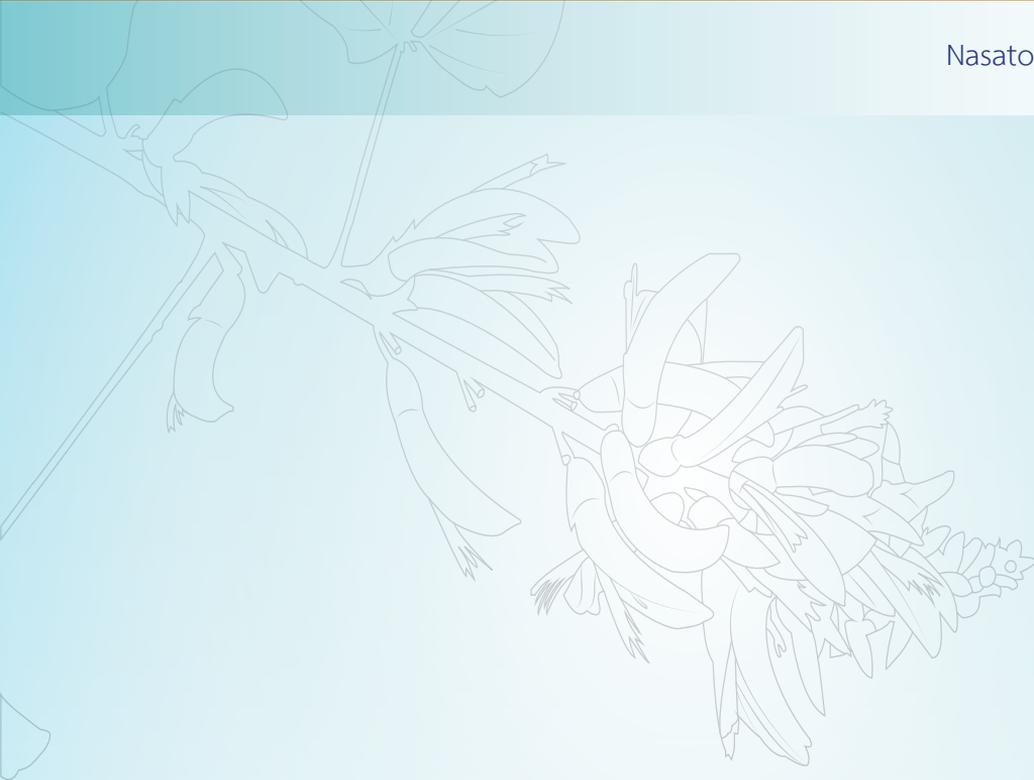# A New Perspective on the Perception of Thai Culture Reflected by Thai University Students' Accounts through the Lens of Small Cultures

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Abstract

Thai culture has been discussed in several studies, yet such discussion is fixed and fails to consider the complexity and dynamism of Thai culture in response to the changing circumstances within society. This qualitative study employed an innovative photo-elicitation technique, utilizing online semi-structured interviews, to explore eighteen Thai university students' perceptions of Thai culture and to establish whether or not their perceptions differ from prescribed ethnic, national, and international qualities. Data from the Thematic Analysis demonstrate that Thai university students' perceptions differ from traditional Thai cultural values in terms of the openness of their sexual attitudes and behavior, the equal relationships between younger and older people, and the promotion of gender equality. Using the notion of small cultures as a conceptual framework, the findings add variety to Thai cultural values and beliefs and raise questions about an imagined conception of national cultures, leading to cultural generalizations by setting up stereotypes of others. Taken together, this study suggests moving beyond generalizations or stereotypes about national groups, or the essentialist view of culture, supporting the notion that culture is dynamic and complex and unrestricted by national boundaries. This study contributes to wider scholarship on intercultural communication by demonstrating that there are a variety of behaviors and perceptions of Thai culture within a single group of Thai people, highlighting that Thai culture is constantly evolving and never fixed.

