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# THE MORAL AND ETHICS OF FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study the satisfaction of people towards the moral and ethics of female police officers. The method used in this research was a quantitative study with 6,120 samples by quota sampling to determine the sample size of 68 people from 1 police station. Then, the stratified random sampling was used that the samples were selected from all over the country. The research instrument was the questionnaire with the reliability of .8778. The statistics used for data analysis were descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation as well as t-test. The results of this research indicated that the score of overall satisfaction of people towards the moral and ethics of female police officers was 8.11 (81.05%). Furthermore, the comparison of opinions regarding satisfaction of people towards the moral and ethics of female police officers showed that variables of residential characteristics and perceptions regarding female police officers' performance of people had a statistically significant difference at 0.01.

**Keywords:** Satisfaction of People, Moral, Ethics, Female Police Officer, Gender

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## **Introduction**

The Royal Thai Police is an agency in the justice system that has the power and duty to prevent and suppress criminal acts and maintain order and safety for people. The previous performance of police officers in the Royal Thai Police showed that a number of police officers sacrificed their physical and mental strengths, also dedicated their abilities to perform duties. On the other hand, many police officers also did not behave within moral norms. As a result, people had negative attitudes towards police officers as in TV news, newspapers, radios, internet presenting police officers who had inappropriate behaviors in performing duty, or acted in abuse of power causing damages to others. Furthermore, it appeared the case that the Royal Thai Police received several reports from people and the result of the reinvestigation showed that most reports were true as being complained (WorkpointTODAY, 2021; Matichon, 2016). Currently, in the Royal Thai Police (RTP), there are a total of 215,607 personnel divided into 92% of male police officers, and 8% of female police officers (National Geography Thai, 2018). The study reveals that female police officers work appropriately with their knowledge, ability, and aptitude. They are also happy to perform their assigned duties and satisfied with performances that they are responsible. Besides, being in charge of cases of children and women as victims should be assigned as the main duty of female police officers in order to build justice and gender equality, especially the focus group which is female. This is also the opportunity for those people who are capable of working under the police organization with non-sexism (Prenzler & Sinclair, 2013).

However, the reflection from female police officers' performance must also be evaluated by people by requiring ethical standards and police's conduct as the main framework for consideration including police's moral standards, police's attitudes, police's ethical standards, police's conduct, and solution of corruption problems of the police. It has not a study toward moral and ethics of female police officers in Thailand. Therefore, the study of moral and ethics of female police officers indicates people's perspectives on the performance of female police officers in order to evaluate the transparency and justice of female police officers as well as confidence and faith from the public to female police officers in Thai society. Additionally, this is an essential matter to consider the roles of female police officers who have different gender and sexuality in police organization that lead to the development of institute to be effective in crime prevention and suppression as well as maintenance of the order of people in the country and safety of people in the society which is the main purpose.

## **Literature Review**

### **Feminist and Work**

The feminists significantly defined the differences of sex and gender that sex is biologically classified, and gender is socially constructed by indicating gender status and gender roles of individuals including physiological, emotional, social, and behavioral dimensions. Thus, generally, gender refers to the anatomical differences between men and women that are divided into male and female. However, gender is socially and psychologically divided into two main parts including masculine and feminine that indicate the distinctive characteristics of such individuals. Law enforcement agencies are more focusing on variety of race than gender (National Geography Thai, 2018). Law enforcement occupation is predominated by male officers, while female officers seem to prevent participation in law enforcement agencies (National Geography Thai, 2018). Many academic scholars now reason that law enforcement agencies must bring woman to join law enforcement agencies because female police officer is rarely overpowered and polite (Matichon, 2016; Fritsvold, n.d.). Moreover, female police officers can deal with violence and sex crime that occur with woman (Fritsvold, n.d.).

