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# QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE KING'S PROPERTIES: A CASE STUDY OF POLICES' WORK TOWARDS THAIS' HAPPINESS THROUGH CRIME PREVENTION

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## Abstract

The Royal Thai Police's operations, with support from the king's projects, improved the quality of life for the Thais citizens. Quality of life refers to many contexts, but in this research, it is in the context of crime prevention. This quantitative research is based on sixty-six communities in the king's properties. The collaboration between the Royal Thai Police, support from the king, and community members' involvement in crime prevention show increased quality of life through their happiness, attitude towards police work, and community involvement in crime prevention. Research suggests that, in general, people can improve their happiness by willful positive activities as simple as helping in the community. Fear of crime occurs across social statuses such as sex, age, class, and race and reduces the level of happiness. This quantitative study used quota sampling of 1,980 samples in sixty-six communities in the king's properties that aimed to find the quality of life through the level of their happiness, participants' attitudes toward police work, and community involvement in crime prevention. The study shows that the presence of police in the communities reduces fear of crime. Collaboration between law enforcement and community members increases trust and happiness; as a result, it reduces fear of crime and improves a positive attitude toward police work.

**Keywords:** Quality of Life, King's Properties, Police Work, Crime Prevention

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## Introduction

The phrase “quality of life” was first used in a policing context in New York City in the early 90s (McArdle & Erzen, 2001). Based on the broken windows theory describes, crimes as a sign of a disorder that will cause severe crimes, left unchecked. Crimes reduce the quality of life around the world. Those living in low-income, specific, or inner-city areas are more likely to express crime concerns. Thais’ expectation of civil affairs has not changed much over the years. Even though the Thai government is trying to adjust the police's roles and responsibilities to serve citizens better, the fear of crime does not decrease over the years. In most countries, citizens expect the police to maintain law and order. They expect law enforcement officers to protect, control, and solve crime issues. Nevertheless, several police organizations have gone further in increasing police capacity to handle crimes more efficiently in the present time by rearranging their work which requires public trust and confidence (Sahapattana & Cheurprakobkit, 2016). The change refers to traditional policing, where the police rely massively on crime prevention, and community policing, where the public partners with crime-solving policies. Despite Thailand's unsettled situation, the police are working diligently toward quality of life for the Thais with operations and annual budget expenditure Act 2020. The operation comes with indicators for evaluating the police efficiency assessment program and public confidence in their performance. Police Strategy Office by the Royal Thai police started the project by collaborating with other civil societies to increase the quality of life, enhance the relationship with citizens, and reduce crime in the king's properties. Quality of life (QoL) is a perception that refers to the general wellness of people or societies, including physical and mental health, environment, recreation, and belonging to a social group (Troiano & Lazzeri, 2020).

Quality of life in this study refers to subjective enjoyment of life. It describes the overall degree of pleasure to which individuals is comfortable, healthy, and able to participate in the live events. Happiness defines living peacefully with a low level of crime in the communities. The confidence in police work is crucial in contributing happiness to the citizens. Likewise, the level of trust and confidence in civil affairs increases police efficiency in preventing and dealing with crime problems. Even though several types of research conducted in the U.S. showed that generally, Americans have positive attitudes toward police, few studies have been done in the Thai Police context (Sahapattana & Cheurprakobkit, 2016). If police officers perform poorly in their duty, the public does not perceive the police as performing well. As a result, their attitudes toward the police tend to be harmful, and they have a low level of trust, reduced happiness, and increased fear of crime. Thus, it is crucial to understand factors that foster trust, create confidence, and bring joy to Thais citizens. The research aims to find the citizens' happiness in the king's properties, citizens' attitudes toward police work, and communities' involvement in crime prevention.