Keywords: Perception, Thai Culture, Small Cultures, The Essentialist View of Culture, The Non-essentialist View of Culture

Introduction

This qualitative study aims to explore perceptions of Thai culture among Thai university students. It contributes to existing research by exploring the changes in the perceptions of Thai culture and contemporary Thai society among a group of university students, who have a unique profile compared to other Thais. As a group, they have experienced the evolution of communication technologies and employ technology routinely as a part of their daily lives, e.g., smartphones, mobile devices, and social media. They have also gained experience of the differences in practice between teachers in high schools and lecturers at university, including accruing other life experiences during their several years of undergraduate study. This combination of factors may have contributed to their unique attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyles which are unlikely to conform to those more commonly observed by Thai nationals. The study is guided by the debate among interculturalists regarding the two paradigms of

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culture, i.e., large cultures and small cultures. Large cultures refer to cultural norms as being limited to national borders, attributing cultural differences between people to race, ethnicity, and nationality (e.g., [1-3]), whereas the small cultures approach stresses the behavior or interactions within social groupings among people who form their own culture without relying on national customs [4]. In the literature, large cultures are referred to as essentialist or national cultures and small cultures as non-essentialist [4]. Some studies have applied a large culture doctrine, using this approach to classify countries according to their levels of similarity and difference: Southern Asia (e.g., Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand) [5]. Arguably, this process of classification of culture through the lens of large cultures is problematic as it could result in stereotyping, and potentially contribute to prejudice and discrimination as people may classify those who do not share similar cultural traits to themselves as the out-group and those who share similar cultural trait as the in-group [5]. Consequently, this classification is likely to generate positive attitudes towards in-group members and negative attitudes towards out-group members without considering diversity in terms of age, gender, institutions, and so on. Addressing the limitations of the large cultures approach, this paper demonstrates that Thai culture does not conform to a national deterministic view of culture, but is rather complex and multifaced, encompassing a great deal of variety among Thai people. Moreover, the perceptions of Thai culture, as viewed through the small cultures lens, offers another angle for other cultures to enable diverse group members to form their values and beliefs under changing circumstances. The small culture lens is evident among Thai university students who are socialized into a culture of learning [6] and have imbibed Thai cultural values from their pre-school years to university. However, due to the impact of the rapid development of modern technology during their lifetimes, they have also been exposed to new information with the potential to prompt a dramatic shift in their attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyle preferences [7]; this exposure may have rendered their perceptions of Thai culture different from other groups of Thais. To the best of this researcher's knowledge, there is a dearth of empirical studies that have investigated how perceptions of Thai culture have been changed, particularly through the eyes of the younger generation of university students. To accomplish this, the study first discusses distinct concepts of Thai culture and research into Thai culture. It then incorporates small cultures [4] as a conceptual framework affording novel insight into explorations of Thai culture. The attention then shifts to address the research questions and the methodology underpinning this study, followed by a thematic discussion of university students' perceptions of Thai culture.

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Literature Review

When describing national cultures, Thailand is typically categorized as a hierarchical society with high power distance [8], which indicates that inequality is likely to be tolerated and accepted [9]. For example, Thai students tend to avoid disagreeing with their teachers in class even when they have good reason to do so, as they emphasize always showing respect. Similarly, in a quantitative study conducted by Ngammuk [10], the Thai cultural value of seniority tends to be observed by Thai university students. However, it can be argued that generalizations of cultural values do not necessarily apply to every group of Thais. For example, Fuangtharnthip et al. [11] find that Thai dental university students in a public university tend to have more equal relationships with their lecturers, potentially suggesting generational change. Likewise, Farrell and Phungsoonthorn [12] report that the younger generation of Thais, aged between 17 and 25, are unlikely to value seniority. In the same vein, Pummanee et al. [13] add that Thai adolescents in the 10-24 age group are unlikely to obey and show respect for their parents. This may be due to their exposure to Western culture via social media and social networks, which offer them a different perspective, suggesting it is possible to exhibit disobedient and non-compliant behavior toward their parents [13]. Arguably, the evolving perceptions among Thai youths in terms of respecting one's parents imply that Thai culture is mutable, and the classification of culture based on its national differences raises questions about changes in current social circumstances [14]. For example, recently, Thai students in high school protested against the rigid rules on school uniforms set by their teachers and school administrators [15]. This incident is unusual in the context of Thai national culture, which expects Thai students to adhere to the rules set by their elders [16]. However, this incident questions the veracity of existing stereotypes.