### **Code of Ethics and Conduct of Police Officers, 2010**

Moral and ethics are fundamental principles to solve corruption problems of government officials, especially the transparency of performance. The Royal Thai Police, therefore, determined the government administration policy based on the code of ethics and conduct of police which is consistent with the policy of Thai government to encourage all police officers to perform their duties with transparency and able to be verified by moral and ethical strength in accordance with democratic and constitutional guidelines 2007 as well as determination ethical standards of civil officials to be effective (Royal Thai Police, 2012). Moreover, this focus on the cultivation of consciousness regarding moral and ethics so that officials are able to pledge to conduct themselves with faithfulness and adjust their attitudes to live simply, be frugal according to the principle of the sufficient economy (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2007).

Since the Royal Thai Police has essential authority and responsibility including security for the King, Queen, royal heir, regent, royal family members, royal representative, royal guests, law enforcement for protecting people's lives and properties, maintaining the order of society, community service for peacefulness, prevention and suppression of offenders, and taking action to bring offenders to the justice system, therefore for the effectiveness of authority of the Royal Thai Police and people's faith, the code of ethics and conduct of the police must be determined in order to be the framework of conduct to police officers to have good moral and ethics and standard (Pavisiko, 2014). Considering police's ethical standards:

1) Police's ethical standard is a virtue of police officers' conduct in order to be respected and accepted by people.

2) Police conduct is the code of conduct in the performance of the police profession's duty that police officers must practice to maintain dignity and prestige of police officers and police profession.

"Non-discrimination" refers to not using personal satisfaction or dissatisfaction to individuals or other groups of people which is due to parentage, sex, region or belief, race, nationality, age, education, political opinion, or other opinions.

"Benefit" refers to money, property, service, position, privilege, or any benefits or promises which will provide or obtain such stuff in the future.

"Abuse" refers to any actions which are cruelly or inhumanly done to a person's body or mind, or causing terrible pain, or insulting human dignity.

3) Police officers must respect and strictly comply with the code of ethics and conduct of police. When violating or not complying with the code of ethics and conduct of police, such a person must be reported to the commander in writing immediately.

4) police officers must be honest and remain the morality by putting public interests before personal ones.

In addition, the Royal Thai Police also promotes and provides advice on compliance with rules of police officers, the code of ethics and conduct, and implements the code of "police ethics" to all police officers for the extensive practice and strict enforcement since the moral and ethics are universal action plans that police officers must focus on (Royal Thai Police, 2012). There are also consistent training and providing honor to the police officials who are well behaved and ethical so that they will be a role model for all police officers all over the country (Royal Thai Police, 2012). Besides, the Project of Good moral and White Police was originated to emphasize every section to focus on moral and ethics with the main purpose of "building confidence and faith for being a refuge to the people" (Royal Thai Police, 2012).

### **Previous Study**

The earlier studied showed that public were not bias against female police officers but people concern about conduct and dealing with serious crime and violent offenders by female police officers (Carlan, 2007; Cuadrado, 1995; New Zealand Police, n.d.; Worden, 1993). At the same

time, male police officer seemed to be negative attitude toward women when they became a part of law enforcement agencies (Brown, 1994; Wexler & Logan, 1983). Later, when society has been changed and more woman are involved to law enforcement officer. It was found that public have positive attitude to female police officers and prejudice toward female police was continuous declined (Breci, 1997; Hassell et al., 2011; Duffin, 2010; Waugh, 1998; Leger, 1997). Moreover, female police officers were less misconducting than male police officers and female police officers (Waugh, 1998).

## Research Methodology

This quantitative research collected the data from people living in communities which is over 18 years in areas throughout Thailand. In overview, there were 90 police stations all over the country which were collected data with 6,120 samples as follow.

**Table 1** Number of police station and sample

Location of Police Station	Number of Police Station	Number of Sample
Provincial Police Region 1	9	612
Provincial Police Region 2	9	612
Provincial Police Region 3	9	612
Provincial Police Region 4	9	612
Provincial Police Region 5	9	612
Provincial Police Region 6	9	612
Provincial Police Region 7	9	612
Provincial Police Region 8	9	612
Provincial Police Region 9	9	612
Metropolitan Police Bureaus	9	612
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>6,120</b>

The research instrument was the questionnaire to test reliability with 50 samples in Pathum Thani Province that the Cronbach's alpha was at .8778. The questionnaire comprised of general information and levels of satisfaction toward female police officers. The statistics used for data analysis were descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation as well as t-test.

