

A procedure of local wisdom: learning, transferring, and utilizing social media

Bunthida Chunngam^{1*} and Thanyanan Worasesthaphong²

Abstract

This qualitative study was aimed to investigate the learning and transferring of local wisdom and the use of social media in doing such task. The research setting was in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province. A survey method was employed in which an in-depth interview with 80 participants and an observation were conducted. The participants were sampled from all 16 districts in the province. The target local wisdom featured seven aspects; local wisdom of livelihood, local wisdom of treatment, local wisdom of eating, local wisdom of fine arts, local wisdom of language and literature, local wisdom of religion and traditions, and local wisdom of natural resource and environment management. Regarding the learning of local wisdom, results showed that 95% of the participants obtained the wisdom from their ancestors. Concerning the seven aspects of local wisdom, it was found that the same method of knowledge transferring was performed. That was the transferred from one generation to another through various transferring means such as teaching, explaining, or knowledge and experience transfer from older to younger generation. In terms of social media, it was obvious that there was integration between the learning and transferring of local wisdom and exploring VDO clips on YouTube or Facebook chat and Line application for those who were eager to learn more.

Keywords: transferring, learning, utilizing social media, local wisdom

¹ Faculty of Industrial Education, Rajamangala University of Technology Suvarnabhumi, Suphanburi Campus, Suphanburi 72130

² Faculty of Business Administration, Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin, Salaya Campus, Nakhon Pathom 73170

* Corresponding author. E-mail: bunthida.c@rmutsb.ac.th

Received: July 25, 2018; Revised: September 13, 2018; Accepted: October 3, 2018

Introduction

Thai ancestors have been closed and relied on nature and this resulted in the creation of culture and discovery of invaluable wisdom in many areas. The wisdom has been a crucial part of Thai lives. Thai people have been skillful and experienced because of the cultivation, training, teaching and inheritance of the wisdom. It has become the foundation and philosophy of their lives. The wisdom has become Thai wisdom. It includes livelihood such as the methods of rice planting, gardening, farming, food preservation, herbal treatment by folk doctors, performances, plays, music, and any branches of arts, as well as the adaptation of religious ceremonies to serve people's lives and preserve natural resources and the environment. They have been accumulated in many regions of the country through finding and adapting processes to make them suitable to people and nature. Wisdom can solve problems and promote managing abilities, self-adjustment, leaning, and cohabitation between humans to humans and humans to nature. Most people in society can take that wisdom into a systematic way of life. Local wisdom can be used in real life or daily life (Pongpit, 2008; Wisootthicharnont, 2014). Besides, local wisdom is like tacit knowledge, which should be removed into clear knowledge, to continue to develop and transfer the local tacit into the explicit knowledge (Kunpluem and

Sowanpreecha, 2016). Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya was awarded outstanding cultural treasure by UNESCO in Carthage, Tunisia on December 13th, 1991 (Thanomsri, 2003). The province has its significant traditions throughout many eras; the Era of the Establishment and Expansion of Sukhothai Territory (1893-1981), the Era of the Great West (1981-2171), the Era of the West (2171-2276), and Era of Pre-destruction (2276 till late 18th century) (Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, 2015). Thus, the province has gathered plenty of wisdom. However, globalization, which brings western civilization and traditions, together with the greatest technological advancement result in numbers of problems. The obstacle in inheriting local wisdom is that the offspring ignore the inheritance and do not promote the new generation. They do not pay attention to the old-fashioned ignorance, and ignore the knowledge transfer. The modern technology make children ignoring wisdom and traditional culture (Phantuwat, Lila, and Aneksuk, 2017). Hence, the body of knowledge which is endangered must be maintained. A learning organization must be established to perform cooperative learning tasks through real practices. The learning must apply the knowledge in every activity and all level of the society; individuals, families, communities, networks, as well as national levels. This is because when any problem occurs, they spread themselves to all levels starting from

the smallest level or an individual. Then people come together and learn from it and try to solve it or discover suitable resolutions, which influence the whole society (Wijarn, 2004).