In addition to generalizations about the Thai cultural value of social hierarchy, there is an assumption that it is a Thai national characteristic that Thai women should remain virgins before their marriage to be regarded as good girls [17]. Traditionally, Thai women are expected to be innocent and naïve about sex until their marriage and failing to be so, for a Thai young woman, can potentially damage the reputation of her parents [18]. Arguably, this cultural value reflects a gender disparity in coital experience, as Thai men can be sexually active free from any cultural prescription [18]. For female Thai high school students, it is believed that this cultural value would encourage them to refrain from having premarital sexual intercourse, as failing to preserve their chastity could bring shame to them and their parents, as their neighbors would gossip, criticize and look down on them [19]. However, this cultural value may not always be true. For example, Tangmunkongvorakul et al. [18] report that young unmarried women, ranging in age from 17 to 20 years old, have experienced sexual intercourse with their boyfriends [17]. This implies that some young Thai women do not adhere to Thai

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cultural norms by preserving their chastity. Thus, assumptions about this traditional value cannot be generalized to young women as a group.

Another issue commonly discussed Thai culture is the shift in Thai women's roles in recent years due to Thailand's socio-economic transformation over the past three decades [13]. Contemporary Thai women tend to work outside, even after childbirth [13]. This means their deliveries are unlikely to interrupt their employment, shifting their roles from traditional one's such as housework, e.g., cooking, cleaning, washing, to taking care of their children at home to moving outside the home [20]. This change in Thai women's roles contrasts sharply with traditional Thai beliefs that a good woman should be a housewife [21]. The gendered expectation that women be able to take on a role in the housework and nurturing the children typically discriminates against women who do not do so, as they are thought of poorly. This view also reflects the cultural dominance of men over women and the ideology of patriarchy, in which men are considered the leader of the family and responsible for bringing in an income to support the family [21]. However, cultural beliefs fail to account for the fact that Thai women need to work outside the home to earn a supplementary income for their families [20]. It is also possible that Thai women have more rights than previously, due to their work outside the home. Moreover, as they have less time to spend on housework, this may result in their sharing the housework with their husbands [20]. Arguably, the change in this aspect of Thai cultural norms reflects a shift in gender stereotypes away from the expectation that women should be housewives. This again suggests cultural norms are not fixed and may change in response to socioeconomic circumstances.

Arguably, the literature designed to explore Thai culture focuses on its national characteristics [22-24] without considering the considerable variety among Thais and the nature of culture, which tends to be fluid. The notion of a fixed Thai culture possibly leads to a stereotyping of Thais, and this can prove influential when people from different cultural backgrounds interact with Thais, as they tend to unconsciously look for particular characteristics and treat Thais accordingly. At worst, stereotyping can lead to prejudice and discrimination due to the perception of one's group as better than others [25]. As Tarry [26] points out, Thai culture is likely to adapt in response to the impact of globalization. Thus, there is still a dearth of research exploring how Thai culture has been changed in circumstances within Thai society, leading to it differing from its prescribed national grouping as the default. In response to this gap in knowledge, this study aims to explore Thai university students' perceptions of Thai culture; specifically, whether it diverges from that discussed in the existing literature or not. Furthermore, if it has evolved then we will discuss in what ways and driven by what factors.

