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Author(s): Karnsunaphat Balthip

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## Enhancing life purpose amongst Thai adolescents

Karnsunaphat Balthip<sup>a</sup>, Wilfred McSherry<sup>b,c</sup>, Usanee Petchruschatachart<sup>a</sup>,  
Siriwan Piriyaakootorn<sup>a</sup>, Pranee Liamputtong<sup>d</sup> and Seana Moran<sup>e</sup>

5 <sup>a</sup>Faculty of Nursing, Community Nurse Practitioner Division, Prince of Songkla University, Hat-Yai, Thailand; <sup>b</sup>Department of Nursing, School of Health and Social Care, Staffordshire University, University Hospitals of North Midlands, UK; <sup>c</sup>VID Specialized University (Haralds plass Campus), Bergen, Norway; <sup>d</sup>School of Science and Health, Western Sydney University, New South Wales, Australia; <sup>e</sup>Hiatt School of Psychology, Clark University, USA

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### ABSTRACT

10 This article describes experiences that enhanced life purpose in 21 Thai adolescents living in Southern Thailand. Thailand is undergoing rapid change from technology, a globalizing economy, and shifting social norms. A phenomenological analysis of in-depth interviews and stories to better understand how Thai youth themselves experience and describe their life purposes revealed two main themes. First, enhancing life purpose is a trial-and-error process that integrates receiving a good opportunity, being urged by others to contemplate the question 'What will you do when you grow up?' and having a positive role model. Second, enhancing life purpose is about accomplishing love of self, gratitude to beneficent others, and sacrifice and awareness of responsibility towards society. Findings provide insights for parents, school nurses and teachers to assist adolescents to enhance life purpose.

### KEYWORDS

Adolescence; dignity; life purpose; qualitative research; Thailand

25 Adolescence is a foundational period for cultivating life purpose, defined as 'a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to the world beyond the self' (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003, p. 121). A life purpose represents a goal, a desire to make a difference, a sense of direction in life, and a source of achievement motivation (Bronk, Finch, & Talib, 2010).

30 Adolescents possessing a life purpose achieve several positive outcomes, such as strong prosocial reasoning, active engagement (Bronk et al., 2010), good psychological health (Kleftaras & Psarra, 2012), and life satisfaction (Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib, & Finch, 2009). In contrast, adolescents who lack a purpose more frequently engage in socially unacceptable or risky behaviors such as drug and alcohol use (Minehan, Newcomb, & Galaif, 2000).  
35 Therefore, cultivating purpose may safeguard youth from high risk-taking behaviors by fostering resilience (Cotton, Larkin, Hoopes, Cromer, & Rosenthal, 2005), success and well-being (Hill, Burrow, Brandenberger, Lapsley, & Quaranto, 2010).

Thailand is a relatively homogeneous society composed of 97% ethnic Thais, 95% Buddhist and 91% are Thai-speaking (World Factbook, 2016). Thai youth are gaining a

general interest in life purpose. One study showed 93% of 1027 Thais, age 12 to 25 years, endorsing finding meaning and life purpose (Benson, Scales, Syvertsen, & Roehlkepartain, 2012). However, research is scarce about how young Thais set in motion their purpose development, and experiences may differ from person to person (Kleftaras & Psarra, 2012). Although some qualitative research examines resilience in Thai youth, purpose is not the central focus (e.g., Chen, Lau, Tapanya, & Cameron, 2012).

Family relationships, social environment, schooling and career orientation influence adolescents' purposes (Call et al., 2002). Many of these influences coincide with the dimensions of life purpose, especially considering the effects of one's purpose and actions on others (Moran, Bundick, Malin, & Reilly, 2012). Specifically, Buddhism strongly influences Thais' perspective on life by emphasizing spiritual strength and compassionate action for oneself and others (Weaver, Vane, & Flannelly, 2008). Thais cultivate gratitude and obligation to care for benefactors with sincere love (Tongprateep, 2000).

Furthermore, the Thai government promotes Twelve Core Values based on traditional norms of Thai society: working for the common good, gratitude toward parents and teachers, education, cherishing traditions, integrity and generosity, upholding the democratic ideals of the King, being respectful of laws and the elderly, obeying royal statements, being prudent with money, maintaining physical and mental health and putting public interest before personal interest (Government Public Relation Department, 2016).

