

Do Negative Stereotypical Views on Low-Income People Still Exist?: Exploring Thai Gen Z Students' Attitudinal Evaluations Towards Poverty and the Paupers of Thai Discourse

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Received November 18, 2022; **Revised** January 7, 2023; **Accepted** January 28, 2023

Abstract

This study aims to investigate Thai Gen Z students' attitudinal evaluations towards poverty and the poor of Thai discourse. However, even though poverty and the poor are only explored, the views on richness and the rich are also investigated since these concepts are intertwined and the dimensional perspectives and interpretations are also expected. This study employs a quantitative approach. The participants in this study comprised of 400 Thai generation Z undergraduate students at a large-size university in Bangkok, Thailand. They were asked to complete the questionnaire on a 4-point Likert scale, consisting of four main parts: (1) opinions on definitions of richness, (2) opinions on the characteristics of the rich, (3) opinions on definitions of poverty and (4) opinions on the characteristics of the poor. The findings reveal that students show a high level of agreements towards first three parts but show their disagreement with the stereotypical views towards poor people in part four. Although they all agree that being rich is desirable and they want to be rich, they don't consider the poor as bad in any manner. They insist that human is equal and deserve equal opportunities.

Keywords: Attitudes; Low-income people; Thai Gen Z students; Stereotypical view towards poverty and the paupers

Introduction

Views on low-income or poor people seem to be stereotypical. When mentioning about poverty or the poor, the negative thoughts such as dirty area or slum, criminal, drug seller or users, uneducated person and violence relatively occur. Actually, these negative assumptions may not be generalized to all people with poverty, but the tendency is likely to be so. Moreover, these perceptions have been passed down from the previous generation to the next generation. This eventually creates the trauma to this group of people, and they are then marginalized by the social process driven by those who identify themselves as richer and cleverer.

Media is one of the tools in strengthening these stereotypical perceptions. For example, *Parasite*, the film that won great prizes for the 92nd Academy Awards, narrates about greed and class discrimination threaten the newly formed symbiotic relationship between the wealthy Park family and the destitute Kim clan. The film takes an in depth look at the classist structures in South Korea. It presents the audience with the stark and raw truth of how the lower class tries extremely hard to climb their way up the social ladder but are always pushed back down. The film tells the story of two families who are at opposite ends of the economy. It started in their semi-underground home trying to find a Wi-Fi signal and benefited from street fumigation to kill bugs in the house. They are nothing but each other. When given the opportunity to work as a tutor in the wealthy and luxurious Park family's home, an ingenious plan is to find the opportunity to take everything from the house. They either pulled all the family to work here, or even ended up killing Mr. Kim because of resentment because he had endured the pressure of being insulted all along. This family of parasites can be called a wonderful representation of what the poor face. This certainly injects the audiences with a certain image of the poor's ultimate desire and a misery of shortage.

However, researchers believe that when people can access to information that is diverse in terms of content, creator, and channel, they will become more critical to what they expose to. The cohort of Generation Z (Gen z) people are believed to possess the unique characteristics. According to Sriprom, Rungswang, Sukwitthayakul and Chansri (2019), Gen Z are stereotypically thought of as being comfortable with technology, interacting, and communicating in the connected world accounting for a significant portion for their socializing. One of the outstanding characteristics of this digital native cohort is their extensive usage of the Internet at a very young age. Moreover, they are found to be entrepreneurial and innovative (Kingston, 2014), criticizer (Salleh et al., 2017), multitasking (Turner, 2015), loyal and open-minded (Eberhard, 2017). With the distinctive

characteristics of Gen Z, this study therefore takes this group into consideration as they are becoming a turning point of generation and their attitudes or perceptions are worth investigating since they have gained input are from different perspectives compared to the previous generation.

To investigate Thai Gen Z's attitudinal evaluations towards poverty and the poor of Thai discourse, this study recruited 400 Thai Gen Z students at a large-size university in Bangkok, Thailand. The online questionnaire via Google Form is used as a main instrument to collect the data. The results of this study can shed light on how Gen Z portrays attitudinal evaluations towards stereotypical views on poverty and the poor.

