

Process of Local Wisdom Transfer to Promote Good Relationship between the Elderly and New Generations

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Abstract

Thai society is undergoing conflicts in the relationship between new generations and the elderly caused of the different frameworks of beliefs. The wisdom transfer process, an approach used in old times, is a solution to such conflicts. However, currently, it is used as a support mechanism. This research aims to develop a wisdom transfer process to ensure a good relationship between new generations and the elderly and study its efficacy. The process was applied to the elderly and new generations in Thung Samo Community, Phanom Thuan District, Kanchanaburi Province. The wisdom transfer process consists of 5 steps, namely Step 1: Agreement of local wisdom learning between the elderly and new generations, Step 2: Learning the background of local wisdom, Step 3: Learning by doing, Step 4: Local wisdom creation based on the ideas of young generations, and Step 5: Publicising the learned local wisdom achievements could boost the relationship between the two age groups, with a higher mean in the post-process. More outstanding communication between the two age groups was the key to better understanding between new generations and the elderly.

Keywords: local wisdom transfer, good relationship, elderly, new generations

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduce the Problem

Rural families in the existing Thai society typically consist of grandparents (the elderly) and grandchildren (as new generations), and parents (as working-age people) who step out of the home to earn a living. Most of them have to work out of their area of residence and visit their families on holidays. This phenomenon is called skipped-generation households (Jitwilai, 2018). Two age groups living together may be involved in conflicts due to their differences in several aspects, i.e., ideas, behavior, and beliefs caused by growing up under different environmental and social conditions (Powers, Gray & Garver, 2013; Aggarwal et al., 2017). Such conflicts between the elderly and new generations can result in violent fights in some families, with destructive behavior and physical attacks on the elderly. Such situations adversely affect the mental health of both parties and hamper a good relationship between them. (Rittakananon, 2007; Dhiman & Jain, 2016)

Government and private agencies focus on finding ways to resolve conflicts between these two age groups and implement guidelines to improve society so that the young generations can live in peace with the elderly while respecting them and their experience. Simultaneously, it is to bring the capability of young generations and enhance local knowledge and wisdom for internationalization that can be utilized in several aspects, both life and social development (Sungsri, 2007; Ratana-ubol, 2008; Sae-Eaiw, 2020).

Non-formal education is a form of education management following Thailand's National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999). It is expected to be one of the mechanisms that will help remove this generation gap (Ministry of Education, 1999). Therefore, these issues are interesting to apply government policies for concrete implementation. Using the local wisdom learning process as a mechanism can also help build a healthy relationship between the knowledgeable elderly and the creative and innovative new generations. Literature review shows that local wisdom learning between the two age groups can enhance local wisdom achievements that create income. (Sae-Eaiw, 2020). However, there have been no apparent reports on the relationship between

the two age groups. Therefore, this research aimed to determine if local wisdom learning could build better relationships between the two age groups. The knowledge obtained from this research would be beneficial to Thai society to apply local wisdom learning to solve the problems of relationships along with enhancing and nationalizing local wisdom for further acceptance.

1.2 Research Questions

- 1) How was the local wisdom transfer process to promote good relationship between the elderly and new generations undertaken?
- 2) How was the relationship between the elderly and new generations after the local wisdom transfer process?

1.3 Research Objectives

- 1) To develop a local wisdom transfer process to promote good relationships between the elderly and new generations.
- 2) To study the results of the local wisdom transfer process to promote good relationship between the elderly and new generations.

1.4 Literature Review

1) Non-formal education management

Non-formal education management involves the devising of contents and activities based on the targets' requirements and ensuring overall development, covering aspects like career, quality of life, and well-being. Education managers are in charge of learning facilitators following plans that can be flexibly adjusted to the situation (Rattana-ubol, 2008; Ministry of Education, 2008). Principles of non-formal education management should consider equality of learners, participation, association with the way of life, diversity, and awareness of the different learning styles (Ali Hamadache, 1991; Kedrayate, 2012). Non-formal education management process is usually used for the learning process design for different targets in the society under the four main steps of implementation, i.e., (a) need analysis, (b) planning of collaborative learning, (c) actual learning and (d) evaluation.