However, Thailand is transitioning from a traditional to a modern society. Now, more than half the population lives in cities, nearly everyone is literate, most children are expected to complete 16 years of schooling and there is a market economy (World Factbook, 2016). More youth pray or worship, but fewer youth believe in the law of Karma that influences consequences of one's deeds (Ramajitti Institute, 2012). Education's benefits are not as accessible to disadvantaged socio-economic families (OECD & UNESCO, 2016). Urbanization, globalization, and technology are impacting family structure and the quality of the connection among family members, which has diminished the traditional upbringing of children by an extended family (Call et al., 2002). Families are one of the most important nurturers of positive youth purpose by providing a safe environment (Booranasuksakul, 2015). But fewer Thais marry and more divorce (National Institute for Child & Family Development, Mahidol University, 2011), teenage pregnancy (Ramajitti Institute, 2012) and risk-taking behaviors are on the rise (Ruangkanchanasetr, Plitponkarnpim, Hetrakul, & Kongsakon, 2005). Thai society admires academic achievement and good deeds, but academic motivation and achievement has decreased and only about half of parents discuss moral issues with their children (Ramajitti Institute, 2012). In addition, adolescents are the most prevalent users of the Internet in Thailand and Thai youth use online media more than most other Asian countries (National Statistics Office, 2017), from which they learn ways of life different from what family and traditional Thai culture promote. This disconnection across generations can lead to communication difficulties (Klorer, 2009).

Because traditional ways of guiding youth are shifting, the cultivation of life purpose may be particularly helpful to adolescents. But parents, teachers and community leaders first need to better understand how adolescents themselves experience purpose development so that guidelines and interventions might be developed to help youth find their place in a changing society. Therefore, this article describes how Thai junior high school adolescents experience life purpose: How do they relate to purpose? What does purpose mean to them? What it is like for them to develop their long-term intentions?

## Method

### *Methodological approach*

This study uses phenomenology to gather and analyze rich qualitative data because little is known about adolescents' experiences of life purpose from their own points-of-view, and because phenomenology directly aims to understand important dimensions of life purpose. Phenomenology is 'the science of consciousness and focused on defining the concept of intentionality and the meaning of lived experience, from the first-person point of view' (Husserl, 1962, cited in Wojnar & Swanson, 2007, p. 173). Life purpose focuses on adolescents directing their own meaning-making and intentional pursuits.

Phenomenology produces insights into how the world is engaged and understood by a conscious being. In this study, we conducted descriptive phenomenology to portray participants' own meanings of what happens to them. Participants reveal meanings of their lived experiences — conveying what *matters* to them—through conversations with researchers who attentively listen, interact, and observe how participants describe their reality (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). The researchers then describe what all the experiences have in common, which is considered the experiences' essence. The researcher does not try to 'fit' participants' comments into a scientific model, but rather aims to relate the comments' meanings to each other so that the structure of the meanings represents the participants' subjective experience of the phenomenon and not the researchers' externally imposed categories.

### *Participants*

Data were collected in an urban public school with about 2400 students in grades 1 to 12 in a large city in Southern Thailand. Most students enrolled here were of average academic achievement. One class of 38 students in year 10 was informed about the study by their teacher. Seventeen adolescents were not selected because they were unable to articulate a response to the question 'What have you experienced about life purpose?' Twenty-one adolescents met the additional criteria of Thai nationality, aged 14 to 15 years, willingness to participate, and ability to speak Thai. The age criterion was important because it is when many adolescents develop a capacity for setting goals and thinking about the meaning of life (Sawyer et al., 2012).

The sample comprised 14 females and seven males; 18 Buddhists and three Muslims; 16 living with their parents, three with other relatives and two with a single mother. Nine had parents who worked in general labor: three farmers, two government employees, two grocers and two goods sellers and one each a parent who was a teacher, mechanic, or noodle restaurant owner. Although all participants received daily allowances from their families, and the school provided a free lunch, two participants also had part-time jobs because they needed to contribute to family income or save money.

### *Data collection*

This study was approved by the Human Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Prince of Songkla University (No. 0521.1.05/164). Participants and their parents/guardian signed consent agreements. Participants received a pen, notebook, and paper file as compensation.

We conducted one-on-one interviews in the Thai language at the school with each participant. Interviews were digitally recorded. To establish trust and rapport, we prepared

snacks and expressed respect and support during interviews. Participants were encouraged to speak freely. Some participants were interviewed more than once.

Our interview guide was examined by three experts for content validity. The guide included broad open-ended questions followed by probing questions related to life purpose, such as: What have you experienced about life purpose? What have you experienced about enhancing life purpose? What situations affected your experiences of enhancing life purpose?