Research objective and research question

In order to investigate Thai Gen Z students' attitudinal evaluations towards poverty and the poor of Thai discourse, one objective was set as a guideline with the one purposed research question. The objective of this study was to explore Thai Gen Z attitudinal evaluations towards poverty and the poor of Thai discourse. The purposed research question is mentioned below.

What are Thai Gen Z students' attitudinal evaluations towards poverty and the poor of Thai discourse?

Literature review

Who can be considered as a rich person?

Definitions of being rich seem to be diverse, but there are elements with which several scholars mutually agreed (Kraus, Piff & Keltner, 2009; Snibbe & Markus, 2005; Stephens, Markus & Fryberg, 2012; Stephens, Markus & Townsend, 2007). They demonstrate the consensus of an idea on the definitions of being rich that it is when a person possesses any form of wealth such as money, gold, diamonds, social class, and the power to live and make life comfortable as well as to meet their needs fully. In addition, being rich does not mean only having enough money to meet your needs, but also being able to afford not to work if you don't have to. In some communities, being rich results in becoming an elite who is admired by and obtain privileges of doing anything. In Thailand, rich people sometimes are called high society or Hi-so who effortlessly offers an individual with freedom of choice and access to plentiful resources. According to Kohn and Schooler (1983), people from relatively upper-class families are more likely to have access to higher-quality education and have greater career freedom due to their elevated social status in society and

substantial economic resources. They also live longer than their lower-class peers (Adler et al., 1994). It's unsocial inequality.

It was found that rich people also have better health than poor people. They have experienced both the chances of treating the disease and getting better treatment. They don't have to worry because they are entitled to complete treatment, but the poor individuals are being treated unfairly and suffering serious diseases because of the inequality in society. According to Cattell (2001) adds that the poor social and environmental conditions and the inequality of access to treatment can be reasons unequal health treatments. With these given characteristics, the meanings of richness may not be a matter, but the outcomes of unequal status.

The question has been raised about what mechanism in generating acceptance of rich people is. Furnham (1990) and Sherman (2017) insist that charity is a noticeable drive of it. Rich people are passionate about doing social charity, which generate the good-moral image and social acceptance.

Keister (2000) also states that wealth brings us political power, social prestige, and educational and vocational opportunities. To put it another way, wealth covers both economic situations and respect and status. Finally, wealth may be a better indicator of one's financial condition throughout one's life. For example, when income is lost due to unemployment or illness, money can help sustain living standards.

Moreover, rich people also had a better chance of getting food and medicine than the poor. For example, poor health in the poor is caused by three reasons: food shortage, food disparity and the likelihood of receiving medical care are less, and it also means environmental factors including housing (Calnan, 1987). Popay et al. (2003) also suggests that in poorer areas, the poor in general were more likely to be ill than those in better-off areas or the rich. From the aforementioned information discussed above, I, therefore, conclude that being rich has various meanings and perspectives, that can be interpreted differently depending on experiences, values, and cultural background. Being rich is fulfilled by not only money but also comfort, high accessibility, privilege, and social acceptance. This may be the reason why humans eagerly crave richness.

Who can be considered as a poor person?

Being poor is a condition in which a person lacks the possession of resources or money. The poor refers to a person who lacks basic human needs including fresh water and clean food, nutrition, public health, education, clothing, and shelter. In our opinion, people who are classified as poor are too diverse to be understood. From what we have experienced and heard, there are people who have no money to even buy clothes, or who are in fact moderately financially wealthy, but have a

lot of debt, that money is not left behind and live in sorrow. Being poor is miserable bad and excruciating that many projects have been put in place to help and alleviate this poor both domestically and internationally, but it is still insufficient, and poverty is always present. For example, The World Bank (2013) found that foreign help has just a minor impact on poverty reduction, with nearly half of Africans still living in poverty on less than \$1.25 per day, despite the fact that massive international aid. According to Qian (2015), the poorest 20% of countries received only 1.69–5.25 percent of foreign help in any given year.