Objectives

This research aimed to investigate the learning means and the transferring methods of local wisdom, and to examine the use of social media with local wisdom in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya.

Scope of the study

This study was aimed to examine the methods of wisdom learning and transferring. Besides, the use of social media in performing those tasks was also investigated. An interview form was employed to survey and observation with 80 participants in each district from 16 districts and in-depth interview with five participants in each district from 16 districts of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya map.

Seven aspects of local wisdom were focused on the followings: local wisdom of livelihood, local wisdom of treatment, local wisdom of eating, local wisdom of fine arts, local

wisdom of language and literature, local wisdom of religion and traditions, and local wisdom of natural resource and environment management (Figure 2).



Figure 2 Scope of local wisdom.

Methodology

Population and participants

1. The population size

The population in this study was the people who were residents in and had originally lived in 16 districts (209 tambon) of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya. These included Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya District (21 tambon), Tah Rue District (10 tambon), Nakhon Luang District (12 tambon), Bang Tri District (23 tambon), Bang Ban District (16 tambon), Bang Pa-In District (18 tambon), Bang Pahan District (17 tambon), Phak Hai District (16 tambon), Pachi District (8 tambon), Lad Bua Luang District (7 tambon), Wang Noi District (10 tambon), Sena District (17 tambon), Bang Sai District (6 tambon), Utai District (11 tambon),

Maharaj District (12 tambon), and Ban Phraek District (5 tambon).

2. The participants

The target participants were residents in and had originally lived in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, which were obtained through multistage sampling. The sampling processes were as follows:

2.1 Critical case was initiated by performing through the categorizing of the district name lists and randomly sampling of the lists to obtain the participants.

2.2 Opportunistic and purposive random sampling was employed in the data collecting process to obtain five participants from each district.

Research tools

This qualitative research applied a survey method, in which participant observation, and an in-depth interview with five participants, in each district, were employed. A set of questionnaire in an interview form featured five areas; the learning of local wisdom, characteristics of the local wisdom, transferring methods of the wisdom, the application of the wisdom, and the use of social media with local wisdom.

Results

From data analysis of the interview, the majority of participants (95%) learned local wisdom in their communities from their ancestors, while few of them favored to learn from their friends or the internet. In terms of livelihood local wisdom of rice plantation, 100% of the participants inherited the methods from their parents, their grandparents, or the ancestors during their time

as a child assisting in rice plantation. One of the participants proposed that, "My grandparents had planted rice long time ago when we had our own land. Now, we had to rent the land as we had lost ours. When we were young my mom and brother usually left home early in the morning, and got home when the sky got dark. My mom usually taught me how to plant rice. Back to those days there were no machines like the ones using these days. Buffaloes were the only things we had and it took longer time. At the same time we needed to be ready for the ritual ceremony when the rice started to yield its fruits to welcome them. It was called, "Traditionally made Kwankaw" (Figure 3). Also, during harvesting, we asked for help from our neighbors to harvest the rice. It was called, "Auw Ruang Kan." One day we helped a family, the other days we were helped by others."



Figure 3 Local wisdom of livelihood.

Concerning local wisdom of treatment, 85% of the participants inherited it from ancestors. For example, most of them learned about edible herbs since they were young and learned to plant those herbs in their households since then. When there were any unfamiliar herbs, they asked their parents for more information. In some cases they learned about herb advantages in curing diseases by themselves through the internet, while some of them knew the names of some herbs without knowing their medical properties.

Regarding local wisdom of eating (Figure 4), most participants (81.5%) explained that they acquired how to preserve food and cook food from their mothers or from generations to generations. A participant in Bang Tri District described that, "I had learned to cook since I was young as my mom usually asked me to

help in the kitchen. We cooked for my father and brothers who went out for rice planting, so when they got back from work they could have it. If I didn't help my mom in the kitchen I supposed to work in the rice field, then I chose to cook. Now I still cooked for my children and grandchildren." However, some of the participants did not realize the benefits of cooking. They believed that it was unnecessary. If they wanted to have something, they could buy it. For them buying was easier and more convenient. A participant in Utai District supported the idea and said that, "I didn't know how to cook and I didn't like to do it. Back in the day, my mom taught me to cook, but I didn't like it. I thought that these days we didn't need to cook. Buying food was more convenient and easier."

