	
Residential area			
Rural	784	35.2	
Urban	1,443	64.8	
Living arrangement			
Both parent	854	38.3	
Father only	63	2.8	
Mother only	311	14.0	
No parent	999	44.9	
Mean score of religious practice (0-20)	-	Mean = 5.5	(3.2)
Mean score of religious belief (0-26)	-	Mean = 14.4	(4.5)
Mean score of prosocial behavior (0-21)	-	Mean = 13.0	(3.4)
Total	100.0	2,227	

Note: Standard Deviation for continuous variables

Due to the highly significant differences in prosocial behaviors between girls and boys, as well as between in and out of school youths, additional model were developed. In this sample, from those who were still in-school, both male and female youths showed greater level of prosocial behavior than those who are out-of-school. Particularly for girls, in-school girls had obviously higher prosocial behavior—helping others even not your relatives, showing gratitude, giving a chance to others, forgiving, and donating—than out-of-school girls. Girls who are in-school reported higher in the item—helping others when they have a chance—than those who are out-of-school at a close to significance level. Among male youths, whether in or out-of-school youth did not show much difference in prosocial behavior score (see Table 2)

Table 2 Prosocial behavior by gender and studying status

Variables	Male (<i>n</i> = 859)			Female (<i>n</i> = 1,368)		
	In-school	Out-of-school	p-value	In-school	Out-of-school	p-value
Helping even not relatives						
Low (0)	4.9	3.8	.640	2.8	2.8	.036*
Medium (1-2)	55.6	57.9		54.0	60.8	
High (3-4)	39.5	38.4		43.2	36.4	
Helping when have a chance						
Low (0)	1.0	1.8	.592	0.0	0.3	.074
Medium (1-2)	90.9	90.7		87.0	90.0	
High (3)	8.1	7.5		13.0	9.7	
Showing gratitude						
Low (0)	2.2	0.9	.183	1.2	1.1	.006**
Medium (1-2)	31.1	34.6		23.1	30.9	
High (3-4)	66.7	64.5		75.8	68.1	
Giving a chance						
Low (0)	2.2	3.5	.367	2.5	2.9	.029*
Medium (1-2)	60.8	62.5		52.6	59.3	
High (3-4)	37.0	33.9		45.0	37.8	
Forgiving						
Low (0)	1.0	2.2	.022*	1.6	2.5	.020*
Medium (1-2)	38.7	46.1		30.5	36.8	
High (3-4)	60.3	51.7		67.9	60.7	
Donating						
Low (0)	29.4	44.3	.000***	25.7	32.9	.000***
Medium (1)	64.5	51.0		65.4	62.5	
High (2)	6.1	4.7		8.9	4.6	

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 3 examined the relationship between religious factors and prosocial behavior. Model 1 begins the analysis with the focus on the relationship between other variables and prosocial behavior. Gender of youth was most significantly related to prosocial behavior. Males had lower prosocial behavior than females. Educational level had a positive relationship with prosocial behavior. Those who were out-of-school had lower levels of prosocial behavior than in-school youths. Respondents who had higher household possession had greater have prosocial behavior. Living arrangement was not significantly associated with having had prosocial behavior.

In Model 2, the effect of religious factors and prosocial behavior is a little different from the first model. Concerning religious factors, the results show that, youths who reported maintaining five precepts were related to have more prosociality. Those youth who reported greater in Applying doctrine to daily life and following the doctrine tended to have higher levels of prosocial behavior than those with lower applying and following the doctrine.

Discussion

This present study contributes to the understanding of religiosity to prosocial behavior among Buddhist youths in Thailand. These findings are consistent with prior studies, which have identified the religious factors that are related to desirable behavior of youth. As mentioned above, having Buddhist life style and following the religious teaching in daily life, youths are more likely to display higher prosocial behavior (e.g., Yodrabum, 2005). With regard to religious belief, only Applying doctrine to daily life and following the doctrine influence on prosocial behavior. The hypothesis regarding religious belief was, in part, based on study by Wallace and Williams (1997), who noted religion plays a role in shaping youths' behavior by affecting their beliefs and attitudes through the mechanisms of social control, social support and values or identity. However, there is no significant influence of belief in necessity of religion to the living and religious level on youth's prosociality. In a sense, applying and following the doctrine can

Table 3 Regression models of the relationship between religiosity and prosocial behavior of youth

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	12.016***	9.886***
Male	-0.717***	-0.356*
Age	0.033	0.012
Never married	-0.150	-0.108
Education level	0.175**	0.140*
Out-of-school	-0.702***	-0.526**
Number of household asset	0.185**	0.153**
Urban area	0.051	0.001
Living arrangement (No parent: ref)		
Both parent	0.147	0.104
Father only	-0.672	-0.713
Mother only	0.067	0.085
<u>Religious practice</u>		
Chanting		0.094
Offering food to monk		0.114
Offering gift to monk		0.023
Maintaining the five precepts		0.247***
Meditation		0.071
<u>Religious belief</u>		
Necessity of religion to the living		0.119
Applying doctrine to daily life		0.630***
Religious level		-0.109
Following the doctrine		0.206**
R ²	0.040	0.120
Adjusted R ²	0.036	0.112

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

be viewed as an expression which closely link to prosocial behavior.