Being poor deprives children of educational opportunities. This is a huge problem that is currently unable to be completely resolved. In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), almost 250 million (43 percent) children under the age of five are in danger of not reaching their developmental potential (Black et al., 2017). Due to poverty, hunger, poor health, neglect, and unstimulating settings, the proportion of at-risk children in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is higher than elsewhere, at 67 percent (Meuwissen & Carlson, 2015). This problem is exacerbated in informal settlements (slums with inadequate and temporary dwellings), where residents are disadvantaged in various ways. Evidence from Nairobi's informal settlements, for example, indicates that residents confront high levels of poor and food insecurity; their children are sicker and have greater rates of malnutrition and death than in other sub-populations (Kimani-Murage et al., 2014). Furthermore, parents in urban informal settlements not only struggle financially to meet their children's fundamental needs but also lack critical information about optimal child stimulation. In this regard, available surveys on child well-being show that children experiencing poverty have marked constraints to their well-being (UNICEF, 2012; Rees et al., 2011). With this respect, poverty can yield a chance, for children, of losing the opportunity to study, a lack of food, medicine, and good housing.

Exemplified during the COVID-19 situation in Bangkok, Thailand, the poor has got a huge impact on the economy. The situation has caused school closings, job losses, and stay-at-home orders that serve as reminders of people's collective vulnerability to forces beyond their immediate control. Although the pandemic's extensive impact, its consequences have been unevenly dispersed among social classes (e.g., Adams-Prassl et al., 2020; Parker et al., 2020). Low-wage employees are more likely to catch the virus (Wilson, 2020), and when they do, they face serious health risks (Raifman & Raifman, 2020). Individuals with lower incomes, who have little to no savings to soften the economic impact have also been disproportionately burdened by the virus's economic burdens and losses (Cohen & Hsu, 2020; Parker et al., 2020), and public opinion polls show that most people

believe the pandemic has harmed the poor (Salvanto et al., 2020). Moreover, being poor may be one of the reasons leading to crime. We find that violence is influenced by the poor, which makes life difficult and cruel, people have to live with the trauma that leads to wrongdoing, with a difficult and bad environment that is called a crime district affects the minds of the people in the community a lot (Beardslee et al., 2019) because it is truly surveyed that people who are poor and live in crime districts are more prone to violence and lead to wrongdoing. The previous studies evidently show that more youth living in high poverty neighborhoods are prone to violence, they also have lower academic achievements, making them more likely to remain poor in adulthood (Beardslee et al., 2021; Duncan & Kawachi, 2018; Karcher et al., 2021; Machell et al., 2016; Murry et al., 2011; Nieuwenhuis et al., 2017; Smart et al., 2021).

All of the aforementioned aspects of the poor, from the ideas of various scholars, reflect how cruel and terrifying poverty is. Also, researchers realize that the ideal poverty and the poor are stereotypical. However, we hypothesize that when the time has passed and the generation has changed, the views on those group might also have changed, and they should be further investigated.

Methodology

This study was conducted using a quantitative design to investigate how Thai generation Z students pass attitudinal evaluations towards poverty and the poor. This also sheds light on whether poor people are bad or not. The participants, data collection, and data analyses to obtain the results are elaborated below.

Participants

The total number of students in the university is approximately 20,000. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the number can be represented by a sample of 377 participants. With this concern, the participants in this study were 400 undergraduates as they were recruited from all faculties and colleges. All of them are Thai generation Z students who study at a big-size university in Bangkok, Thailand. The sample comprised 300 female students, 84 male students, and 16 identified as LGBTQ students. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire given online via Google Form.

General information of participants

After the questionnaire was administered to 400 Thai generation Z undergraduate students, the general information of participants including gender, and year of study is shown below.

Gender

As shown in Table 1, of the questionnaire respondents, 300 were females (75%), 84 were males (21), and 16 were identified as LGBTQ (4%).