Creswell (2007) suggests that various forms of data can be included in phenomenology. After the interview, we asked participants to write stories about their life purpose experiences by reflecting more on the questions mentioned above. Some participants drew a picture in their stories. We used both stories and pictures to probe further during follow-up interviews to enhance the trustworthiness of the data and make sure participants shared their experiences completely.

### Data analysis

We analyzed interview transcripts and stories using a modified version of Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method to describe the participants' experiences. It is important that researchers do not bring preconceived ideas or models to the data, but rather allow the meanings to emerge from the data themselves (Husserl, 1962). Colaizzi's method is prevalent in studies related to experiences of healthcare, which is a primary focus of this study's first author. The Colaizzi method produced deep description from participants of both 'what they have experienced' and 'how they experienced it' (Creswell, 2007, p. 58).

First, all transcripts and stories were read thoroughly several times to acquire a 'feel for' the data as a whole. Second, researchers extracted direct quotes of statements explicitly addressing life purpose. Third, researchers interpreted each significant statement based on the particular words and how the words related to each other. Then they restated the statements in terms of these formulated meanings. Fourth, formulated meanings were categorized into six themes, which were then clustered into two higher-order themes. These two higher-order themes were common to all participants' descriptions of their life purpose experiences. Finally, researchers integrated these themes into an exhaustive description of life purpose, organized and distilled the themes into their essential structure, illustrated the themes using verbatim quotations from interviews and stories, and showed the six themes and two higher-order themes to all participants to verify accuracy of the interpretation (see Table 1 for example of the process, see Table 2 for theme structure and prevalences).

### Results

Enhancing life purpose among Thai junior high school adolescents mainly emerged from opportunities and relationships. Some said their search for life purpose started when they were young, coming from hopes to have a better life, to care for parents and others, and to receive positive support from others. Two higher-order themes essential to participants' experiences were that enhancing life purpose involves *trial and error* and *accomplishment of life*. These higher-order themes each were composed of three more specific themes: opportunity, being urged by others, and role models supported trial and error; love of self, gratitude and sacrifice and responsibility supported accomplishment of life.



**Table 1.** An example statement demonstrating the steps of phenomenological data analysis.

Step and type of transformation	Statement
1. Transcript	I want to be a mechanic like my father, to repair machines like he does. <i>I can see that he is tired and so I want to help him.</i> I used to wonder why he had to work hard, but I know now that he needs to earn money to keep our family, to make our family happy. <i>I want to help him.</i>
2. Extracted exact statements	I can see that he is tired and so I want to help him. I want to help him.
3. Formulated meaning	The participant wants to be a mechanic because he wants to help his father who works hard for the family. <i>It represents his gratitude towards his father.</i>
4. Theme	Gratitude to beneficent others
5. Higher-order theme	Enhancing life purpose is about accomplishment of life

Note: Italics in step 1 show the exact words extracted from transcript statement. Italics in step 3 show the meaning interpretation of the extracted statements in step 2.

**Table 2.** Themes in enhancing life purpose amongst Thai adolescents.

Higher-order theme (what)	Themes (how)	n
Enhancing life purpose is a trial-and-error experience	Having a good opportunity	9
	Being urged by others to contemplate the question 'What will you do when you grow up?'	3
	Having a role model	7
Enhancing life purpose is an accomplishment of life	Love of self	13
	Gratitude to beneficent others	21
	Sacrifice and awareness of responsibility towards society	16

It is important to note distinctions in Thai understanding of the themes for accomplishment of life. Love of self is not individualistic but rather involves healthy habits that make it possible to contribute and be proud of one's merits and to have a good life. Gratitude focuses on recognizing support from and giving back to family. Sacrifice and responsibility address contributing to the broader society.

Table 2 shows the number of adolescents whose statements supported each theme. Table 3 includes adolescents' specific purpose aim(s), gender, and the specific themes their described experiences endorsed. Before exploring the themes in detail, we note gender patterns in these adolescents' aims. Common career aims for females were teacher, accountant, and nurse, which focus on helping others one-on-one, plus females tended to integrate more social and familial aims into their view of the future. Common aims for males were to follow in their father's occupation, or to be police and military, which aim to protect and serve society more broadly, plus males' purpose statements were more narrowly focused. Being urged by others was mentioned more by females, whereas being given specific opportunities was mentioned by almost all the male participants.

