

# DEVELOPMENT OF A SELF-RELIANT PROCESS BASED ON BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY FOR QUALITY OF LIFE IN ELDERLY THAI POPULATION

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## ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were 1) to study the integration of Buddhist principle and psychological theory for encouragement of self-reliance for quality of life in elderly people, and 2) to propose the self-reliance process based on Buddhist psychology for quality of life in elderly Thai population. Qualitative research was used for research design. The researcher used an in-depth interview from the key informants who were scholars and specialists related to elderly, psychology and Buddhism. Focus group discussion of the self-reliant elderly aged was also used for data collection. The research tools were interview schedule and guideline question for focus group discussion. Content analysis and analytic induction were used for analyzing data. The research results were as follows: 1) self-reliance for the development quality of life in elderly people was integrated by the characteristics of the four paths of accomplishment in Buddhism and psychological theory of the optimistic attitude building and the self-competency awareness. 2) There were 2 sub-processes related to the self-reliance process based on Buddhist psychology for quality of life in elderly Thai population. The first sub-process was to develop and promote the optimistic attitude towards life by keeping follow with the news in the modern world, future policy, new innovative products, continue life-long learning, and promoting in the characteristics of the four paths of accomplishment by practicing the training in meditation regularly and doing activities with intention in order to achieve the good outcomes, having a value and benefit to others and oneself. The second sub-process was to improve and solve problems in the elderly themselves by practicing to learn to know themselves with the meditation practice to create mindfulness and wisdom when encountering the appeared problems. Therefore, they could search for the cause, way in coping, and solving execution totally by themselves.

**Keywords:** Buddhist Psychology, Elderly Thai Population, Quality of Life, Self-reliant Process

## INTRODUCTION

Buddhist psychology is the combination of knowledge in Buddhist principles that is the path of accomplishment which consists of 4 aspects and positive psychology with optimism to develop a self-reliance approach of the elderly. Optimism makes it possible for elderly people to learn how they can control and give hope to accomplish their activities. The perception of success is a strong reverse-force for the elderly. It has confidence and self-pride, leading to the feeling of self-efficacy.

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Thai elders are those aged from 60 years old, who have a decline in the body, mind, society, work, and income, as well as the last phase of the natural life cycle. The elders have considered the age range and determined the age of the elderly in accordance with the social biology criteria for 4 levels. Specially for early age (The Young-old), the age of 60-69 years old is a period of experience with a change of a somewhat crisis life, such as retirement, losing close friend or spouse, less revenue, loses general social positions. It is healthy but may be dependent on others. For those who have high education, they know how to adapt and participate in family and social activities. Thai elders who live alone or alone with a spouse have a higher proportion. In the future, it will be effective for long-term care of elderly people. From the above, economic and social conditions make it easier for the elderly to be abandoned, need more care and self-reliance. It is important to be self-paid for survival, it becomes a problem, and it is critical that threatens the elderly both physically and mentally to become a country-level problem. In the end, the elderly must be prepared to cope with and adapt to the life of self-reliance (Siriwongpakorn, S., 2013).

From the experts and scholars interview characterized the self-reliance factor for the quality of life for the elderly; it has been found that the information is very similar and consistent as most of the key factors of the elderly self-reliance consist of physical, social, and economic bodies. It is only with a wide description dimension and different depths, or to divide a group into two factors, is an external factor (physical factors) that mean physical, economic, social income, and internal factors (psychological factors) mean psychological, emotional, mental, and cognitive attitude.

Due to the state of Thai elderly population has been designated as one of the major research issues because it affects the development of the economic and social countries. A huge increase in government costs and families requiring various operations to protect promotes and supports the health, role and activity of the elderly in both welfare and health. In addition, the elderly population increases rapidly and steadily. Thailand has become an elderly society (Office of the National Research Council, 2013-2016), and the elderly society is made up of many countries. Some societies may better handle in a familiar sense of being a single family and self-reliance, while Thai society seemed to be standing between the turning point and between old and new society. It was found that the population had an average age of 27 years as a result of the birth rate and low mortality rate (Seedsman Terence, 2004). Based on the number of projections, the population showed that in 2566 the population of 60 years old and up in the country was 14.1 million as 21 percent of the total population. That is, Thailand has become a completely elderly society, which means the elderly will become burdens and in one way. Older people are more self-reliant, and in the year 2033, they have an elderly population of 60 years up to 18.7

million people as at 29 percent (National Research Council Office, 2012-2016). Thailand's social conditions are now being stepped into the elderly society. The economic structure that changes to the other social environment has more material growth. The traditional Thai lifestyle of the people has changed from the rural society to the city's society, and the extension was reduced to a single family that makes the relationship model with family members change.