Table 1 Gender of participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	300	75
Male	84	21
LGBTQ	16	4
Total	400	100

Year of study

From 400 respondents, most of them were 4th year students (207 persons, 51.7%), followed by 1st year students (68 persons, 17%), 3rd year students (64 persons, 16%), 2nd year students (41 persons, 10.3%), 5th year students (10 persons, 2.5%) and 6th year students (10 persons, 2.5%). The results are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Year of study of participants

Year of study	Frequency	Percentage
First	68	17
Second	41	10.3
Third	64	16
Fourth	207	51.7
Fifth	10	2.5
Sixth	10	2.5
Total	400	100

Instrument

Questionnaire

To explore the students' opinions on whether the poor people are bad or not, a questionnaire consisting of 37 items was used as data collection in this study. The questionnaire was adapted from the literature review and previous studies which is divided into two main parts: *personal information*

and students' opinions towards richness, the rich, poverty, and the poor. The 37 items in the questionnaire were evaluated by 3 experts for content validity and were then put into a Goggle Form. The participants were required to evaluate their level of agreement based on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

Even though students' opinions towards poverty, and the poor are the main focus of this study, the understanding of richness and the rich is primarily concerned since these two issues are intertwined. Therefore, the perceptions on richness and the rich are also investigated in order to be a benchmark for multidimensional perspectives.

Statistical analyses

In order to interpret the findings, the responses were collected and calculated in Microsoft Excel. The score of items was calculated for the average score. Descriptive statistics were used to find the average sum for each item reflecting the students' opinions towards richness, the rich, and poverty, the poor.

Results

To address the research question of this study, how do Thai Gen Z students attitudinally assess towards poverty and the poor were analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The findings comprising of 37 items are demonstrated based on four categories: (1) opinions on definitions of richness, (2) opinion on the characteristics of the rich, (3) opinions on definitions poverty and (4) opinions on the characteristics of the poor as shown in Table 3, Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6 respectively.

*Opinions on definitions richness***Table 3** Opinions on definitions of richness

Opinions on definitions of richness	Mean	SD	Rank	Level of Agreement
1. Richness is the possession of any form of wealth such as money, gold, diamonds, social class, and the power to live a life that makes life more comfortable.	3.52	0.68	6	Very high
2. Richness means you don't have to work hard but you can fulfill your desires even more.	3.16	0.94	8	Hight
3. Richness makes you an elite in society.	3.10	0.96	9	Hight
4. Richness provides access to high-quality education and more stable career opportunities.	3.70	0.59	2	Very high
5. Donations or charitable events are often part of activities to enhance the image of the wealthy and social acceptance.	3.21	0.84	7	Hight
6. Richness brings power, influence, and acceptance to people in society.	3.54	0.74	5	Very high
7. Richness leads to better acquisition of necessities such as food, medicine, housing, and clothing.	3.76	0.51	1	Very high
8. Richness gives the rich more time than the poor, can use the money to shorten the travel time or use the money for better treatment of ailments.	3.68	0.63	3	Very high
9. Richness is your desire because not only there is a lot of money, but also the convenient access to a wide variety of things and getting social acceptance.	3.66	0.57	4	Very high
Total	3.48	0.16		Very high

N=400

1.00–1.75	Very low
1.76–2.50	Low
2.51–3.25	High
3.26–4.00	Very high

From table 3, the results show the students' opinions on definitions of richness. The descriptive statistics for the overall opinion of richness evaluated by Thai undergraduates demonstrate that the level of agreement was very high (Mean = 3.48, SD = 0.16) on all definitions of richness. This implies that students have positive attitudes towards definitions richness. Furthermore, when taking a look into details, students also have positive attitudes towards all definitions of richness. For example, richness leads to better acquisition of necessities such as food, medicine, housing, and clothing. (mean = 3.76), richness provides access to high-quality education

and more stable career opportunities. (mean = 3.70), richness gives the rich more time than the poor, can use the money to shorten the travel time or use the money for better treatment of ailments. (mean = 3.68), richness is your desire because not only is there a lot of money, but also the convenient access to a wide variety of things and accepted by society (mean = 3.66), richness brings power, influence, and acceptance to people in society. (mean = 3.66), and richness brings power, influence, and acceptance to people in society. (mean = 3.54). There are parts of the question that the students agree on at a high level as well, Donations or charitable events are often part of activities to enhance the image of the wealthy (mean = 3.21), richness means that you don't have to work hard but you can fulfill your desires even more (mean = 3.16), and richness makes you an elite in society (mean = 3.10).