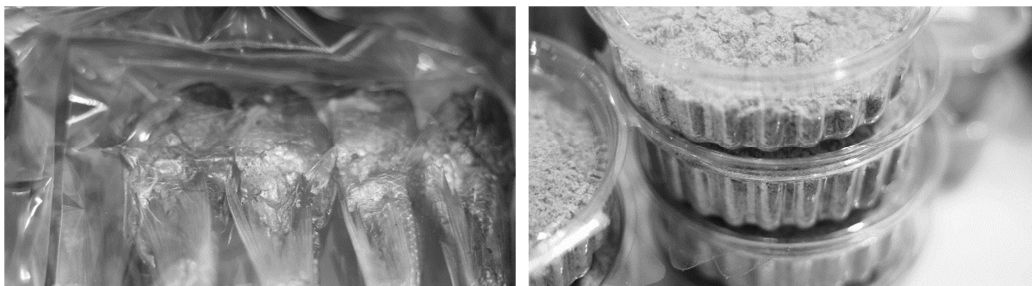


Figure 4 Local wisdom of eating.

In terms of fine art local wisdom (Figure 5), only 35% of the participants had knowledge about it. Most of them learned how to mold and

weave from their ancestors. Besides, some of them performed self-learning after taking courses with Office of Non-Formal and Informal

Education or surfing the internet such as from websites or YouTube for more information. As described by a participant in Nakhon Luang District that, "I had been interested in fine arts even though we didn't earn a living from this career. Later, I took a short course at Office of

Non-Formal and Informal Education together with self-learning from VDO clips on the websites. I was interested in this field as I believed it might provide more income than planting rice and I could spend my free time from the rice field with it."

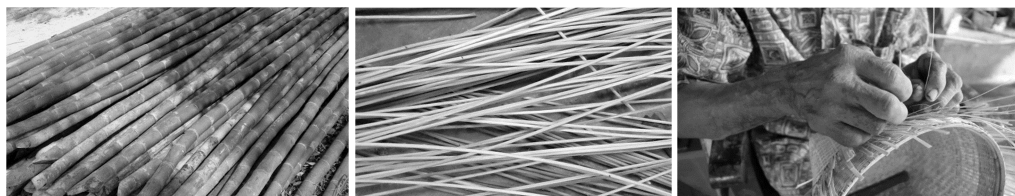


Figure 5 Local wisdom of fine arts.

The data analysis also revealed that regarding local wisdom of language and literature (Figure 6), only 26.25% of the participants learned it. Most participants had no experiences learning it. However, despite of ability to sing they heard and knew a bit about local music performances like Pleng Choi, Pleng Lae, Pleng Glom Dek, Pleng Esaew, and etc. from their grandparents. They believed that the music performances were hardly found at present, accept on television.

One of the participants in Tah Rue District said that, "I couldn't sing Pleng Choi or Pleng Esaew, but I had heard them. I got used to Pleng Glom Dek more as my granny usually sang for my younger sister. The lyric was "Mae Ga Euy Khai Wai Hair Mae Ka Fak Mae Ka Kor Hlong Ruk." That all I could remember. I thought no one would sing this song later because not many people heard this song. Especially the ones who lived in big cities, they might have no idea about it."



Figure 6 Local wisdom of language and literature.

Wisdom of tradition (Figure 7) referred to the one involving with the application of religious ceremonies for community security. About 30% of elderly participants learned tradition of lives from birth to death. These people had inherited the processes of conducting the ceremonies, for example, Kon Phom Fai (The first hair shaving for new born baby), which was performed in the early stage of life. Then for adults there were ordain tradition, wedding tradition, and funeral tradition. Concerning this kind of wisdom, from the stance of not taking it as a job it was found that most participants realized what to do; whereas the proper order of each tradition was missed. This was resulted from no direct teaching of such tradition as well as the rare occasions to

experience it. For example, for Kon Phom Fai tradition convenient sequences would be performed as explained by a participant who was resident in Tah Rue District that, "In the past, wedding tradition required several Khan Mak Eak (Offering goods from the groom to the bride), Khan Mak Toe, and some more Khan Mak. The ones who held Khan Mak Eak must be four ladies, all married or all single. If they were married, they must have a happy married life. These four ladies represented all Indra's four queens; Queen Suthamma, Queen Sununtha, Queen, Sujittra, and Queen Suchada. The four ladies were the greatest in the Khan Mak parade. It was hard to find the complete practice of the tradition these days. Most of the time it was held conveniently."