## Literature Review

### Public Confidence in Police Performance

According to a survey in the U.S., police can improve public confidence and opinion by increasing their favorable informal contracts with citizens (Ashcroft, Daniels & Hart, 2021). Citizens' expectations of law enforcement have had little to no change. In several countries, the public expects the police to maintain law and order, control crime, protect persons and property, and solve crime problems. In the past, police organizations have used their resources to complete tasks, mainly on a police patrol. Besides, many police agencies have gone further with the strategy to increase police capacity in dealing with criminal and noncriminal incidents more efficiently. The U.S. and several countries in Europe provide services called community policing. The essential of community policing is to improve the police and citizens' relationship in the 1970s (Sahapattana & Cheurprakobkit, 2016). Recently, the Royal Thai Police started to

implement community policing programs. They have tried to strengthen their relationship with Thai citizens and find ways to reduce disorder and crime issues. Shifting the police's roles from fighting crime heavily to community policing requires public trust and police confidence. Community policing is where the public is part of crime-solving and perhaps becomes partners of the police. Several experimental studies in the U.S. show positive public attitudes toward police work (Sahapattana & Cheurprakobkit, 2016). However, few studies were conducted in the context of Thai Police. Public confidence in police works can be an excellent mark on police performance. Thus, it is crucial to understand the factors influencing confidence in Thai law enforcement. These factors include contextual demographic and police-citizen contact categories. However, the most vital public confidence toward police work is the public perception of police performance quality.

### **Position in Society**

Happiness defines as subjective and relative. One study indicates that people's happiness levels link to their social position (Ejrnaes & Greve, 2017). People who have higher income imply higher happiness levels. There seems to be a positive relationship between happiness and average income (Ejrnaes & Greve, 2017). The well-being of individuals depends on one's status in society. Furthermore, the connection between individuals' perceptions of their societal position and happiness level is unclear. In other words, the well-being of people does not mean the level of happiness. One research shows that individuals' satisfaction in life depends on how they perceive their situations. Examples of these circumstances are one's past experiences, perception of others' circumstances, and expectation of future outcomes (Ejrnaes & Greve, 2017). Happiness comes from how individuals perceive their situation as higher or lower than their peers, which leads to emotional distress to either increase or decrease happiness levels. Thus, how one perceives their social status impacts their well-being.

### **Fear of Crime**

Several types of research in criminology classify many factors linked to fear of crime. However, these studies have limited connection within the psychological context. Therefore, fear of crime refers to social demographics such as age, socioeconomic status, media exposure, health, and location (Ellis & Renouf, 2018). With the decrease in crime reports in the developed world, such as the U.K., fear of crime, in general, has continued to rise, and its dramatic social problems worldwide. Fear can lead to psychological issues, such as anxiety and depression. These psychological problems can trigger a variety of adverse health challenges, including panic attacks.

Nonetheless, crime-related fear reduces individuals' physical activity, low quality of life, and poor mental health (Ellis & Renouf, 2018). In addition to the psychological impact, governments and policy-makers need to understand the factors that underlie the fear of crime. Crime-related fear is difficult to identify which individuals are more than likely to report high levels of fear. Previous research shows that women report a greater fear of crime than men. The result is mixed when predicting those with direct experience with crime (Ellis & Renouf, 2018). According to Weinrath and Gartrell, in 1966, previous crime victims increased their level of fear (Ellis & Renouf, 2018). Therefore, fear of crime can increase fear itself, which links to the feeling of social unease. However, personality might be a predictive factor in crime-related fear and contribute to potential coping mechanisms.

### **Happiness Theories**

Psychology refers to happiness in theories of well-being and emotions. Individuals' well-being indicates rewarding, valued experiences, positive psychological functioning, or beliefs about self and the world (Kaczmarek, 2017). Nowadays, researchers found the term happiness linked to positive psychology. Happiness can be interpreted differently depending on its context and the type of professional group that introduces it into its terminology (Kaczmarek, 2017). Several happiness theories are associated with philosophical traditions, such as subjective well-

being, objective happiness, psychological well-being, eudaimonic well-being, social-psychological prosperity, and authentic happiness/well-being theory (Kaczmarek, 2017). Despite various names, all theories emphasize subjective that determine whether they are happy or not. However, some theories are objective, with the subject misled by cognitive biases in their judgment's perspective on happiness measurement (Kaczmarek, 2017). Happiness theories are based on the subjective well-being belief that a happy person must experience plenty of positive and few negative feelings. The objective happiness theory views the cognitive evaluation of well-being (Am I a happy person?) as usually biased (Kaczmarek, 2017). Nonetheless, cross-cultural research shows that most individuals consider themselves happy.