In addition, there were some comments stating about definitions of richness collected below:

“Some people, despite their fame, money, and wealth are not always happy. There may be something that one wants but is unable to meet their needs. But there are only a small number of millionaires in Thailand.”

“Rich people have more access to resources.”

“I want to be in the 1% group.”

“In a rich society, there are both good and bad rich people.”

“There are many kinds of richness including richness from parents, richness from investments, richness from business, and etc., but it doesn't make you an elite in society. In the section on donations, rich people donate a lot because they benefit from it. Donations are tax-deductible twice.”

“Wealth purchases all happiness.”

“It is because capitalism is the engine that drives society, thus creating social classes that are measured in terms of the value of money.”

*Opinions on the characteristics of the rich***Table 4** Opinions on the characteristics of the rich

Opinion on the characteristics of the rich	Mean	SD	Rank	Level of Agreement
10. The rich tend to live longer.	2.60	1.07	8	High
11. The rich are often well-educated and smart.	3.02	0.94	5	High
12. The rich tend to save money and dress simply.	2.33	0.99	9	Low
13. The rich tend to have better skin than poor people.	3.15	1.01	3	High
14. The rich tend to have good plans for their money and focus on the future.	3.04	0.99	4	High
15. The rich enjoy reading and pursuing knowledge even when they are old.	2.80	1.06	7	High
16. The rich tend to have the courage to invest.	3.61	0.89	1	Very High
17. The rich have commercial ideas from childhood.	2.92	1.15	6	High
18. The rich use the money to buy experience and knowledge to build on opportunities.	3.47	1.04	2	Very High
Total	2.99	0.08		High

From table 4, the results show that the students have positive attitudes opinions on the characteristics of the rich. The descriptive statistics for overall opinions on the characteristics of the rich were interpreted that the level of the agreement on the characteristics of the rich is at the high level (Mean = 2.99, SD = 0.08). When looking into details, students have a positive attitude towards opinions on the characteristics of the rich at a high level in almost aspects. Students agree that the rich tend to have the courage to invest (Mean = 3.61), the rich use the money to buy experience and knowledge to build on opportunities. (Mean = 3.47), the rich tend to have better skin than poor people. (Mean = 3.15), the rich tend to have good plans for their money and focus on the future. (3.04), the rich are often well-educated and smart (Mean = 3.02), the rich have commercial ideas from childhood. (Mean = 2.92), the rich enjoy reading and pursuing knowledge even when they are old (Mean = 2.80) the rich tend to live longer (Mean = 2.60), and there is a low level of agreement, that is the rich tend to save money and dress simply (Mean = 2.33).

In addition, there were some comments stating about opinions on the characteristics of the rich collected below:

“Most of the good opportunities come with wealth.”

“I think some of the questions might also be about people, for example, number 12. Rich people tend to save money and dress modestly. Actually, it's a very economical type of rich people, including the wealthy that are extravagant, I think it depends on the person.”

“I don't know what to suggest, but I can tell you that I need more money.”