Figure 7 Local wisdom of traditions.

In terms of local wisdom of natural resource and environment management (Figure 8), 56.25% of the participants learned it from their parents, especially tree planting which they were taught to experience in real situation. Their parents taught them the processes and steps of how to perform

grafting or branch propagating as well as other methods of propagation. Besides, they learned flood prevention, as in the year 2011, a big flood had made great impacts on the province. Thus, the people applied their local wisdom to manage the incident. The participants realized when the

flood would come. They usually got ready by repairing their boats prior to the flood. A participant in Bang Ban District explained that, "We usually knew when the flood would come by observing the walking tracks. Then we fixed our boat to be ready. Doing so wasn't a tough job by turning over the boat and observed any obvious holes or grooves. When we found some we removed the old natural adhesive substance and replaced with another one. The natural adhesive paste

contained three materials; red lime paste which we ate with Betel Palm, Chan Powder (Sticky liquid from Teng Trees), and a solvent container made from coconut shells to mixed the ingredients well. Plastic containers hindered the well mixture. When we were in a hurry, we used Gap Oil, which resulted in moderate quality. For the best and enduring quality, we gradually mixed red lime paste, liquid from Yang Trees, and Chan Power together. Then we placed it over the holes."



Figure 8 Local wisdom of natural resource and environment management.

The data analysis showed that the transferring methods of all the seven aspects of local wisdom were the same. That is to say they were transferred from generations to generations by various means such as parents or grandparents' teaching. The teaching referred to transfer of accumulated knowledge and experiences to their children. Sometimes formal teaching bored this generation as supported by a participant who was resident in Bang Ban District that, "I asked my grandchildren to help with rice planting and taught them how to do it. However, they weren't

interested in it. Then they couldn't do it. I thought young people in this generation couldn't do rice planting as my grandchildren asked me, 'Would you like me to grow rice as you do? I better work in a company instead.' my grandkids replied." Next, demonstration or teaching while showing how to do was also performed. This method resulted in more understanding of means and steps of the perform tasks until their grandchildren could do it. The method was favorable for them, especially the local wisdom of eating, as it took place in every household. Parents and their children usually

cook food or dessert together in the kitchen. At the beginning they just asked their kids to be in the kitchen with them and persuaded them to try making it as described by a participant in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya District that, "I could cook because of the teaching form my mom. Then I taught my child. I usually asked them what they felt like eating. After that, I persuaded them to cook. At least when they grew up, they could cook something." Meanwhile, unique techniques of each family were also taught to their children. A participant in Ban Phraek District who used bamboo in fan-weaving explained that, "In the process of bamboo preparation, we used straight bamboo trees with long segments and smooth surface. Then we cut them and soaked the whole three into water to keep them fresh and protect them from ants, termites, and snout beetles. When we needed them, we cut them into short segments and cut into thin layers. After that, we let the layers dried into the sun. In some communities they used bamboo trees which were older than 2 years or around 10 months or a year depending on their wisdom." In addition, the transfer of wisdom through written forms was also performed. In terms of wisdom of treatment, there had been hand written records so far. Then the records were handed to the later generation for them to use. A participant in Bang Pahun supported the idea and said that, "I had a

treatment booklet. I got it from my dad and my dad got it from my granddad. I had studied from it and now I could give medical treatment to patients. But I realized that today medical care was different from that in the past. Long ago we used herbs to cure illnesses such as using guava leaves to stop bleeding. In doing so we use around 5 leaves, washed them, and pounded thoroughly. Then we added limewater and mixed them well. Finally, we put it over the wound; whereas medical staff just pressed the wound with a clean cloth pad. They are totally different." The next area of wisdom transferring was done through a listening method, particularly wisdom of language and literature. It usually started from listening every day followed by practicing as mentioned by a participant in Nakhon Laung District that, "Because of my career I always sang. When joining an ordain ceremony, I took my son with me. He would absorb it and at the same time he could practice as well."