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Theoretical Framework

For its conceptual framework, this study draws upon small cultures or the non-essentialist view of culture [4]. According to the small culture theory, culture can be understood to describe the behavior of any social grouping, e.g., a family, schools, and different groups of people. Small cultures differ from large cultures introducing an essentialist view that confines culture to national cultures as a way to describe the behavior of a particular group [4]. For example, a Japanese person may behave in a particular way because this is how the Japanese are. Thus, large cultures, or the essentialist view, consider culture as fixed since it solely and reductively characterizes a person based on national cultural characteristics (see [9]). Consequently, this leads to overgeneralization of the entire population and stereotyping [4]. Unlike large cultures, small cultures regard culture as "a dynamic, ongoing group process" [4]. For example, the essentialist view states that Thai people are likely to value people who hold seniority, such as teachers. At school, Thai students are expected to kneel when their teachers sit on chairs to convey respect [27]. However, this practice is not followed at universities and the young generation of Thais tend to value seniority less highly than older people [13]. This suggests that the Thai cultural value of seniority varies based on different groups of people. Moreover, culture is changeable or fluid, as a consequence of the impact of globalization where the world has become connected via Internet access and media resources [28]. Thus, this suggests that people in Eastern countries may be influenced by Western cultural values when constructing their cultural identities. Small cultures are employed in this study to demonstrate that Thai culture is fluid, multifaceted, and heterogeneous, as it involves a great variety of group members, e.g., families, Thai high school students, and university students, who may hold distinct perceptions of Thai culture, aside from those restricted to race, ethnicity, and nationality.

The objective of this study is to explore the perceptions of Thai culture among Thai university students and establish whether their perception has evolved or not. The evolved perception of Thai culture among the younger Thai young generation can be further investigated if it occurs in other international contexts. The following research questions have been constructed to achieve the objectives set for this study:

1. What are the perceptions of Thai culture among Thai university students?
2. Does their perception of Thai culture evolve? If so, how?
3. What are the contributory factors to this?

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Methodology

Participants

The Human Research Ethics Committee of the University in Thailand, where this study was conducted granted permission for this research has confirmed the ethical requirements were met. The participants included eighteen students, fourteen females and four males aged from 21 to 24 years. Using purposive sampling, the researcher selected students who were all in their fourth year studying English at a Thai public university. These participants had experienced the transition from high school to university life. They had also witnessed the differences in practice between teachers in high school and lecturers at university, including observing other life experiences that they had gained throughout their undergraduate studies over several years. Additionally, they experienced the evolution of communication technologies which might have influenced their attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyles [7]. Thus, these experiences might impact their perceptions of Thai culture. The participants' direct quotations were coded from P1-P18.

Table 1 Demographic profiles of the participants (n = 18)

Participants	Age	Gender
P1	21	Female
P2	21	Female
P3	22	Female
P4	22	Female
P5	21	Male
P6	22	Female
P7	24	Male
P8	21	Male
P9	22	Female
P10	22	Female
P11	22	Female
P12	21	Female
P13	22	Male
P14	22	Female
P15	21	Female
P16	23	Female
P17	21	Female
P18	21	Female

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Data collection

As the researcher knew some participants might have informed others of their decision to participate in the study, the secretary sent letters of invitation to all students with the researcher's contact details, e.g., email addresses, so that those students wishing to participate could volunteer to do so. Thus, they did not feel pressured to participate. Before commencing the main study, a pilot interview was conducted online with one participant who shared similar characteristics with the participants in the main study. The pilot interview evaluated the clarity and understandability of the interview questions [29]. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and one hour; the interview was audio-recorded to facilitate a verbatim transcription. Interviews were conducted in Thai to encourage openness, and clarity and to help participants express their ideas smoothly [30].

A creative photo-elicitation technique, which refers to using photographs during a semi-structured interview [31], was employed to help participants reveal their insights into cultural and symbolic objects that would be difficult to describe in words, which, in turn, created a mutual understanding between the researcher and their participants [32]. Moreover, the photo-elicitation technique served as a tool to uncover the participants' thoughts and facilitated their reflections on the abstract concepts behind their photographs [32]. For example, a photograph of a school corridor reminded the participants that they had to show respect for high school teachers, whereas they are not required to do so in the same way at university. Finally, the photo-elicitation technique triangulates data from the participants' photographs and the meaning associated with the photographs and narratives in the interview, which helps strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings [32].