Opinions on definitions of poverty

Table 5 Opinions on definitions of poverty

Opinions on definitions of poverty	Mean	SD	Rank	Level of Agreement
19. Poverty refers to the lack of basic human needs, including fresh water and clean food, nutrition, public health, education, clothing, and shelter.	3.55	1.07	4	Very high
20. Poverty is often caused by the fact that some people have a lot of property but a lot of debt, that is, wealth comes from being in debt and the money was not truly left or without obligation.	3.18	1.19	9	High
21. Poverty often leads to a lack of educational opportunities.	3.67	1.08	3	Very high
22. Poverty has resulted in some parents being deprived of the knowledge and capacity to care for their children correctly and properly.	3.36	1.28	6	Very high
23. Poverty leads to a lack of opportunities for necessities such as food, medicine, housing, and good-quality clothing.	3.71	1.13	1	Very High
24. Poverty causes stress, violence, or disease.	3.51	1.26	5	Very High
25. Poverty brings insults and disrespect.	3.31	1.39	7	Very High
26. Poverty is the cause of crime and theft, including drugs.	3.27	1.43	8	Very High
27. Poverty is something you don't want and will do whatever it takes to escape it.	3.70	1.33	2	Very High
Total	3.47	0.13		Very high

In table 5, the results show students' attitudes towards opinions on definitions of poverty. The overall descriptive statistics opinions on definitions of poverty show that the level of agreement was very high (Mean = 3.47, SD = 0.13). Students demonstrate a very high level of agreement in most of aspects of opinions on definitions of poverty. Students express their opinions that poverty leads to a lack of opportunities for necessities such as food, medicine, housing, and good-quality clothing. (Mean = 3.71), poverty is something you don't want and will do whatever it takes to escape

it (Mean = 3.70), poverty often leads to a lack of educational opportunities (Mean = 3.67) poverty refers to the lack of basic human needs, including fresh water and clean food, nutrition, public health, education, clothing, and shelter (Mean = 3.55), poverty causes stress, violence, or disease (Mean = 3.51), poverty has resulted in some parents being deprived of the knowledge and capacity to correctly and properly care for their children (Mean = 3.36), poverty brings insults and disrespect (Mean = 3.31), poverty is the cause of crime and theft, including drugs. (Mean = 3.27), and poverty is often caused by the fact that some people have a lot of property but a lot of debt, that is, that wealth comes from being in debt, the money was not truly left or without obligation. (Mean = 3.18)

Opinions on the characteristics of the poor

Table 6 Opinions on the characteristics of the poor

Opinion on the characteristics of the poor	Mean	SD	Rank	Level of Agreement
28. The poor can't make themselves rich.	1.90	1.64	6	Low
29. The poor has no effort.	1.56	1.64	9	Very low
30. The poor are unsuccessful people.	1.72	1.70	8	Very low
31. The poor are often short-lived.	1.92	1.76	5	Low
32. The poor tend to have dull and wrinkled skin.	2.32	1.78	2	Low
33. The poor tend to use overpriced items to make themselves look rich.	2.06	1.84	4	Low
34. The poor tend to be lazy and like comfortable things.	1.89	1.88	7	Low
35. The poor always make money from things they don't like.	2.47	1.95	1	Low
36. The poor tend to spend money without thinking about the future.	2.07	1.99	3	Low
37. The poor are often bad people, such as being criminals or having a habit of stealing.	1.80	2.00	7	Low
Total	1.98	0.13		Low

From table 6, the results show students' attitudes towards the characteristics of the poor. From the overall opinions on the characteristics of the poor, students evaluate the level of agreement at the low level (Mean = 1.98, SD = 0.13). For students, they disagreed that the poverty of the poor was caused by their lack of effort or behavior, so, they show the low level of agreement in that the poor always make money from things they don't like (Mean = 2.47), the poor tend to have dull and wrinkled skin (Mean = 2.32), the poor tend to spend money without thinking about the future (Mean = 2.07), the poor tend to use overpriced items to make themselves look rich (Mean = 2.06), the poor are often short-lived (Mean = 1.92), the poor can't make themselves rich (Mean =

1.90), the poor tend to be lazy and like comfortable things (Mean = 1.89), and the poor are often bad people, such as being criminals or having a habit of stealing (Mean = 1.80). Moreover, they demonstrate a very low level of agreement in that the poor are unsuccessful people (Mean = 1.72) and the poor has no effort (Mean = 1.56).