### **Psychological Evidence on Happiness**

There is a big difference between the absence of happiness and the presence of unhappiness—for instance, the human mind and brain process negative emotions differently from positive ones. In general, people tend to assume that the high number of happy experiences a person has, the less likely unhappy the person is or vice versa, but this is not the case in reality. For example, those with an excellent social position might experience more positive feelings; however, they do not necessarily experience fewer negative emotions than depressed individuals. Furthermore, those who expect the worst in situations are more than likely to be depressed. Research showed that both partners are unhappy in marriages with equally negative and positive exchanges (Music, 2009). A typical happy marriage requires 5 or 6 more positive than negative interactions to be considered satisfying (Music, 2009). The defensive system is a negative emotional system that works toward avoiding danger. The defensive mechanism's activation leads to more worry and pessimism; its motivation is to seek security and safety. On the other hand, the positive system brings pleasure, hope, and interest to increase good feelings. Primarily individuals need to create capacities to manage both positive and negative experiences. In general, those who have gone through traumatic experiences need professional help to process the enormous pain and experiences which otherwise might hurt them. They also need help enjoying good things to create hope and skills to reach out for things.

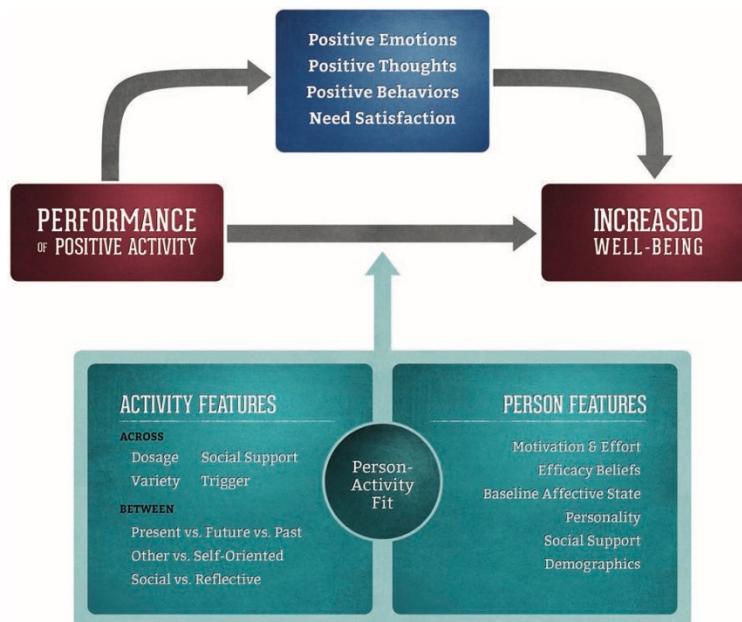
### **Quality of Life**

Quality of life refers to the roles of material well-being in individuals' lives that were first noted in the mid World War 2 (Broekaert, Maeyer, Vandeveld, Vanderplasschen, Claes, Colpaert, & Walgraeve, 2017). The term quality of life came after the economic growth and improved living standards after the War. The quality of life implies family, health, and housing and is often referred to as the social indicator movement (Broekaert et al., 2017). According to the World Health Organization, quality of life is "individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live, and concerning their goals, expectations and standards and concern" (Broekaert et al., 2017). The primary understanding of the quality-of-life bases on the perception of individuals. It is the perception that expresses individuals' perspectives in life (Thanathiti, 2019; Chuachoonu, Chatchawanchanchanakij & Arpornpisan, 2021).

### **Activities Theory**

Most people worldwide want to be happy, but how can they be satisfied intentionally. Some data show that individual differences in their well-being are strongly influenced by genetics (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). Research shows that positive activities increase individuals' happiness if deliberately practiced (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013). The positive activities can be classified as intentional, simple, regular practices of healthy thoughts and behaviors. These behaviors associate with naturally happy individuals. A simple act, such as writing gratitude letters, counting blessings, and performing kind acts, can cultivate their strengths. The positive-activity model in Figure 1 shows that positive activities increase an individual's well-being.

The positive-activity model informs activity and person features that influence positive activities' success as people perform them (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013).