2) Local wisdom transfer

Local wisdom transfer was the way of life in the old days and a mechanism to strengthen the relationship between generations. It refers to the knowledge, beliefs, and capabilities of the local people from accumulated experiences and learning, combined with continuous invention and development, passed on from generation to generation for problem-solving, adaptation, and survival in the environment and the society while conserving culture (Sinthopphan, 2015; Punyopashtambha, 2018, Sae-Eaiw, 2020). There are seven approaches to local wisdom transfer in the context of the Thai society (Nathalang, 1997), namely (1) narration or verbal teaching, (2) demonstration, (3) practical application, (4) self-learning, (5) learning sources (6) recording knowledge in textbooks or on websites, and (7) observation or indirect imitation. In recent times, wisdom transfer has started to disappear as young generations consider it out-of-date and not applicable from the economic aspect. However, local wisdom recovered during the COVID-19 crisis because unemployment compelled community members to extend the available local resources to create income sources and make a living.

3) Relationship between the age ranges

A lower level of relationship is mainly caused by conflicts between young generations and the elderly. These conflicts are caused by several factors (Lievrow & Livingstone, 2002; Shapiro, 2004), as follows: (a) The technological advances that facilitate young generations to access all information rapidly change traditional learning platforms. This contradicts the elderly's beliefs because they do not believe that learning by technology is the best educational platform. (b) Culture has changed as young generations accept and adopt foreign cultures so much that they do not follow the old ways, like no respect paid to the elderly or female teenagers living with male teenagers before marriage. Such changes make the elderly view young generations as disobedient and aggressive. (Segal, 1991; Aggarwal et al., 2017) (c) They communicate without listening to each other's reasons and do not express their true feelings. These conflicts cause a lower level of good relationships. (Aggarwal et al., 2017) However, there are studies on the expected relationship between the elderly and young generations in the context of Thai society, with findings that there should be at least four components of the variables indicating behavior, i.e., (1) acceptance of personal characteristics, (2) compromising communication, (3) trust, and (4) sincere compliments (Department of Mental Health, 2003; Sirathatnararajana, 2016, Chongvisal, 2007).

1.5 Conceptual Framework

In this research, the steps for non-formal education were designed for learning and local wisdom transfer approaches. They rely on collaboration between new generations and the elderly for further development of the local wisdom transfer process, which refers to the systematic transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of local wisdom learning from the elderly to new generations. The main objective was to build a good relationship between the elderly and new generations through local wisdom transmission. The conceptual framework is displayed as follows.

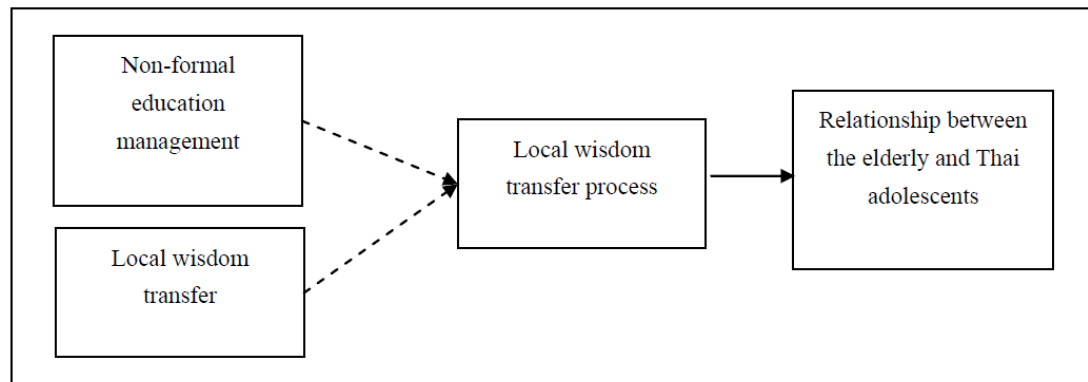


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

2. Method

2.1 Study Area

Thung Samo Community, Phanom Thuan District, and Kanchanaburi Province, consisting of 4 villages with 20% of the elderly and 10% of new generations in the total population, were used as the study area. Thung Samo Community is a traditional community with local wisdom and traditional art contributing to the formation of its identity, e.g., bamboo wickerwork, traditional Thai-style stucco, loincloths, artificial flowers, Kanom Lamood (A traditional Thai dessert), etc. However, these good things are no longer being passed to the next generation as new generations are not interested in acquiring these skills.