### **Enhancing life purpose is a trial-and-error experience**

Some participants perceived that life purposes could change and adapt over time. At every stage of life, a person may have several purposes resulting in a mixture of successes and failures. Hence, some participants explained life purpose as a process of searching by trial and error before finding one that fits. One male participant said:

I think purposes in life are like mathematical problems. We need to find ways to solve them through a series of trial and error until we can reach the final answer. In the same way, if we

**Table 3.** Specific life purpose aims of participants and the themes their statements supported.

Participant's life purpose(s)	Gender	Opportunity	Urged by others	Role model	Love of self	Gratitude	Sacrifice & responsibility
Musician, care for family, be successful	Male	X			X	X	
A mechanic like my father, have higher education	Male	X		X		X	X
Have a good job, athlete, policeman, care for parents, make parents proud	Male	X			X	X	X
Care for grandparents	Male	X				X	X
Police, soldier, care for father	Male			X		X	X
Have a good job, policeman, soldier, have higher education, care for parents	Male				X	X	X
Engineer, programmer, help others find purpose, care for parents, be alive to make the dream come true	Male	X			X	X	X
Member of the Navy Band, care for parents, hope to develop country	Female	X			X	X	X
Nurse, have a good life, care for parents	Female			X	X	X	X
Nurse, care for parents, help others	Female			X	X	X	X
Doctor or nurse, care for family, be happy	Female		X	X		X	X
Nurse, care for herself, parents, others	Female				X	X	X

(Continued)

**Table 3.** (Continued).

Participant's life purpose(s)	Gender	Opportunity	Urged by others	Role model	Love of self	Gratitude	Sacrifice & responsibility
Veterinarian, be the hope of her family, have higher education	Female				X	X	
Hotelier, make parents proud	Female	X		X		X	X
Petrochemical teacher, care for parents	Female	X			X	X	
Thai dancing teacher, be the hope of family, have higher education	Female			X	X	X	X
Kindergarten teacher and writer, be a good child of parents and not a social burden, be happy	Female		X			X	X
Have higher education- Have a good job, teacher, be proud of herself Care for parents	Female	X	X			X	
Teacher, accountant	Female				X	X	X
Have a good job, police-woman, teacher, care for parents, be the hope of family	Female					X	
Have a good job, teacher, accountant, be happy, be a good daughter, care for parents	Female				X	X	X

have purposes in life, we need to think and try to achieve them to fulfill our dreams though we may have to try many times.

Participants perceived that on their way to accomplishing their life purpose, three conditions are usually necessary: receiving a good opportunity, being urged by others to contemplate the question 'What will you do when you grow up?' and having a role model.

### ***Being given a good opportunity***

Nine participants perceived that their life purpose developed because of an opportunity from family members or teachers. Receiving support enhanced their self-value and self-worth. They felt proud of themselves, which made them feel like they were 'somebody.' They demonstrated appreciation for the experience and for the person who provided the opportunity. Participants also hoped one day they would become the person who supports others. A male participant who was given a good opportunity by his preschool teacher said,

I wanted to be a football player. I have loved football since childhood. After my teacher took me to practice at the department store, I hoped to become a football player. Football taught me how to forgive and be kind (to be a good person).

### ***Being urged by others to contemplate the question: 'What will you do when you grow up?'***

Three participants thought their life purposes came from family members or others who had asked questions to stimulate thinking about life purpose and eagerness to achieve. As a female participant remarked:

'Life purpose' is what my parents have always talked about with me, especially when I was in year 9. Every time they mentioned it, I thought about it over and over, about what my purposes in life are, what I expect from life, what my future will be ... and I found that finishing my study, doing the occupation I am apt in, being a good child of my parents, not being a social burden, and hence, ridding my parents from worries were the answer.

### ***Having a positive role model***

Seven participants said having a positive personal and/or professional role model was an indirect but important support for forming a life purpose. Role models could be the King of Thailand, family members, teachers, neighbors, or people in their dream occupation or who otherwise had succeeded in life. By example, these role models inspired youth to dream, to strive toward goals, and to see how to achieve success by following their own purposes. A female participant wrote that her future work arose from work as a receptionist with her aunt who was already successful in the youth's desired career:

My goal is to get a doctorate degree (a Ph.D.) in the hotel business. ... I will get to meet a lot of people and communicate with foreign people. This goal occurred when I was in year 8. My aunt, who graduated with a degree in hotel business, took me to work in Phuket. I had a chance to speak English. ... My aunt is my role model. She inspires me to dream of working in the hotel business.