**Figure 1** The positive-activity model

Source: Lyubomirsky & Layous (2013)

## Research Methodology

"Quality of Life in the King's Properties: A Case Study of Polices 'Work Towards Thais' Happiness Through Crime Prevention" used quantitative methodology. The sample size came from 66 communities, each with 30 volunteers, in a total of 1,980 samples. The quota sampling technique was used to gather information from each community. Researchers used uncontrolled quota sampling to choose samples according to their will. The sample groups from the general public living in the king's properties are accidental sampling. The sample was selected based on the number of samples. For example, if a sample of 20 people was required, it could be divided into ten males and ten females, and then a random sample was selected in the area. In this study, 30 people were chosen from each community.

The questionnaire breaks into six parts: general information, the level of happiness, the level of attitude, the level of public activities, and recommendations and satisfaction toward police work. The participants answered each question from 1(the least) to 5 (the most).

Data collection was done during the day by trained researchers. It involved using a semi-structured questionnaire, which was used as an interview guide for the researchers. Survey questions were prepared to guide researchers toward the satisfaction of participants. Furthermore, participants are free to make any additional comments during data collection. This study analyzed data using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS). The descriptive statistics analyzed the quantitative data described in frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

## Research Results

The target areas of this research are sixty-six communities of the king's properties. Each community has police officers who provide services and support to its leaders and members. Thirty samples in each district were collected, totaling 1,980 samples. The research focuses on citizens' level of happiness in the king's properties, people's attitudes towards police work, and why some might not participate in community work. The survey explores various opinions

and aspects of the target population obtained from 1,980 field surveys and 20 in-depth interviews. The field researchers collected data in different target areas to code and input the data into the field. A database system for analysis uses quantitative data analysis using descriptive statistics to analyze the statistics used, such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The survey results with the general public were 1,980 voluntary participants, shown in the table below.

**Table 1** The basic information of the general public

Voluntary Participants	1,980	Percent
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	910	46.00
Female	1070	54.00
<b>Career</b>		
Employee/ Company employee	869	43.90
Agriculture	14	0.70
Service/ State enterprises	239	12.10
Personal business/ trade	528	26.70
Student	144	7.20
Other	186	9.40
<b>Monthly income</b>		
Does not provide information	619	31.30
5,000 THB or less	208	10.50
5,001-15,000 THB	776	39.20
15,001-25,000 THB	229	11.50
25,001-35,000 THB	105	5.30
35,001-45,000 THB	21	1.10
45,001 THB or more	22	1.10
<b>Have you heard of the Royal Thai Police's Program to make citizens happy through crime prevention?</b>		
Yes	1587	80.20
No	393	19.80

The table 1 shows that most of the sample were female, with 1,070 people (54.00%). The average age was 44.08 years. Most of them were employed with 869 contractors/company employees (43.90%). 39.2% of participants' income was more than 5,001 but not over 15,001 THB per month. Only 22 People (1.10%) make more than 45,001 THB per month.

**Table 2** The overall analysis of happiness, attitudes, and community involvement

Overall	Mean	SD	Percentage
1) Happiness	3.62	0.89	72.40
2) Attitude	3.98	0.73	79.60
3) Community involvement	3.59	0.85	71.80

The overall analysis of happiness among the 1,980-sample size is 72 percent, their attitudes toward police work are 79 percent, and community involvement toward crime prevention is 71 percent (Table 2).