2.2 Targets

There were 2 groups of the targets in this research as follows.

- 1) The elderly as local wisdom teachers, classified as 5 Kanom Lamood teachers, four artificial flower teachers, and four loincloth teachers. All of them had more than 20 years of work experience.
- 2) 20 new generations aged between 15 and 25, born and brought up and residing in the Thung Samo Community. They were all granted informed consent to participate in the research without force.

2.3 Implementation Process

- 1) Area preparation: The participants were informed of the research objectives in this step. The level of relationship between new generations and the elderly before collaborative learning management planning was evaluated. The researcher was the facilitator and the person in charge of processing the data obtained to design systematic learning plans.
- 2) Planning: Collaborative learning management plans were developed among the researcher, new generations, and the elderly using the public stage so that all target groups could freely express their ideas. The plans were presented to new generations and the elderly for common acceptance before moving to the next step.
- 3) Implementation and observation: The act of learning three types of wisdom, i.e., making Kanom Lamood, artificial flowers, and loincloths, took place in this step. The researcher was an observer here and observed the behavior and interaction between new generations and the elderly. After the completion of each learning exercise, new generations and the elderly were given time to reflect on what they acknowledged and learned in each activity.
- 4) Learning reflection: This step studied the relationship between new generations and the elderly after local wisdom learning by setting the public stage again so that new generations and the elderly could reflect on their

feelings towards each other. An evaluation form was also completed to understand the relationship between new generations and the elderly as local wisdom teachers after the collaborative learning activity.

2.4 Research Instruments

1) The questionnaire to evaluate the relationship between new generations and the elderly was designed by the researcher based on interpersonal relationships, characteristics to build the interpersonal relationship, and psychology to build a good interpersonal relationship, and good relationship behavior between the two age groups (Department of Mental Health, 2003; Sirathatnararajana, 2016, Chongvisal, 2007). The questionnaire contained a 5-point rating scale. It was divided into four aspects, namely (A) acceptance of personal characteristics, (B) compromising communication, (C) trust, and (D) sincerity and compliments. In this regard, content validity and Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) of the questionnaire was tested by two psychological experts and an expert in non-formal education before use.

2) The filed record to study expression between new generations and the elderly, with four issues for the record, i.e., (A) expressed acceptance of personal characteristics, (B) interpersonal communication, (C) trust, and (D) sincerity and compliment

2.5 Data Analysis

1) The results of developing the local wisdom transfer process promote the relationship between the elderly and new generations by making conclusions regarding the learning management plans developed for local wisdom transfer.

2) The results of using the local wisdom transfer process to promote the relationship between the elderly and new generations divided the data into two parts.

2.1) The qualitative data from the field research, collected during the implementation of the plans, of which contents were analyzed, and conclusions were made concerning the four issues as per the field record.

2.2) The quantitative data from the questionnaire analyzed the relationship between new generations and the elderly by mean and SD, of which the results were displayed as individuals. The components of the relationship variables were classified by presenting the viewpoints of new generations and the elderly.

3. Finding

3.1 Local Wisdom Transfer Process to Promote Relationship between the Elderly and New Generations

The local wisdom transfer process comprised 5 steps as per the local wisdom learning management plans for ensuring collaboration between the two age groups. The 5 steps are as follows:

Table 1. The results of the development of local wisdom transfer process to promote relationship between the elderly and new generations