Data analysis revealed that social media was applied together with learning and transferring of local wisdom. In case people would like to learn more, they usually surf the internet, got in websites, watched demonstrating VDO clips via YouTube, gained knowledge through Facebook chatting, or Line application, and etc. Obviously, in terms of wisdom of eating, the participants searched for more food and dessert

cooking information and traditional techniques on the internet. A participant in Pak Hai District stated that, "We sold food at home. Sometimes, I spent my time surfing the internet to learn how to cook via YouTube, Facebook, or on websites. For example, I learned that baby bamboo trees were edible when we peeled and boiled them. We could add them in curry with much vegetable, any fried dishes, having them with chili paste, or add salt to preserve it. After preservation, we could add them into sour curry or curry with coconut milk, while bamboo stems could hold water, palm sugar, or be used as a container for roasted sticky rice with coconut milk. I got all the information from the internet." Similarly, herbs medical properties were also googled via the internet as well as how to take care of simple health problems. One of the participants in Lad Bua Laung supported the idea that, "My child usually got sick he often needed to see the doctor. We spent a lot of money. He was allergic to swing weather. I couldn't afford it. Then I talked to my neighbor. He suggested that I initiatively use herbs for simple symptoms. Thus, I search for more information on Google, Facebook, or asked my friends who had local doctor relatives in Esan via Line. After that, I tried it with myself till I was sure about it. Finally, I used the herbs with my son. At first I was afraid of using it, but he gradually got better. The herbs I usually used

were kariyats, onions, and lemongrass. I believed that Thai wisdom was beneficial. We should keep it for our next generation." Lastly, for wisdom of fine arts, the participants usually watched VDO clips of how to weave fans or baskets on YouTube as well as went on tutorial websites, and etc.

Discussion

In terms of inherited local wisdom, the participants learned it directly through their own experiences and indirectly from their ancestors. It was highly integrated and linked to people's ways of life. Also, it was a crystalized body of knowledge in the local communities (Thitichanchaikuna, 2012). The knowledge will be lost if the person does not broadcast. It is important to change the tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge (Kunpluem and Sowanpreecha, 2016). Besides, due to its fertility, Thai society was rich with variety of local wisdom (Pinwiset, 2007). The wisdom was chosen to be used, applied, and developed to suit one's life or the whole society. The transfer could be witnessed these days through various methods. The most popular ones in all regions were demonstration, verbal teaching through lullabies, proverbs, and written form of knowledge such as textbooks like treatment booklets, house building manuals, fortune telling manuals, etc. Besides, the knowledge was in the literature forms like literature, doctrine,

proverbs, maps, legendary tales, etc. In addition to the previous transferring methods, learning by doing, lecturing and demonstrating, telling directly/ describing, self-learning from media, learning centers, as well as learning through local art performances, and learning indirectly were also common. (kru pak rak jum) (Na Ayudhya, 2008; Viphatphumiprathes, 2010). It was interesting that the transferring methods were changeable when time went by. For example, in the digital era in which social media could serve people's needs, media exposure was great. These new media could systematically store countless information which were easy to be accessed. These resulted in successful publication and greater achieve. Moreover, the characteristics of computer programs and the media could form mixed media which could reach the audience rapidly (Saipradit, 2008).

Conclusion

The results showed that 95% of the participants learned local wisdom from their ancestors. Next, concerning the learning of the target local wisdom, it was found that the transferring method was the same. It referred to the transfer from one generation to another through various means mostly the informal teaching of accumulated experiences by parents or grandparents. Besides, the obvious use of social media with local

wisdom occurred after the local wisdom leaning and transferring. When people required or interested in more information, they usually used the internet to watch tutorial VDO clips on Youtube or Facebook chat, and Line application.