In addition, it was observed that the self-care meaning of the elders who lived alone were two meaning. One is to take care of the health of the body and mind, and another is self-reliance. From the perception of their ability to engage in various activities, older people try to be self-reliant and avoiding to ask for help from others (Aintarapirom, et al., 2008), in accordance with the research of (Ysako, 2007). The elderly is an important person that the children and their families should be aware of and as individuals. When they enter their age, they have a problem caused by a derogatory body, mental problems and memory. Some elderly people will think that they lack of ability and not be able to adapt their changes to the environment.

## **PURPOSES OF THE RESEARCH**

1. To study the integration of Buddhist principle and psychological theory for encouragement of self-reliance for quality of life in elderly Thai population
2. To propose the self-reliance process based on Buddhist psychology for quality of life in elderly Thai population.

## **LITURATURE REVIEW**

From the review of documents and related research in regard to self-reliance in the way of life of the elderly, the overview suggests that an increase in the elderly population has an impact on both the elderly and the nation as a whole. A major problem that Thai elders suffer is the problem of physical, psychological, social, particularly psychological, loneliness, sadness that is the reflection of external problems. Moving the labor of young people from the countryside to the city makes the elderly lack of people inside the family and lack of intimate relationships with the family. In addition, economic issues have a non-living income. The health is moderate, and is not very good. Diseases that are very common among elderly people include pain in the lumbar pain, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart and elderly illnesses are one of the reasons why elderly people cannot work for a living. In addition, the family institute is still the primary to lend to the elderly (Panu Aodgun, 2010).

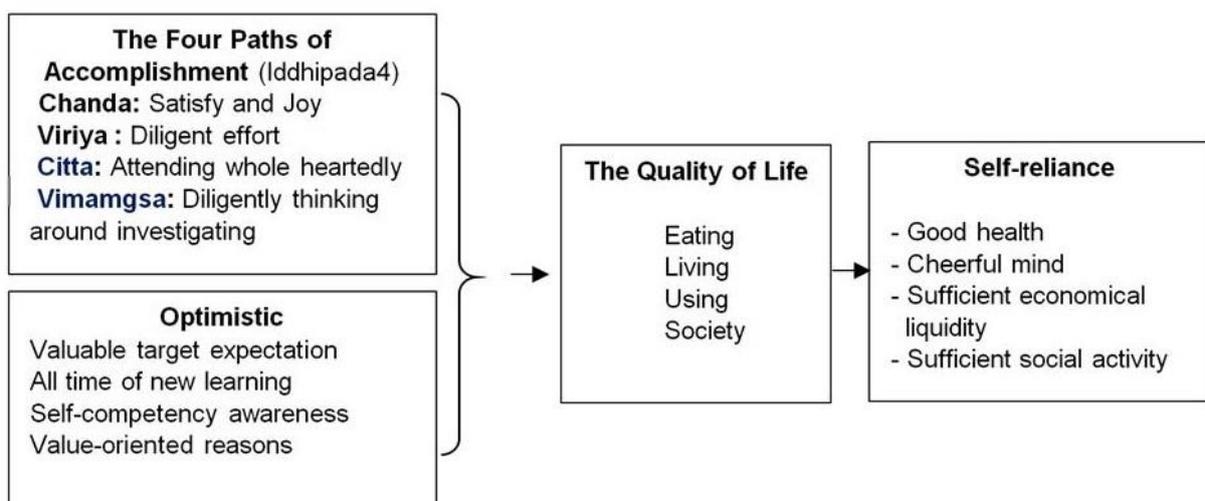
Tipwadee Leangkrachang (2011) has developed a Buddhist learning pattern to develop elderly people using qualitative research methodology: study the 67

documents in case of 6 case studies using engaging and engaging observation and in-depth interviews, including the elderly group chats. It found that learning methods include learning from self-taught, teaching and attending training. Listening to or reading a message, activity, physical, mental, and social health. A holistic principle is inserted to develop the elderly.

Payutto (Payut) has expounded in the book of life in Dhamma, for the elderly that this is an important principle to make the life of a living, and then have a path that leads forward to the destination. This makes life meaningful to stay on the go, not in a drift. It is also an emotional cutter when faced with satisfactory or unpleasant events and prevents things from being in the mind and life. It is a light and airy life. In the inside, there is the power of the corridor to go forward. In the outside, there is nothing to interrupt the life and to know what is appropriate to treat it.