Local wisdom learning management plans		The developed local wisdom transfer process
Act Plan 1	Common understanding	Step 1: Agreement of local wisdom learning between the elderly and new generations
Act Plan 2	Setting goals and creating local wisdom learning management plans	
Act Plan 3	The narration of my local wisdom: Kanom Lamood	Step 2: Learning the background of local wisdom
Act Plan 4	The narration of my local wisdom: Artificial flowers	
Act Plan 5	The narration of my local wisdom: Loincloths	Step 3: Learning by doing
Act Plan 6	Making Kanom Lamood	
Act Plan 7	Making artificial flowers	
Act Plan 8	Making loincloths	
Act Plan 9	To improve Kanom Lamood making	Step 4: Local wisdom creation based on ideas of young generations
Act Plan 10	To improve artificial flower making	
Act Plan 11	To improve loincloth pattern making	
Act Plan 12	To prepare the exhibition of the learned local wisdom achievements	Step 5: Publicizing the learned local wisdom achievements

Step 1: Agreement of local wisdom learning between the elderly and new generations

The objective of this step was to set the common goals in local wisdom learning. The role of the elderly was to

explain primary information of learning each type of local wisdom. The new generations were to listen, reflect on their desired outcomes, and communicate those to the elderly. The activities mainly focused on narration to share the experiences of the elderly as local wisdom teachers and non-formal conversations to exchange their viewpoints to find conclusions that finally led to local wisdom learning plans. The evaluation was based on the success of local wisdom learning plans with clearly defined goals, the role of each party, and expected learning approaches.

Step 2: Learning the background of local wisdom

The objective of this step was to encourage new generations to take pride in their local wisdom and accept and appreciate the efficiency and skill of the elderly. The role of the elderly was to narrate their background, history, and beliefs in several aspects of local wisdom while new generations were listeners and kept questioning doubtful issues. The activities included dialogues that narrated local wisdom stories and showed evidence/information like materials, documents, or achievements by the elderly. The new generations were given time to question or express their ideas and communicate these to the elderly without focusing on judgment of right or wrong but rather giving precedence to understanding each other. The evaluation was based on new generations' feelings after they acknowledged the background of local wisdom and their feelings toward the elderly or the local wisdom teachers.

Step 3: Learning by doing - The objective of this step was to provide an opportunity for new generations to develop their communication skills during local wisdom learning by learning with the elderly. The role of the elderly was to teach and transfer skills required for learning each type of local wisdom, e.g., the technique of making colorful Kanom Lamood, carving artificial flowers, and making fine and firm texture of loincloths. The role of new generations was to learn each type of local wisdom. The activities mainly focused on active learning guided by local wisdom teachers and collaborative problem solving between new generations and the elderly in possible problematic situations. Moreover, new generations were required to note their learning, with a discussion and reflection of feelings shared after this step. The evaluation was based on the products obtained from learning each type of local wisdom and data obtained from sharing ideas between new generations and the elderly who communicated their feelings.

Step 4: Local wisdom creation based on the ideas of young generations - The objective of this step was to promote new generations' creativity and improve local wisdom with the elderly for their confidence and acceptance of the efficiency of new generations. The role of the elderly was of a listener who understood and provided suggestions to new generations. The prominent role was to think and design local wisdom following modern society's needs and context. The activities mainly focused on the workshop and discussion to share experiences and viewpoints that finally led to the conclusion to design modern local wisdom. The evaluation was based on the achievements of the designed local wisdom plan and data obtained from sharing ideas and communicating feelings.

Step 5: Publicizing the learned local wisdom achievements - The objective of this step was to display the results of the implementation of the local wisdom learning program and evaluate the level of relationship between the two age groups before and after the program. The role of the elderly and new generations was to build a shared learning space to exhibit the achievements of local wisdom for local people to come and learn and to buy various local wisdom products. Activities included the community exhibition in Thung Samo Subdistrict Municipality. The evaluation was based on the data of ideas from people in the community who visited the exhibition and the data obtained from joint reflection between new generations and the elderly after the community exhibition.