The interviews were conducted online via Chats in Microsoft Teams as the University was closed at the time due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The interviews were recorded via Chats in Microsoft Teams. Each interview lasted 40 to 60 minutes, and the researcher conducted the interviews in Thai so that the participants did not worry about using their English, e.g., making a grammatical error, or limited English vocabulary, when providing their accounts.

Data analysis

Transcripts were sent to the participants for validation purposes after the interviews were completed [33]. The researcher utilized Express Scribe, and Foot Pedal Controls to facilitate a verbatim transcription of the interview data, and NVivo software to assist in qualitative data analysis. The researcher followed guidelines on translation proposed by Van Nes, et al. [34] to translate interview transcripts from Thai to English. Data were systematically analyzed by following guidance on Thematic Analysis, which is defined as

"a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" [p.79], due to its flexibility to determine themes [35]. The themes were determined by following guidelines recommended by Krueger and Casey [36]. Photographs that correlated with the participants' quotes were selected. Themes were then identified to address the research questions. Concerning incorporating photographs in the results, the researcher selected photographs that corresponded to the participants' quotations, identifying key themes. For example, in discussing the theme 'equal relationships between younger and older people, a participant compared different practices of showing respect for his high school teachers and university lecturers when asked to describe his selected photograph of a school corridor. This photograph was chosen to complement a theme that arose from the interview data. These themes were inductively identified following a focused reading of the transcripts in order to address the study's research questions.

Results

The participants revealed their perceptions of Thai culture, which differed from the generalized cultural stereotypic view of Thai culture, i.e., permissive sexual attitudes and behavior, equal relationships between younger and older people, and gender equality.

Permissive sexual attitudes and behavior

This theme was discussed many times during the interviews, and some of the participants went into detail when talking about it. P11 is one of them; she selected the photograph below of a shadow of her and her boyfriend holding each other's hands. The photograph reflects her story of cohabiting with her boyfriend. Undoubtedly, she confirms, her mother strongly disagreed with her decision.

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Figure 1 The shadow of a young couple

'My mother said that she was unhappy with my decision but didn't explain why. I think cohabitation does not devalue me as a woman ... it helps me get to know my boyfriend's personality, and if he can get along well with me or not as we are together most of the time. I want to know if we can try to adapt to each other and if we can keep our relationship healthy or not. ... The new generation has changed their attitudes towards cohabitation as they think that it is not a bad idea, unlike our parents' and grandparents' generations.'

(P11)

P11's account does not conform with Thai cultural values outlining the preferred qualities of Thai women, specifically that she should not be free with her sexuality and should retain her virginity until marriage [17]. Her account reflects the change in attitude towards this value, noting that the younger generation of Thais is unlikely to strictly adhere to it, unlike their grandparents or parents' generation. Her account also implies that she does not obey her mother, as P11 insists on cohabitation despite her mother's disapproval. This behavior is contrary to traditional Thai cultural norms, which emphasize children's obedience to their parents, and compliance with their parental directives [13]. P11's account relates to the small culture perspective, positioning different groups of people, i.e., P11's parents' generation versus her generation according to viewpoints. Each generation holds a different view of the value of female premarital chastity. Thus, the values attributed to the ideal

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women cannot be overgeneralized to the entire population of Thai women, as they depend on grouping with society. Interestingly, P15 indicates that a possible cause of the evolved perception of Thai culture among young people is the influence of Western cultural values, which inform young Thai women that they have another option aside from marriage, i.e., cohabitation. Consequently, they tend to accept Western cultural values, and this contributes to the changing attitudes towards sex among young Thai women since they are unlikely to adhere to the Thai cultural value of preserving their virginity until marriage.

Figure 2 American breakfast representing the impact of Western culture, which results in the evolution of the perception of preserving virginity among young Thai women

'This photograph of American breakfast depicts the acceptance of Western culture by Thai people, especially the young. … Thai women are unlikely to keep their virginity before marriage, unlike their parents' or grandparents' generations. … I think this may be caused by the influence of the media …'

(P15)

P15's photograph offers a symbolic representation that remains hidden until the participant reveals its importance [37]. This photograph represents the causes of the evolved perception of preserving virginity among young Thai people as a result of the impact of Western culture, which is reflected in the photograph of an American breakfast. Arguably, her account reflects the impact of the globalization of culture, which contributes to the mutability of cultural values. This occurs because people are connected with those living in other countries and are aware of each other's culture via the media and the Internet. This leads to the changes in Thai cultural values, which are in line with those in small cultures which posit that culture is fluid or changeable [see 28].