### ***Enhancing life purpose is about accomplishment of life***

Many participants described the significance of life purpose as having a compass directing their way. They portrayed purposeful people as having a bright future that the purpose motivated them to realize. As a male participant said, 'I think life purposes are the purposes we need to achieve despite misery or obstacles, like the saying "Targets are to be hit".' Participants with a life purpose knew what to do because they planned their future, then committed their time to achieve their purpose.

For most participants, life purpose was associated with their desired future career. Many aimed to have secure and honest occupations so they could financially support themselves,

parents, and benefactors to live a good life. Participants recognized that they were the only person who could make a difference in their own lives. A male participant who wanted to continue his family's business, noted:

5 Purposes in life are set by us, ourselves—what we will do in the future, what our goals in life will be, what stream of study we should take to be successful in life. I am the eldest son. I need to inherit my father's business so he won't have to work so hard. He has worked so hard. I think I need to study in a technical college so I can get the job I want without having to use the trial and error technique.

10 Although most participants emphasized work as a purpose aim, life purpose's motivation focused mostly on relationships: love of self, gratitude to beneficent others, and sacrifice and awareness of responsibility towards society. These themes relate to Buddhist doctrine of gratitude, lovingkindness, and compassion: 'According to Buddhism, compassion is an aspiration, a state of mind, wanting others to be free from suffering' (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 2005, p. 49). Compassion toward oneself is considered a foundation for compassion toward others, and gratitude is felt but often not required to be directly expressed. Many participants addressed supporting others and eliminating suffering, such as helping so their parents would not have to work so hard.

### ***Love of self***

20 Love of self means a person sees good prospects for themselves. They are willing to do their best for themselves. This love was a major influence for 13 Thai adolescents. They resisted common problems like pregnancy and drug addiction. They desired prestigious and secure occupations. They aimed to have 'a good life or better life.' A female participant from a farming family explained, 'I want to have a promising life prospect and don't want to destroy it. ... I will have a good and prestigious occupation. ... I want to be happy. I have dreams and want to make them come true.'

### ***Gratitude to beneficent others***

30 Gratitude toward others who helped the participants was the most prevalent theme in enhancing life purpose because it encouraged making plans for a meaningful life. Many participants, particularly those from low-income or troubled families, emphasized legitimate occupations so they could financially support their parents and benefactors. A good occupation would make their parents proud and happy, and it reflected their gratitude towards their parents. A male participant said,

35 I want to be a mechanic like my father, to repair machines like he does. I can see that he is tired and so I want to help him. I used to wonder why he had to work hard but I know now that he needs to earn money to keep our family, to make our family happy. I want to help him.

### ***Sacrifice and awareness of responsibility towards society***

40 Participants were merciful, kind, and aware of their responsibility towards others. Although their desired future occupations differed, they shared ideals to help people, animals, society and their country. Sixteen participants considered this a crucial reason underlying their life purpose. For example, the most frequently mentioned life purpose for female participants was to become a good teacher because they wanted Thai children to become good, well-adjusted adults. A female participant wrote:

I want to be many things, a good child of my parents, a writer and kindergarten teacher. But the last one is what I want to be the most. ... I want to care for children so that they will grow up to be good members of society, who are of high quality, not stubborn, not naughty, because most children nowadays are aggressive and undisciplined because they have not been trained in their childhood. Hence, my life purpose is to be a kindergarten teacher.

## Discussion

Purpose is the principal enthusiasm for life that can provide a sense of self-worthiness no matter what one's life conditions (Meraviglia, 1999). This article describes how Thai adolescents experience and develop life purpose in their daily lives. The themes that emerged from phenomenological analysis highlight important foundations for purpose development from adolescents' subjective perspectives.

Prior youth development studies note that connection to important social institutions—such as religion (Moran, 2014), family (Moran et al., 2012), work (Dik, Duffy, & Steger, 2012) and school (Lee, McInerney, Liem, & Ortiga, 2010)—impact adolescents' experiences of life purpose. Thai youths in our study also emphasized such institutional relationships. Of particular interest is how Thai adolescents focused on *contributing* to family, work, and school as much as feeling supported by these institutions, unlike US adolescents who tend to describe their relationship to family and school as *receiving* support (Moran et al., 2012). Thai adolescents did feel supported, and gratitude is an important part of the Thai culture. Even adolescents who were not cared for by their parents still had someone to whom they could pay gratitude, such as grandmothers. However, for some Thai adolescents, their life purpose emerged from a perceived need to support their family, to catalyze a positive difference for the people they loved, and that doing so helped them develop more purpose (Balthip, Boddy, Kong-In, & Nilmanat, 2011; Balthip & Purnell, 2014).