3.2 Relationship between the Elderly and New Generations after Local Wisdom Transfer Process

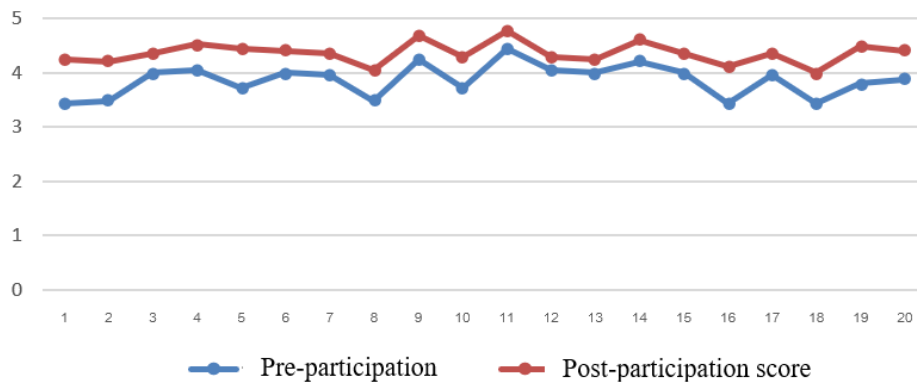


Figure 2. The score of the level of relationship between new generations and the elderly according to new generations' viewpoints, classified by individuals

Figure 2 shows the scores of relationship between new generations and the elderly according to new generations' pre-participation and post-participation viewpoints. All 20 new generations (100%) had higher post-participation scores.

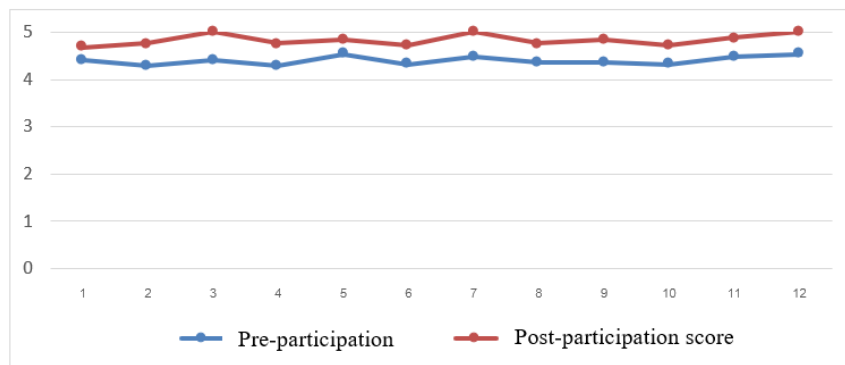


Figure 3. The score of the level of relationship between new generations and the elderly according to the elderly's viewpoints, classified by individuals

Figure 3 shows the scores of the relationship between new generations and the elderly according to the elderly's pre-participation and post-participation viewpoints. All 12 elderly (100%) had higher post-participation scores.

Table 2. The results of the development of local wisdom transfer process to promote relationship between the elderly and new generations

Components of relationship between the two age ranges	Pre-participation		Post-participation	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1) Acceptance of personal characteristics	3.89	0.54	4.37	0.49
2) Compromising communication	3.74	0.65	4.33	0.51
3) Trust	3.90	0.57	4.31	0.46
4) Sincere compliments	3.80	0.62	4.38	0.54
Total	3.86	0.61	4.36	0.51

Table 2 shows The mean relationship between new generations and the elderly, compared by the defined components according to new generations' pre- and post-participation viewpoints. The mean increased in every component post-participation. Pre-participation and trust had the highest mean ($\bar{x} = 3.90$) while compromising communication had the lowest mean ($\bar{x} = 3.74$). However, post-participation, the mean increased in every

component. Sincere compliments had the highest mean.

Table 3. The mean of relationship between new generations and the elderly according to the elderly's pre- and post participation viewpoints, classified by the components

Components of relationship between the two age ranges	Pre-participation		Post-participation	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1) Acceptance of personal characteristics	4.68	0.59	4.84	0.36
2) Compromising communication	4.29	0.54	4.85	0.37
3) Trust	4.23	0.49	4.86	0.43
4) Sincere compliments	4.33	0.52	4.75	0.35
Total	4.39	0.54	4.83	0.38

Table 3 shows the mean relationship between new generations and the elderly, compared by the components according to the elderly's pre-and post-participation viewpoints. The mean increased in every component post-participation. Pre-participation, the acceptance of personal characteristics, had the highest mean ($\bar{x} = 4.68$), while trust had the lowest mean ($\bar{x} = 4.23$). However, the mean increased in every component post-participation. Trust had the highest mean.