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Equal relationships between younger and older people

More than half of the participants repeatedly discussed their evolving views about their respect for their seniors and those in authority (i.e., parents and teachers), highlighting a drive for greater equality between younger and older people. This seems to be incongruent with the essentialist view of Thai culture, which attaches importance to seniority as some people, e.g., teachers and parents, tend to be respected, and students and children are, therefore, expected to behave well towards them [9]. In the case of P8, his photograph below reflects his experience as a student in a high school. He was required to kneel when submitting his homework or assignments to his teachers to show respect.

Figure 3 A school corridor

'It is the corridor of my secondary school in this photograph… The photograph reflects seniority when I studied there [his secondary school]. We [students] had to kneel when submitting our homework or assignments. Teachers told us not to stand by the desk because such behavior shows disrespect to them [teachers]. … However, I don't need to do this at university [where he studies now]'

(P8)

P8's account implies that observation of the practice of showing respect towards teachers by kneeling varies between different groups of people, with university lecturers

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unlikely to ask their students to do so. Similarly, P12 added that she had to bow her head every time she walked past her teachers, and when she met them, to show her respect in secondary school. However, she was not required to do this at university; she simply greeted her lecturers, without bowing her head to denote respect for them. Her verbatim quote demonstrates the different cultural values of university lecturers. She stated, '*it seems that university lecturers do not care about this (showing my respect) much*.' P12 further commented, '*it is like I was forced to respect my teachers when I was in high school. I think it [bowing her head whenever she walked past her teachers or met them] was too much*. P12's account reflects different cultural values in terms of showing respect for high school teachers and university lecturers, as doing so seemed to be required more in high school, than at university.

The above correlates with expectations within smaller cultures, where it is anticipated that it will be necessary to demonstrate respect for the cultural values that different groups of people hold, i.e., a hierarchical society or high power distance at the secondary school level versus less seniority at the university level. This mirrors the Thai cultural trait of a hierarchical society or high power distance, which has been described by the essentialist view of culture as not generalizable to all Thais, as different groups of people have different cultural values. Interestingly, P13, P17, and P18 expressed similar thoughts about people deserving to be respected because of their good behavior, rather than because they are old. P17 added that the *'older generation tends to respect their parents, although their parents may hurt their feelings as parents could express something badly to their children [the older generation] when they [the older generation's parents] get angry at the children [the older generation].'* However, the *'younger generation is unlikely to respect this kind of parenting.'* P17's account suggests that the Thai cultural value of respecting one's parents tends to have evolved, as the younger generation is unlikely to obey and respect their parents [10]. This implies that Thai culture is unlikely to be fixed and that this cultural value is fading over time.

Gender equality

With enthusiasm, P2 raised the issue of gender inequality in Thai society when she found an interesting post on Twitter describing equal roles for men and women when helping each other to do housework.

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'There was a post on Twitter about a university man who was asked by a lecturer about what he would think if his wife-to-be could not do the housework. He replied to his lecturer that it would not be a problem, as he would help her do the housework and even cook food. I thought this is a good idea as there is no fixed rule that women should do this, and men should do that. Things have changed.'

(P2)

P2's account points out that Thai women in the past typically stay at home as housewives to do domestic chores. However, contemporary Thai women seem to have more opportunities to work outside the home. Interestingly, her account implies that cooking skills are unlikely to be an important criterion for men seeking to marry. This is an indication that this Thai cultural value has changed, clearly challenging the patriarchal system, as Thai women can choose to take a role outside the home and earn money as professional working women. Another participant, P2, discussed the gender stereotype in Thai society, observing that Thai women were expected to become housewives when they married, have a baby and raise children. However, this cultural perception tends to have changed and cannot be generalized. For example, an undergraduate Thai man posted a discussion on Twitter showing that he and his friends may be upset if their wives-to-be failed to be responsible for household chores. P2's opinion was also supported by P15, who selected a photograph of a bottle of milk belonging to her younger sister and spoke about how her father helped her mother raise her when she was a baby, including doing the housework.