Our findings support the social norms of Thai society indicated in the Twelve Core Values aimed toward harmonious connectedness among citizens (Government Public Relation Department, 2016). Consequently, experiencing life purpose may produce more effort toward positive expectations for the future and fuel adolescents' desires to achieve these expectations through prosocial behavior (Machell, Disabato, & Kashdan, 2016), which in turn develops feelings of self-worth and personal dignity. Promoting life purpose could support stronger self-esteem, self-efficacy, and well-being (Bronk et al., 2009; Hill et al., 2010) as components of personal dignity (Nordenfelt & Edgar, 2005). Personal dignity combines self-worth as a human being, moral self-respect, strong relationships with others across time, and recognition by others for one's merits and contributions to society.

Although Thai adolescents in our study did not make explicit reference to religion in their experiences of life purpose, many issues they discussed implicitly had spiritual meaning. Spirituality is feeling connected to the world, nature, or a higher power, which provides meaning and transcendence above daily concerns or suffering (Weathers, McCarthy, & Coffey, 2015). Thai language does not use a term for spirituality, but rather uses 'panya', which is a moral and generous mindset that leads to good decisions and a bountiful life (Office of the Council of State, 2007). Connectedness, relationships, gratitude, compassion, and most crucially, the quest or desire for purpose and meaning in life indicated both 'panya' and spirituality from the Buddhist traditions of Thailand (His Highness the Dalai Lama, 2005). Past studies suggest that both spiritual community and connection with significant

persons or things that promote general spiritual growth can develop or maintain life purpose (Malin, Reilly, Quinn, & Moran, 2013; Moran et al., 2012).

5 Articulation is one of three important components in McKnight and Kashdan's (2009) framework of purpose. We note that 17 of the possible 38 students in the class from which we recruited participants were not selected because they could not articulate their life purposes. They answered 'I don't know' or 'I never thought about it.' These adolescents were not included in our analysis, but they provide an interesting counterpoint that still supports our themes of opportunities, role models, and connectedness. Although these adolescents heard about life purpose, they had not thought about their own life purposes, 10 so they could not describe their experience of life purpose. Some of these students came from socio-economically disadvantaged families, or had parents who never asked about thoughts regarding their future. In addition, Thai culture admires academic achievers and recognizes less those individuals with talents in other skills. So parents and teachers are less likely to provide opportunities or role models for these adolescents (see also OECD & 15 UNESCO, 2016).

Although Thailand is undergoing societal change, the life purposes to which most Thai adolescents aspire remain focused on traditional aims and values, such as contributing to and caring for family, taking honest jobs that benefit society, and being grateful for the opportunities, connections, and insights that others provide to them. But these shifting 20 trends may make it more difficult for future youth to find or pursue purposes because the trends may impact the themes that participants said were important to their purpose development. For example, extended families are becoming smaller nuclear families, and there are more single-parent households, which can impact the quality of role models and opportunities. Growing individualism and individualistic Internet usage may affect connectedness even as the Internet may make youth more aware of new opportunities. Thus, 25 if our study is conducted again in five or 10 years, the results may be dramatically different.

### **Limitations**

Although purpose development is important in Thailand, our findings do not generalize to the general Thai youth population because of the small homogenous sample. Further 30 research could investigate Thai youth from diverse backgrounds, e.g., with average versus high academic ability, or from low, middle, and high-income families. In addition, more explicit exploration of spirituality may be needed to better understand the role of Buddhist influences on youth purpose development since young Thais may so thoroughly internalize these religious and cultural norms that they feel no need to articulate them. Finally, a 35 study that more directly addresses the impact of new technologies on life purpose may be useful since their use and influence is growing in Thailand, but adolescents have not yet incorporated technology into how they articulate their life purposes.

### **Conclusion and implications**

40 In Thailand, adolescents who acquire a specific life purpose believe they have an opportunity to foster a positive life that is not only beneficial for themselves but also for others and the wider society. Of particular significance are others close to the youth, such as parents, family members, and often a particular teacher. These close others, in turn, encourage



Thai adolescents to develop a life purpose by providing opportunities, role models, and encouragement to reflect, plus cultivating a sense of self-love, connection with others, and contributions to a greater good. Thai adolescents associate these themes with achievement and well-being.

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