Table 4. The results of the analysis of ideas reflected about the relationship between new generations and the elderly after local wisdom transfer

Components of relationship between the two age ranges	Analysis results	Examples of the targets' words
1) Acceptance of personal characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning activities facilitated both parties to acknowledge and understand each other's differences. - new generations and the elderly learned to respect each other and participate in the activities. 	<p>Examples of new generations' words. "...I listened to local wisdom narrated by grandmas, and I felt amazed at their capabilities. They truly and profoundly knew about it, and were very smart..."</p> <p>"...Participation in activities made me realize that the elderly respected us a lot. They neither forced nor caused frustration throughout learning..."</p> <p>Examples of the elderly' words. "...Children of today must be the way they are. We cannot expect them to live like us because this is the different era..."</p>
2) Compromising communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local wisdom transfer provided opportunities for the two age groups to explain. - The mechanisms in the activities facilitated each party to listen to each other's ideas and viewpoints. - Sweet conversations brought comfortable feelings during interpersonal communication. 	<p>Examples of new generations' words. "...I had more opportunity to talk to the elderly until I felt that we fight sometimes because we actually talk less..."</p> <p>"...The activities shaped us to become more reasonable listeners, and learned to talk to the elderly with more polite words..."</p> <p>"...I felt guilty that I used to argue with my grandma, just because I wanted to win her agreement without any reasoning..."</p> <p>Examples of the elderly' words. "...The activities made us talk. So, now I realize that sometimes teenagers can talk nicely..."</p>
3) Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning activities facilitated new generations to feel generosity and trust of the elderly to touch expensive materials/objects with the risk of damage in case of carelessness. - new generations acknowledged trust from the elderly during their learning as they were supported regardless of whether it was right or wrong, and good or not good. 	<p>Examples of new generations' words. "...I can't believe grandmas would allow me to touch their loinclothes at thousands baht, and even allowed us to take those loinclothes home. They must trust us a lot..."</p> <p>"...I saw grandmas supporting us while we were making Kanom Lamood. They kept cheering us although we wasted a lot of those snacks from the start..."</p> <p>Examples of the elderly' words. "...Young generations are smarter than us. They are only younger at age, but very quick learners. We must trust them..."</p>
4) Sincere compliments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - new generations were brave to show respect or greet the elderly without feeling nervous/shy like during the pre-participation stage. - new generations and the elderly thanked and apologized each other without consideration of age or seniority. 	<p>Examples of new generations' words. "...I feel I can show respect and apologize grandpas and grandmas without apprehension than before..."</p> <p>Examples of the elderly' words. "...The elderly can apologize younger people if we are wrong. And we must compliment them if they do good things..."</p>

4. Discussion

The local wisdom transfer process is a social mechanism in Thai society that can unite people in communities

(Punyopashtambha, 2018, Ueangchokchai, 2020; Nathalang, 1997). However, this research used non-formal education to support the local wisdom transfer process more clearly regarding goals, approaches, and evaluation. This concept was applied flexibly to suit the context of the community and the targets' needs as the core of non-formal education management. (Sumamal et al., 2021; Smith, 2001) The main goal of education was to develop the relationship between the two groups.

Before starting the local wisdom transfer process, the relationship between new generations and the elderly were studied. According to new generations' viewpoints, communication was at the weakest point in the relationship. Low, unclear, and wrong communication was identified as the main factor that caused conflicts between the two parties, affecting their relationship. This factor aligned with the findings in the research papers of several countries in the world and the expression behavior of young generations with lower face-to-face communication (Lievrow & Livingstone, 2002; Shapiro, 2004; Segal, 1991; Aggarwal et al., 2017). In contrast, they created their identities in the virtual world and thus paid less attention to others' feelings in communication (Sae-Eaiw, 2020). According to the elderly's viewpoints, it was found that the mean in all components of their relationship had higher scores than the evaluation results by new generations. Trust had the lowest evaluation score but with high interpretation. The data reflects that the elderly in Thai society is highly mature, following the nature of learning in adults who use understanding and their life experiences to accept the identities of new generations who have different viewpoints from older generations (Knowles, 1970; Rattana-ubol, 1999). This conformed to the research evaluation results of the elderly, in which acceptance of personal characteristics had the highest mean when compared with other components.