There are many Buddhist doctrines, but these five precepts are the primary basis mode of training in Buddhist practice. Based on the study of Tapontong, Napompech, and Kukuan (2005), Thai students are able to understand the concept and meaning of five precepts correctly, however, some precepts may appear more difficult to follow. In this study, only maintain the five precepts can determine the youth's prosocial behavior. We found no relationship between prosocial behavior and some following religious practices; namely, chanting, offering food and gift to monk, together with meditation. The benefit of taking five precepts provides a wholesome foundation of the moral obligation for self-growth. The first precept encourages goodwill, compassion, and kindness. The second precept helps to promote altruism, generosity, honesty, service, non-attachment, contentment, and right livelihood. The third precept leads to develop self-restraint, mastery over the senses and emotions, renunciation, and control of sensual desire. The fourth precept helps to build up the honesty, reliability, and moral integrity. The fifth precept can be instrumental in cultivating wisdom, mindfulness, and clarity of mind (Plamintr, 1994). From the present research findings, obviously, an adherence to the Buddhist doctrine has been suggested as increasing prosocial behavior. Maintaining the five precepts is found to be the single most important religious practice for predicting prosocial behavior. Since practicing all five precepts are quite hard, the individual who practices all five precepts tend to act prosocially regularly.

In-school youth have greater level of prosocial behavior than those who are out-of-school. Based on primary socialization theory (Oetting & Donnermeyer, 1991), school is seen as one of three primary socialization agents—family, school, and peers for youths. School is capable of transmitting prosocial norms in consequence of the assigned duty from society to transmit certain cultural and behavioral norms. Besides, gender differences in prosocial behavior are generally consistent with that found in researches of Western and Thai cultures (e.g., Beutel & Johnson, 2004; Ma, Cheung, & Shek, 1996; Nimitongkam, 1992; Pakaslahti, Karjalainen, & Keltikangas, 2002; Suawannachort, 2005; Tohkani, 2011; Yodrbum, 2005).

Female youths are prone to have significantly greater levels of prosociability than male youths. In addition, in line with study of Nimtongkam, household wealth effects are related to prosocial behavior of youth. A possibility of explanation is that household wealth is associated with donation which is one of prosocial behavior items. For this standpoint, youths who come from relatively wealthier families do have more extra money for living and have more capacity to donate.

A possible major predictor suggested by Bekkers (2004) is that education increases prosocial behavior. From the study on the influence of education on prosocial behavior, the higher educated people tend to show a wide range of prosocial behaviors, such as volunteer, give blood, register for postmortem organ donation, and engage in philanthropy, and donors than the lower educated. Bekkers and Dirk de Graaf (2005) observed that education increases prosocial behavior as it is considered as capacity of possession and accession to the resources. Further, not only educational level of youth, but also education level of parents has a positive relationship with youth's prosocial behavior. This finding is compatible with that of Nimtongkam (1992), who identified the education level of parent will enhance the level of prosociality of child.

Precisely how religious factors will affect the youth's prosocial behavior recommend for policy implication. As regards the underlying relations of religiosity and prosocial behavior of youth, this study does suggest religious-oriented socialization can benefit the child outcomes. This paper draws attention to the need for practitioner to reaffirm the awareness of religion. Repeatedly encouraging young people to take part in religious activities and launching the program related to religion to ensure that at least they recognize and aware of it. Particularly, the findings of this study support the need for services for male youths.

Recently, one of research on Thai youths had focused on ethical socialization (Tancharoen & Maphud, 2009), which indicated that chief agency of religious socialization is the parent in terms of doctrine, thought and religious practice. Parent may be held responsible for foster the religious belief and practice; chanting, meditation, practice the dharma in daily life,

take the child to the temple for offering food to monk in important day. Education institution also takes part in cultivate by teaching and practice the dharma in the holy day and provide the instruction media. School may hold Buddhist activities such as dharma talks or offering Buddhist courses on dharma every Friday afternoon classes. Many possible sources of socialization agents in Thai contexts, e.g. Sunday Buddhist school, Buddhism-oriented school, or even Buddhist website.

Religion is significance domains in all cultures and their potential impact on behavior, particularly among youth, is seldom explored. This study recommends considering religion as one of an essential component in a wide range of young people's behaviors. Researcher probably may use different research methods, for example, naturalistic observation, peer rating, etc. It would be useful to study in cross-cultural studies and other religions. Some limitations of our study should be emphasized. There are some limitations to the present study. Some religious young people may behave prosocially with no truly internalizing prosocial values. On the other hand, they have other motives for being altruistic, such as gaining positive reinforcement, approval for action prosocially, or fear of negative consequences for not having prosocial actions. Thus, the present study is merely one step forward in understanding the roles of religiosity on teen prosocial behavior.

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