Seligman, Peterson and Steen proposed the key concept of optimism according to this nature. It is the form of describing the situation of a person (explanatory style) which is derived from the learning theory of the ability (learned helplessness theory) and reasoning theory (attribution theory). An absurd learning theory (learned helplessness theory) is a theoretical response to stimuli. When a person is in a situation that cannot be controlled or manipulated, the person will be worried, depressed and motivated. When in that situation has a long-time access, the person will learn that self-confidence cannot do anything contrary if the person is in a controlled situation.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



**Figure1.** Conceptual framework of development of a self-reliant process based on Buddhist psychology for quality of life in elderly

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The research development of a self-reliant process based on Buddhist Psychology for quality of life in elderly, is a qualitative research method (qualitative research), where the research method is divided into three phases: Phase 1, characteristic of self-reliance in the life of elderly and Buddhist psychology. The primary and secondary information are studied by documentary study in order to analyze the concept, the problem theory and composition of the elderly self-reliance, the principles of Buddhism and psychology. Phase 2, to analyze self-reliance in the Buddhist life of the elderly. By studying the case from a specific important data provider, the elderly is aged 60-75 years old both male and female. There are 4 people with disabilities and Buddhists in Bangkok, and 9 experts with experienced qualifications involving elderly and Buddhist psychology were used for in-depth interviews and observation. Data were validated by qualified experts, and research tools are guideline for interview and observation form. Phase 3, monitor self-reliance processes in the lives of elderly people according to Buddhist psychology, a group of people who have educational experiences or elderly people. Qualitative data were analyzed by using categorized, content analysis and analytic induction.

## **RESULTS**

Development of a Self-Reliant Process in the elderly based on Buddhist Psychology summarized as follows:

### **1. A characteristic condition of self-reliance in elderly and Buddhist Psychology**

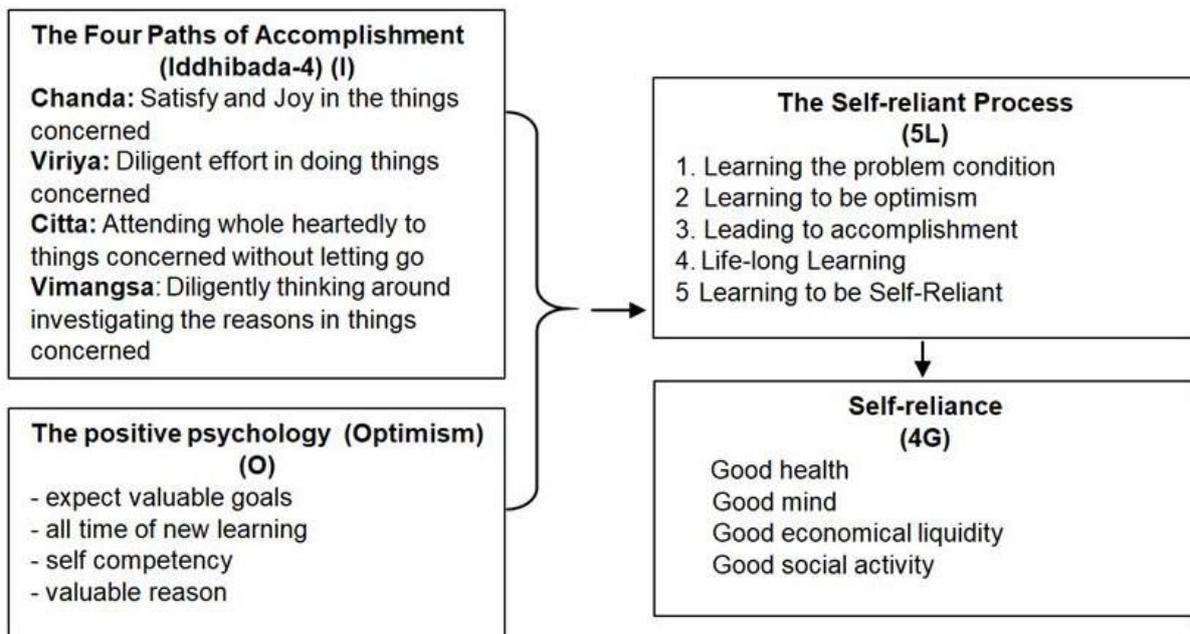
1.1 The condition of self-reliance on the elderly's lives consists of a) elderly people aged between 60-75 years, b) problems and barriers to life of the elderly in physical and mind due to the deterioration of the organ, such as pain syndrome, high cholesterol, diabetes, etc. Revenue was reduced due to retirement and not working because the degradation of body. The social was reduced by the role being thought of as a burden. c) Self-reliance factors are the body is strong and healthy, cheerful mind, well-known enough to earn a good society and learn by your convenience, d) quality of life is to have the good eating, living, having a sufficient society and revenue in everyday routines.

1.2 The Buddhist psychology that should be applied in self-reliance of the way of life in the elderly consists of 1) the four path of accomplishment (Iddhibada 4) with the following steps: to consider good and bad result, choose what to do, believe in the benefits of what is done and committed to achieving the goals. 2) Create a positive attitude by anticipating valuable goals such as the longevity, a

teacher volunteer, believed in their ability to make the valuable reasoning things and continue new learning.