The process of local wisdom transfer began with an agreement between the two groups, conforming to the initial process of learning management for adults, called 'Andragogy,' wherein preparation, understanding, and agreement are needed to ensure agreement between learners and learning managers (Knowles, 1975; Rattana-ubol, 1999). The key to activities at this step included narrating their own needs through non-formal conversations, a friendly atmosphere, and informal communication with the facilitators to control implementation so that all would feel safe in the learning space provided. Apart from the opportunity to talk, the activities should encourage all learners to be good listeners (Sumamol et al., 2021, Sae-Eaiw, 2020; Charles, 1971). Individual learners can use the data from the listening during interactions to acknowledge, understand and reason one another's viewpoints.

For the narration of the background of local wisdom, the contents were just a mechanism of continuity (Office of the National Education Commission, 1998). However, what was necessary at this step was the opportunities for the elderly to communicate as true experts in local wisdom through a chronological narration of the background in detail, with descriptions based on scientific principles. This was part of the reasons that made new generations accept latent potential in the elderly and look over limitations caused by uncontrollable physical degeneration. Simultaneously, new generations would admire and cherish the elderly living together in the communities more. (Kaplan et al. 1998; Mebain & Pezzuti, 2020).

Local wisdom learning by doing and local wisdom development was the step for new generations to prove themselves so that the elderly acknowledged the responsibility for the learning (Jitwilai, 2018; Sae-Eaiw, 2020). That was because the elderly believed that young generations were interested in a particular thing for only a short period, and then they got bored and gave up on learning. However, the process of doing local wisdom learning this required time demonstration from the elderly as examples. Then, new generations learned to solve problems, with the elderly as advisors who provided suggestions until they finished learning. While learning, new generations and the elderly were the main mechanisms in developing interpersonal relationships because of collaboration in learning (Fingerman & Perlmutter, 1995; Silverstein, Bengtson & Lawton, 1997). To clarify, new generations kept questioning the elderly in case of problems and listened to the solutions presented by the elderly. Sometimes, new generations exchanged their ideas with the elderly to suggest new approaches that the elderly had not acknowledged until then. Close collaboration through a trustable communication process facilitated both parties to learn and adapt to each other, with better communication development, higher trust, and more feelings of admiration towards each other (Sirathatnararajana, 2016; Chongvisal, 2007; Smith & Yeager, 1999).

Publicizing the learned local wisdom achievements was the proof of an improved relationship between new generations and the elderly because both parties had to collaborate in preparing the community exhibition and displaying their achievements (products) from the learning process. No conflict was found between both parties, as they planned and allocated jobs. This reflected more acceptance and trust in each other, with more positive conversations. New generations also reflected that they had developed a better attitude toward the elderly after participating in the local wisdom learning program. This can be theoretically described that when the root cause

due to wrong communication was solved through a participatory communication process, both parties learned to adjust their conceptual framework by willingly listening to one another and using logic rather than emotions in decision-making (Charles, 1971; Habermas, 1981; Kenner et al., 2007); as a result, communication was flexible and soft. In addition, most new generations in Thai culture are taught to be courteous and show respect to the elderly. This prominence made the relationship between the two age ranges connect more easily.

5. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The local wisdom transfer process in this research was developed in the context of the community selected by purposive sampling. Therefore, it cannot technically be representative of other areas. As a result, we cannot confirm whether or not the utilization of this process will generate the same results as in this research. However, future research may build on this research and develop a process for other areas with a similar context to confirm the process's efficiency. It can also be tried in areas with different contexts to find possible limitations for bringing data to develop a local wisdom transfer process that can develop a relationship between ages in different areas of Thai society and the global society.

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