In addition, there were comments about opinions on the characteristics of the poor collected from the questionnaire shown below:

“Item 30 should be a poor person who 'doesn't have a chance to succeed.’”

“From item 35, the poor always make money from things they don't like. I think it might be because there is no more choice, therefore they had to do everything in order to earn money to continue living.

“Sometimes the poor who are diligent but work in the wrong place. Do not get rich.”

Discussion and conclusion

The results from exploring Thai Gen Z students' attitudinal evaluations towards richness, the rich, and poverty, the poor of Thai discourse show the agreement attitudes toward (1) opinions on definitions of richness, (2) opinions on the characteristics of the rich, (3) opinions on definitions of poverty, but they show their disagreement with (4) opinions on the characteristics of the poor.

The results of this study are also divided into four parts as mentioned above, and from opinions on definitions of richness and the characteristics of the rich, it can be seen that the Thai Gen Z students think that being rich is a desirable thing and they aspire to be rich. They believe that richness brings them many good qualities and opportunities as some of their opinions are demonstrated below.

“I don't know what to suggest, but I can tell you that I need more money.”

“Rich people have more access to resources.”

“I want to be in the 1% group.”

“Most of the good opportunities come with wealth.”

“Wealth can purchase all happiness.”

In addition, Thai Gen Z students agree on every aspect of definitions of richness. Notably, some aspects they mutually agree are supported by previous studies and literature. For example, richness makes people healthier, longer lives, and less likely to get sick than the poor. From item 10, students clearly agree that “The rich tend to live longer,” which is consistent with literature as

Adler et al. (1994) said that the rich live longer than their lower-class peers. The students also strongly agreed on several items, such as from item 4, richness provides access to high-quality education and more stable career opportunities. According to Kohn & Schooler (1983), people from relatively upper-class families are more likely to have access to higher-quality education and have greater career freedom due to their elevated social status in society and substantial economic resources.

For opinions on definitions of poverty, and the characteristics of the poor, Thai Gen Z students think that being poor is a terrible thing and all Thai Gen Z students want to be away from it. However, all Thai Gen Z students expressed their strong disagreement with the given characteristics of the poor, that are presented in the negative ways. It was also found that there were additional comments provided to shows their disagreement as follow.

“Item 30 should be a poor person who doesn’t have a chance to succeed.”

“From item 35, the poor always make money from things they don’t like. I think it might be because there is no more choice, therefore they had to do everything in order to earn money to continue living.

“Sometimes the poor who are diligent but work in the wrong place. They won’t become rich.”

In addition, the attitude towards the poor seems to be stereotypical when the poor, from the literature, have been highly suspected as a criminal or having undesirable behaviors such as stealing, being rude and violent. For example, Shedd (2015) states that there is a program to explore crimes from the poor and it shows that consistently, the greater the poor, the more likely it is to stress and lead to crime. However, Thai Gen Z students show a low level of agreement on that. In Table 6 presenting attitudes towards the characteristics of the poor, Thai Gen Z students demonstrate contradictorily that poor people are less likely to be bad, dull, lazy, ambitious, extravagant, and short-lived and they are, moreover, highly recognized not to be unsuccessful person and not to have no effort. This may be because the information or fact which Thai Gen Z students obtain is different from previous generation. The students can easily access to information that is globally created and shared, so they can compare, differentiate, and validate the information by themselves. Moreover, while they are synthesizing the plenty of information, their critical and analytical skills are also enhanced. They can go into the root of the problems and present it in a creative way.

Therefore, it can be concluded that while the poor are still insulted and being branded as bad people, Thai Gen Z students show contradict opinions on that. Although they all agree that being rich is perfect and is their desirable thing, they agree that poverty is atrocious, but they do not label people with poverty in a negative way. On the other hand, they think that unequal opportunity is the serious main factor of the different economic status. Finally, they point out that everyone deserves good things and fundamental opportunity should be distributed equally.

Limitation and recommendation

Since this study employs quantitative design using questionnaire, the data obtain may not be dimensional. Therefore, further studies can conduct an interview to get in-depth information.

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