In terms of livelihood local wisdom of rice plantation, 100% of the participants inherited the methods from their parents, their grandparents, or the ancestors during their time as a child assisting in rice plantation. Local wisdom of treatment, 85% of the participants inherited it from ancestors. For example, most of them learned about edible herbs since they were young and learned to plant those herbs in their households since then. Local wisdom, most participants (81.5%) explained that they acquired how to preserve food and cook food from their mothers or from generations to generations. The art local wisdom, only 35% of the participants had knowledge about it. Most of them learned how to mold and weave from their ancestors.

Besides, some of them performed self-learning after taking courses with Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education or learning online such as from websites or YouTube for more information. Local wisdom of language and literature, only 26.25% of the participants learned it. Most participants had no experiences learning it. However, despite of ability to sing they heard and knew a bit about local music performances

like Pleng Choi, Pleng Lae, Pleng Glom Dek, Pleng Esaew, and etc. from their grandparents. Wisdom of tradition referred to the one involving with the application of religious ceremonies for community security. About 30% of elderly participants learned tradition of lives from birth to death. These people had inherited the processes of conducting the ceremonies and local wisdom of natural resource and environment management, 56.25% of the participants learned it from their parents, especially tree planting which they were taught to experience in real situation.

If people wanted to learn more, they usually went to the internet for more information, watched demonstrating VDO clips on YouTube, and gained knowledge through Facebook chatting, or Line application, etc.

Suggestion

1. It should be emphasized on the transfer of local wisdom. In this research, there are number of VDO clips from interviewees regarding the seven aspects of local wisdom. If any interested, they can learn from YouTube or websites.

2. Demonstration or transferring of local wisdom to new generation in new media.

3. In each region, there will be different local wisdom. The local wisdom of each region should be explored.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank you all of the respondents for their kind cooperations in answering all questions. I would like to thank you Faculty of Industrial Education, Rajamangala University of Technology, Suphanburi, Thailand, for the financial support of this research.

References

- Kunpluem, P., & Sowanpreecha, R. (2016). Knowledge management for local wisdom. *Sripatum Chonburi Journal*, 12(6), 89-97.
- Na Ayudhya, S. (2008). *The transfer of wisdom by the elderly*. Retrieved September 15th, 2017, from http://www.stou.ac.th/stoukc/elder/main1_12.html
- Phantuwat, P., Lila, S., & Aneksuk, S. (2017). Socialization on local wisdom in self-care of elderly. *SDU Research Journal Humanities and Social Sciences*, 13(1), 149-170.
- Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya (2015). *UNESCO world heritage site*. (2015). Retrieved September 15th, 2017, from <http://www.thailandsworld.com/th/ayutthaya/world-heritage-site-ayutthaya/index.cfm>
- Pinwiset, M. (2007). *Thai lives and cultures*. Bangkok: Aimpan Ltd.
- Pongpit, S. (2008). *Theories, guided practices, and strategies for local development*. Bangkok: Jaroenwit Kanphim.
- Saipradit, K. (2008). Roles of public relation officers in public relations through new media section 1. *Phattana Technique Suksa*, 20, 42-51.
- Thanomsri, M. (2003). *The world heritage historical park*. Bangkok: PP World Media.

- Thitichanchaikun, N. (2012). *Art and craft wisdom of wood carving: A case study of Sanpa Tong wood crafts cooperative, Sanpa Tong district, Chiang Mai province*. Bangkok: Srinakharinwirot University.
- Viphatphumiprathes, T. (2010). *Local wisdom transfer of local philosophers: A case study of Thai traditional drum (Klong Yao) group in Pranburi district, Prachuapkhirikhan province*. Bangkok: Dhurakij Pundit University.
- Wijarn, B. (2004). *Knowledge management in action*. Bangkok: Expernetbooks.
- Wisootthicharnont, C. (2014). *People's participation of local wisdom conservation, Khlongdan sub-district, Ranod district, Songkhla province*. Songkhla: Hatyai University.