## Research Results

According to Table 2 of general information with 6,120 samples obtained from the general people from all over the country. Most of the samples were female with a total of 3,135 people (51.22%). The average age of samples was 34 years and 7 months. Most 5,820 samples (95.00%) were employed that 1,988 samples (32.48%) were a vendor/ own private business. For education level, most 1,681 samples (27.47%) had education levels at a high school/vocational certificate. The monthly income of most 6,025 samples (98.45%) was 5,001-15,000 THB. Regarding marital status, most 3,035 samples (49.59%) were married and 4,399 samples (71.88%) lived in urban communities and municipal areas. Most 5,561 samples (90.85%) had no experience of being victimized by crime. Most 2,790 samples (45.59) never contacted or used the service of female police officers. Regarding the perception of female police officers' performance, television was the most perceived channel in the perception of female police officers' performance with 5,768 samples.

**Table 2** General information of samples

<b>Data</b>	<b>Number of samples</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	2,985	48.78
Female	3,135	51.22
Average age 34.60 years (SD = 12.42)		
<b>Employment status</b>		
Unemployed	300	5.00
Employed	5,820	95.00
<b>Occupations</b>		
Agriculture	1,047	17.10
Government official/state enterprise officer	1,672	27.32
Vender/private business	1,988	32.48
Employee	973	15.90
Housekeeper	140	2.30
Unemployed	300	4.90
<b>Education</b>		
Primary education	801	13.09
Secondary education	912	14.90
High school/vocational certificate	1,681	27.47
Diploma/High vocational certificate	846	13.82
Bachelor degree	1,654	27.03
Post-graduation	226	3.69
<b>Monthly income</b>		
Below 5,000 THB.	1,279	20.90
5,001-15,000 THB.	2,872	46.93
15,001-25,000 THB.	1,366	22.32
25,001-35,000 THB.	579	9.46
35,001-45,000 THB.	18	0.29
45,001 THB. or more	6	0.10
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	2,751	44.95
Married	3,035	49.59
Divorce/Separated	213	3.48
Widowed	121	1.98
<b>Residence area</b>		
Urban	4399	71.88
Suburb	1709	27.92
Remote	12	0.20
<b>Experience of victims of crime</b>		
Yes	559	9.13
No	5,561	90.87
<b>Contact of female police officer services</b>		
Never	2,790	45.59
Reporting a crime case	202	3.30
Reporting as evidence or a loss document	1,323	21.62
Arrest in a criminal case	22	0.36
Arrest in traffic offences	1,020	16.67
Being inquiry or investigation	150	2.45
Requesting assistance	540	8.82

<b>Data</b>	<b>Number of samples</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Other	73	1.19
<b>Channels for perception of female police officers' performance</b>		
Radio	12	0.20
Television	5,768	94.25
Newspaper	22	0.36
Online media	267	4.36
Other	51	0.83

According to Table 3, the results of the satisfaction of people towards the moral and ethics of female police officers show that the overall score is 8.11 (81.05%). The highest satisfaction is that the police officers do not allow the offender to use their influence or property for persuading the officers to unlawfully perform the duty with the score of 8.37 (83.72%). The lowest satisfaction is that the police officers are careful and perform their duties with caution with the score of 7.96 (79.59%).

Considering each aspect, the score of police's moral standards is 8.06 (80.55%) and the highest satisfaction is that police officers perform their duties with sacrifice with the score of 8.18 (81.82%). The score of police's attitudes is 8.06 (80.56%) and the highest satisfaction is that the police officers consistently provide assistance to people with the score of 8.19 (81.92%). The score of police's ethical standards is 8.09 (80.92%) and the highest satisfaction is that police officers respect people's rights and freedom according to the law with the score of 8.22 (82.16%). The score of police's conducts is 8.12 (81.21%) and the highest satisfaction is that the police officers maintain justice in performing their duties by using knowledge and the ability to seek the truth and do not cause any wrongful act in order to obtain evidence with the score of 8.21 (82.09%). Lastly, the score of the solution of the police corruption is 8.20 (81.99%) and the highest satisfaction is that police officers do not allow the offender to use their influence or property for persuading the officers to unlawfully perform the duty with the score of 8.37 (83.72%).