**Table 3** The community's overall happiness, attitude, and activities

Subject	Mean	SD	Percentage
<b>Happiness</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>72.40</b>
1) Proud to be born in Thailand and has a Thai citizen	4.34	0.89	86.80
2) Received information on maintaining good health during the pandemic	3.79	1.04	75.80
3) Received support for a bed-bound patient	3.73	1.09	74.60
4) Received the Royal supplies.	3.67	1.18	73.40
5) Received free medical check-ups	3.50	1.15	70.00
6) Participated in vocational training.	3.33	1.16	66.60
7) Learned crime prevention	3.48	1.13	69.60
8) Police came to help out with cleanliness in the community.	3.73	1.06	74.60
9) Received information on illegal drugs and crime prevention	3.46	1.13	69.20
10) Police trained youth in the community to stay away from drugs in school	3.47	1.18	69.40
11) Received training course about traffic laws and road safety	3.34	1.19	66.80
<b>Attitude</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>79.60</b>
1) Awareness of the Thai monarchy	4.07	0.84	81.40
2) Eager and motivated to become a volunteer	4.02	0.82	80.40
3) Promoted economic sufficiency	3.93	0.89	78.60
4) Carried out royal initiatives to develop communities, roads, and public areas	4.00	0.83	80.00
5) Have volunteered, "We do good for the King."	4.02	0.88	80.40
6) Regularly participated in public holiday activities	3.92	0.88	78.40
7) Volunteer with children and youth in the community and schools	3.89	0.91	77.80
<b>Activities</b>	<b>3.59</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>71.80</b>
1) Informed children and grandchildren about crime prevention	3.81	0.98	76.20
2) Regularly participated in anti-drugs and community crime prevention activities	3.53	1.07	70.60
3) Participated in building relationships within the community	3.61	1.02	72.20
4) Participated in enhancing the safety of people's lives and property in the community	3.49	1.04	69.80
5) Educated community members on crime prevention, including various disasters.	3.46	1.06	69.20
6) Invited community members to participate in activities according to the Royal initiative warning on anti-drugs and crime prevention	3.48	1.09	69.60
7) Collaborated to improve the community's environment for crime prevention and community living	3.77	1.00	75.40

People were happy that the police were involved in the communities and encouraged members to promote crime prevention through environmental design. Since crime is a social problem, it causes fear within the community. Crime prevention through environmental design helps reduce fear of crime and enhance the quality of life. When police officers patrol in the district discourages the criminal and their activities. Community members' surveillance is one of the most effective in crime prevention. Criminals do not want to be observed, and intruders are less likely to commit crimes with community surveillance. They were impressed with the

police's work that helped solve the communities' challenges and improve their condition. Community members expressed that some crimes and traffic problems were solved since the polices were involved in the community.

Happiness came from receiving assistance from the polices by caring for their living conditions. Safety within the community due to police officers patrolling the neighborhoods and improving the landscape and environment to be orderly and pleasant. They are happy to receive various nursing assistance, especially among the elderly and the sick who need special care.

Furthermore, the level of fear of crime was reduced. The lowest score in happiness was participation in vocational training with sixty-six percent. Members hoped the police team would provide vocational training to earn income at the pandemic's beginning.

Coordinating various vital stakeholders with its implementation brought happiness, and people felt satisfied and relieved of their concerns about many issues. The patrol mission in the communities makes people feel safe, and as a result, people share their stories, including various problems found in the community, leading to timely problem-solving. The community has organized activities jointly with the task force (OPC) regularly, thus allowing people to participate in various operations together. It helped people feel part of the community, which led to more participation in the community in the future. People have a good attitude towards the police operation unit due to their involvement in the community.

Regarding attitudes, eighty-seven percent reported that they are happy to be born in Thailand and have Thai citizenship. Some stated he was proud of the country but not much of the kingdom. New generations usually had an emotional feelings about their king. On the other hand, the older generation favors the previous king more but still holds high regard for the current one as their king. Since the lowest score in attitude is volunteering with children and youth, the sample group did not give high value to this matter. Some said that due to their busy schedule, others reported that they did not know about volunteering opportunities.

Community activities for crime prevention have the highest score with a mean of 3.81. The elders gave high respect to informing their children and grandchildren about crime prevention. One participant reported feeling much safer since the police officers have come to the areas for patrol. It is something about uniform and their presence that discourages illegal activities. He also added that in the past, he noticed illicit drug businesses in his area. They were either trafficked illegal drugs or sold to the community's youth (Table 3).

## Conclusion & Discussion

In conclusion, 72.4% of people are happy to receive assistance from polices' operation, with a mean of 3.62. The operation teams improved the communities' landscape and environment to make them more orderly and livable and reduced crimes and fear of crime. Community members received nursing aids, particularly among the elderly population. Furthermore, the communities have an opportunity to work closely with other organizations that came with the policies' operation. These organizations often asked how members were doing, helped them with their challenges, encouraged them, and as a result, brought lots of happiness to the communities. Since people were open and participated in police work, they had the courage to address their challenges and solve problems promptly. People were delighted to join in the community's activities and police's activities. However, the dilemma was a lack of adequate equipment to support the communities' needs. In addition, assistance was usually delayed to meet the requirements, making it inadequate to solve the problem on time. The police teams often contacted and coordinated with the community leaders on short notice, which caused the community members' hecticness. Therefore, good coordination is necessary. The community has requested to promote, develop, and correct social and economic conditions for a better quality of life. There should be career training for the public. The request is for the government