Figure 4 A bottle of milk belonging to a participant's younger sister

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The story of P15's family life reflects the changes in Thai women's roles nowadays. The responsibilities of bringing up a child and doing the housework are likely to be shared between men and women after marriage, unlike before, e.g., in her grandparents' generation, when women were expected to nurture their children and remain at home to do the housework. Similarly, P5 also supports the notion that women do not necessarily have to leave their jobs and become housewives when they have a baby. Participants' accounts seem to be contrary to traditional gender role attitudes in that women are considered mainly responsible for housework when they marry, and men tend to financially support them as head of the family [38]. Arguably, these accounts conform to small cultures, in that the Thai cultural value of male superiority is fluid and dynamic, gradually changing over time, as Thai women nowadays are unlikely to stay at home as housewives and only do housework. Moreover, this suggests that Thai culture includes a great deal of variety among Thais, and making cultural generalizations should be avoided as it leads to inaccurate stereotyping.

Discussion

The findings reported in this study demonstrate that the perception of Thai culture is fluid and dynamic and that Thais have a different perception of their culture. The findings of this study are inconsistent with the Thai national culture of hierarchy which considers Thailand a high-power distance country, wherein an unequal distribution of power is broadly accepted [9]. That is, the participants thought that the age or authority of an individual does not indicate that they are to be respected. It is good behavior that counts, implying that teachers or parents who do not behave well towards their students or children should not deserve respect. However, this research is not representative of the larger population of university students, rather it aims to prompt discussion to question the established view of national cultures, which assumes default ethnic and national groupings of people. This is because national cultures risk othering, meaning the behavior of a person represents the behavior of an entire group, labeling a particular group of people as having stereotypes imposed on them [4]. Faulkner et al. [39] criticize the essentialist view of national cultures as monolithic since culture is treated as both unchanging and stagnant. Arguably, culture is dynamic and evolving because cultural value depends on the value and beliefs or practices of each social grouping, despite individuals living in the same country, i.e., university students witnessed different perceptions of seniority between those who work in high schools and those working in universities, and opinions on gender equality, and the sharing of household chores and childcare vary between families. Equally important, the findings of this study demonstrate those female participants are unlikely to uphold Thai moral-based values of preserving their virginity before marriage, which again supports small cultures [4], as the norms

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of remaining a virgin before marriage cannot be generalized to every Thai woman. Interestingly, the findings demonstrate that the online community on social media, i.e., Facebook and Twitter, and the influence of Western cultural values possibly leads to evolved perceptions of Thai culture among young Thais, as this helps broaden their views, facilitates their discussions and helps them exchange their ideas and opinions with one another.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The main contribution of this study is to point out that viewing Thai culture as large culture, which focuses merely on national differences, depicts a simplistic and one-dimensional image of Thai nationals. Furthermore, large cultures treat Thai nationals as a homogenous group – neglecting the fact that Thai culture is complex, fluid, and multifaceted and cannot be shortened to a single explanation. The small culture approach leaves the perceptions of Thai culture open to all types of social groupings, allowing individuals to form their own beliefs and norms, which can differ from the characteristics of specific national cultures. This study also supports a review of the impact of Thai culture on interactions between Thai people and those from different cultural backgrounds in the areas of intercultural communication or cross-cultural communication. This is because looking at culture and following a national culture perspective leads people from different cultures to treat Thai women as passive and submissive individuals. In addition, the findings of this study encourage a review of other cultures to avoid seeing people as a homogeneous group. Regarding the limitations, this study excluded Thais of different ages from different socioeconomic backgrounds (e.g., office workers, houseworkers, civil servants, and elderly people) which possibly makes the results of this study biased. Thus, future research could include these groups to explore the extent to which perceptions of Thai culture vary across occupations and generations.

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