**Table 3** Levels of satisfaction of people towards the moral and ethics of female police officers

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
People's satisfaction towards the moral and ethics of police officers	8.11	1.19	81.05
Police's moral standards	8.06	1.57	80.55
Police officers perform their duties with honesty	7.97	1.70	79.92
Police officers adhere to their duties even though being wrongfully offered benefits	8.01	1.83	80.11
Police officers perform their duties with sacrifice	8.18	1.62	81.82
Police's attitudes	8.06	1.43	80.56
Police officers consistently provide assistance to people	8.19	1.61	81.92
Police officers patiently perform their duties	7.99	1.58	79.94
Police officers are patient with temptation or violence of people	8.08	1.59	80.80
Police officers are careful and perform their duties with caution	7.32	1.59	73.31
Police's ethical standards	8.09	1.44	80.92
Police officers respect people's rights and freedom according to the law	8.22	1.64	82.16

Questions	Mean	S.D.	Percentage
Police officers are willing to perform their duties with a sense of responsibility without dereliction of duty or shirking responsibility	8.03	1.57	80.29
Police officers have a good relationship with the people	7.96	1.61	79.59
Police's conduct	8.12	1.47	81.21
Police officers facilitate the people to contact with the official by using friendly and polite language with non-discrimination	8.01	1.65	80.12
Police officers do not use violence in performing their duties unless there is a necessity under the law	8.15	1.62	81.48
Police officers maintain justice in performing their duties by using knowledge and the ability to seek the truth and do not cause any wrongful act in order to obtain evidence	8.21	1.62	82.09
Police officers are self-sacrifice for the public interest by supporting the operation under the Royal voluntary projects	8.12	1.75	81.16
Solution of the police corruption	8.20	0.81	81.99
Police officers perform their duty without unlawfully seeking interests	8.03	1.65	80.31
Police officers do not neglect the existence of illegal sources or illegal stuff in the area such as gambling house, unlawful place, and drugs, etc.	8.35	0.66	83.51
Police officers do not allow the offender to use their influence or property for persuading the officers to unlawfully perform the duty	8.37	0.53	83.72

According to Table 4, the comparison results of opinions regarding the satisfaction of people towards the moral and ethics of female police officers show that the moral and ethics of female police officers are different. In other words, people who live in urban communities and have perceived female police officers' performance are satisfied with the moral and ethics of female police officers at a higher level than people who live outside urban communities and have never perceived female police officers' performance. Besides, even though other factors are different, the satisfaction of the moral and ethics of female police officers is not different.

**Table 4** Comparison results of opinions regarding satisfaction of people towards the moral and ethics of female police officers

Factors	Number of samples	Mean	S.D.	T	Sig
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	2,985	3.900	0.419	-2.397	0.595
Female	3,135	3.969	0.407		
<b>Employment</b>					
Unemployed	300	3.816	0.408	1.219	0.311
Employed	5,820	3.296	0.394		
<b>Education</b>					
Bachelor degree and lower	5,894	3.924	0.420	-1.326	0.222
Master degree and higher	226	3.922	0.394		
<b>Marital status</b>					
Single	3,085	3.955	0.397	1.119	0.531
Married/Widowed	3,035	3.922	0.424		

<b>Residence</b>					
Urban	4,411	3.937	0.414	2.254	0.001*
Suburb	1,709	3.930	0.415		
<b>Experience of victims of crime</b>					
Yes	559	4.008	0.378	3.155	0.156
No	5,561	3.907	0.424		
<b>Contact of female police officer services</b>					
Yes	3,257	3.341	0.223		
No	2,863	3.748	0.613	-1.195	0.375
<b>Perception of female police officer's performance</b>					
Yes	6,022	3.973	0.380	2.754	0.009*
No	98	3.894	0.444		

$P = 0.01$

To sum up, public are satisfied with performance and conduct of female police officers. People agree that the moral and ethics of female police officers is high level. People who live in urban communities are more satisfied with female police officers' performance than people who live outside city.