to provide surveillance in the community or for the police officer to patrol more frequently to eliminate drug problems and homelessness. Also, establish a special fund to help manage and solve various issues. The overall attitude result was 79.6%, with a mean of 3.98. People have a positive attitude towards the operation. Some community members reported that the police teams helped them motivate and became more enthusiastic about maintaining their community's environment for crime prevention. One community member stated that the most impressive work of the police teams was their willingness to help out without any request. Despite a fear of crime, community members are not highly involved in advising and educating people on crime prevention (69.2%).

### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

Crime prevention in community-based approaches can have a more significant impact on criminal behaviors than only law enforcement. Prevention and intervention combined with traditional law enforcement significantly impact criminal behavior. Community policing is the collaboration between police, interactive partners, and stakeholders. It recognizes that police cannot solve problems alone (Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice, 2022). The strategies that promote the systematic use of problem-solving and partnership can address the immediate crimes, which help protect public safety. It helps people feel part of the community leading to increased happiness, better attitude, and public participation, which builds ownership and sustainability. Collaboration and multi-agency approaches are one of the best approaches not only for the quality of life but crime prevention. Fear of crime has an enormous impact on society around the world. People usually choose where to live, work, shop, and socialize based on safety perceptions (Cordner, 2010). Fear of crime is real and can be decreased with the support of the local police department. The police must start by analyzing and measuring fear of crime more systematically. Not only this, but they also need crime analysis to target crime which requires community involvement, community meetings, environmental audits, key community leaders, and routine public contacts (Cordner, 2010). Once they can identify and understand the fear, they can apply a response or find solutions. People will not become less fearful unless they know their fear sources have been addressed (Cordner, 2010). The key to reducing fear of crime is for the police to ensure that the community sees, hears, or recognizes that the problems have been solved and improved. They need reassurance and safety to reduce the fear of crime. Community policing is one way of crime prevention. Fear causes by the perception of individuals, whether based on past experiences or beliefs. Encouraging neighbors to watch out for each other, citizen patrol, and other related programs can decrease crime fear. It enables members to engage in positive activities that result in their well-being. Research shows that community policing makes people feel safe and increases police-public contact through foot patrol, police visits to homes and stores, and organizing efforts to improve individuals' well-being.

For individuals to have holistic well-being, it requires environment, system, psychosocial, and economical. The environment consolidates both the natural and the built environment (Roy, Riley, Sears & Rula, 2018). The natural environment involves air and water quality. The built environment refers to all human-made structures, such as sidewalks, roads, houses, and necessities. Individuals' well-being in the environment advocates social connectedness, positive living, engagement, and trust. These positive influences on well-being can be done by creating safe pedestrian crossings and encouraging social interactions, especially among the elderly. Researches show that community well-being comes from several factors such as economic, environmental, social, and cultural (Cloutier, Ehlenz & Afinowich, 2019). A good system in the community cultivates the community's well-being.

Example of systems is education, health care, housing, transportation, and water. When the community members have access to a good quality system, it builds positive well-being. A study shows that when children do not have adequate transportation access to and from school,

it creates depression and anxiety (Roy et al., 2018). Generally, communities with good access to social services have better well-being and health outcomes. The psychosocial environment is comprehensive safety, acceptance, trust in the government, civil affairs, various feelings of inclusion, and social support and connection. Any communities with a low or hostile psychosocial environment tend to have a high crime rate, low community engagement, social isolation, and low trust. Therefore, increased social cohesion and community engagement promote higher well-being and quality of life. Strengthening financial well-being is essential. Large numbers of unemployment create a negative impact on well-being. Anxiety and stress-related due to economic insecurity contribute to negative social connections. Income inequality has a negative effect on well-being. For example, income inequality tends to have lower levels of trust, less social mobility, lower life satisfaction, and higher imprisonment rates (Roy et al., 2018). Furthermore, individuals who have a job but are still poor also have low well-being and unmet mental health needs. The civil affairs operation/Thai government must advocate for citizens' well-being in economic crises like COVID-19.

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