**2. The analyzing of self-reliance base on Buddhist Psychology for quality of life in the elderly**, the nature of self-reliance in the way of life in the elderly according to Buddhist psychology. Positive psychology (Optimism) has a huge influence on the elderly to create motivation, attitude, self-esteem, courage, confidence, and self-respect help to keep the elderly body and mind healthy including a better society and sufficient revenue. By combining the expectation of good valuable results with Dhamma principle is called Iddhibada 4 for self-reliance as the following 1) body expectations or goals require a quality longevity using the Chanda (Aspiration) principle and positive attitude. 2) Moving the body with perseverance by using (Viriya) and a positive attitude. 3) The mind is focused on the exercise using of the Citta principles and positive attitudes. 4) Research studies consult a physician if illness use Vimangsa principles and positive attitudes.

**3. To monitor and implement a self-reliance process for quality of life in the elderly according to the Buddhist knowledge.** Cognitive psychology that researchers developed is **IO 5L 4G** process for self-reliance based on Buddhist psychology consists of 1) Iddhipada 4-**I** mean Chada, Viriya, Chiitt and Vimangsa. 2) **Optimism-o** means a positive attitude to see the world in optimism by anticipating valuable goals for lifelong learning. Confidence in their abilities is for a valuable reason. 3) Self-reliance process-**5L**, there are 5 steps; to learn about the problem (**L**earning the problem), create a positive attitude (**L**earning to be optimism), characteristic of Iddhibada 4 (**L**earning to accomplish), continue studying (**L**ife-long learning), and feature self-reliance (**L**earning to be self-reliant). 4) Self-reliance-**4G** consisted of **G**ood health, **G**ood mind, **G**ood economical liquidity, and **G**ood social activity. The IO 5L 4G process for self-reliance based on the Buddhist psychology is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** The **IO 5L 4G** process for self-reliance based on the Buddhist psychology

The 4 knowledge components achieved from this research comprised 1) the Buddhist psychology for self-reliance, 2) conditional elements for better living in the elderly, 3) activities for the way of life in the elderly, and 4) a self-reliance process for quality of life in the elderly.

## DISCUSSIONS

This research is discussed according to objectives. The condition of self-reliance is in Buddhist living, psychology, problems and barriers. Older people have had many problems including physical problems due to the change of body and physiology based on age such as osteoarthritis, muscle, hypertension, kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, etc. Mental problems have been found to have a lonely way because of the vacant work and society. Detaching from a soul mate and it can lead to a heart and physical illness. Income issues retirement and lower body conditions have an impact on careers and earning income. Many elderly people rely on their children or relatives and social issues in a changing social environment. This gives the role as a consultant to the young people of the elderly to see the importance of being reduced. This makes the elderly feel self-valued, and it is important to prepare to enter the elderly age. The preparation has 4 sides: preparing for health, body and mind, financial preparation and social activities preparation (Tanatiti, T. & Chumroomsawad, K., 2015).

The elderly will be successful in their self-reliance. Body of mind, the social and learning income must create a characteristic of the Iddhibada 4 (P.A. Payutto),

in accordance with “the Book of Life”. For the elderly, it is a key principle to make life strong and cheerful because it has a living path that leads forward to the destination. This makes life meaningful to stay on the go, and not in a drift. It is also an emotional cutter when faced with satisfactory or unpleasant events and prevents things from being in the mind and life. It is a light and airy life. In the inside, there is the power of the corridor to go forward. In the outside, there is nothing to interrupt life and to know how to treat it including creating a positive attitude with optimism for self-reliance on the life of the elderly that have a positive relationship with the well-being (Seligman, Peterson and Steen, 2002).

The elderly can be self-reliant with the quality of life (eating, living, using and social), that is, knowing the problem of the elderly for the four sides (the body mind, income and society) will resolve. The problem or improvement with the Buddhist psychology process consists of the creation of the Iddhibada 4 and optimism attitude building. To have the healthy body is to do the following: appropriate exercise, make a separate activity for yourself such as a house cleaning, and dine in the right proportion. To have the good and strong mind, there are a few ways to do this such as join group activities and join the volunteer club. To have enough income is to arrange for the revenue expense and set up an extracurricular course. To have good social aspect, there are the ways to do this such as share activities in the home and outside, using social media to make an appointment with friend or doctor.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The results of this research should be published to the relevant authorities at the level of policy and operation.
2. Both private and government sectors should provide training on activities that promote motivation and setting up a self-reliance goal.
3. For further research can be setting experimental research design to have training course, incentive training, or set a good goal to be self-reliant in the quality of life in young generation based on Buddhist psychology.

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