## Discussion

Even though there are only 54.41% of people that have perceived, understood, and contacted or used female police officers' services. However, it found that public have positive comment with the moral and ethics as well as attitude toward performance and conduct of female police officers. Especially, people said that police officers do not allow the offender to use their influence or property for persuading the officers to unlawfully perform the duty. Also, police female officer performs their duties with sacrifice and consistently provide assistance to people with respect rights and freedom according to the law. Consequently, female police officer can maintain justice in performing the duties by using knowledge and the ability to seek the truth and do not cause any wrongful act in order to obtain evidence. As a result, people are satisfied with performance and conduct of female police officers and it appear good outcome. This is consistency with research that public attitude toward women in policing is continuous increased (Breci, 1997; Hassell et al., 2011; Duffin, 2010; Carlan, 2007; Waugh, 1998; Leger, 1997; Cuadrado, 1995; Worden, 1993; New Zealand Police, n.d.). People said that female police officer were less misconducting than male police officers (Waugh, 1998). This may because female police officer understands the Code of Ethics and Conduct of Police Officers, 2010 clearly, a result, performing duties of policewomen are strictly followed the Code of Ethics and Conduct. Another reason could be that female police officer service people with polite and compassionate. Consequently, it makes people to be impressed and satisfied (Duffin, 2010).

Considering in detail of each issue, even though the satisfaction of people towards the moral and ethics of female police officers is at high level, the low level of satisfaction are police officers performing their duties with honesty, police officers being careful and performing the duties with caution, police officers having good a relationship with the people, police officers facilitating the people to communicate with the official by using friendly and polite language with non-discrimination and police officers performing the duties without wrongfully seeking benefits. These are not a new concern, but they are old concerns which can occur to both male and female police officers since social conditions which have changed from Thai society which focuses on agricultural products to the use of modern technology. Also, the patronage system



still remains as Thai people's ways of life that easily cause wrongful support and gain of benefits.

According to comparison of opinions regarding satisfaction, people who live in urban communities and have perceived female police officers' performance that are satisfied with the moral and ethics of female police officers at a higher level than people who live outside urban communities and have never perceived female police officers' performance. This is because people have obviously seen the performance of female police officers due to a large number of cases in urban communities which are assigned to female police officers and this is also in accordance with the principles of crime prevention in urban areas. In other words, there are a large number of cases in urban communities according to populations, modernity, and material progress which affect the increased number of crimes when compared to communities outside urban communities.

## Conclusion

The study aimed the satisfaction of people towards the moral and ethics of female police officers. This was a quantitative study with 6,120 samples by quota sampling to determine the sample size of 68 people from 1 police station. The research instrument was the questionnaire with the reliability of .8778. The statistics used for data analysis were descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation as well as t-test. It found that public have high level of satisfaction towards the moral and ethics of female police officers. It suggests that:

- 1) Government sectors and the Royal Thai Police should promote or support moral and ethical policy, and raise good awareness and consciousness to personnel in the organization.
- 2) The Royal Thai Police should provide opportunities to female police officer to freely perform the duties according to individual abilities with non-sexism. In addition, this should be appropriate assigned duties, especially in case of children and women as victims that should be in charge of female police officers.
- 3) The Royal Thai Police should place importance on facilitation of people in contacting with the officials, and building of the justice, especially in communities outside urban areas.
- 4) Female police officers should consistently provide assistance to people, perform the duties with friendliness, use polite language, have a good relationship with the people and serve the people equally.
- 5) There should be public relations of services or performances of police officers, especially female police officers' performance in order to build more confidence and faith in the justice system from the people in Thai society.

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**Data Availability Statement:** The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

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