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**The Mindful Self:
Sense of Self and Health-Promoting Lifestyle Behaviours
among Thai College Women**

**A thesis presented in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of**

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in
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ABSTRACT

Wellness educators have faced a great challenge to develop strategies to move people toward the adoption of positive lifestyle behaviours. This research explores concepts of self and the impact of Thai culture on the motivation of young college women to engage in health-promoting lifestyle behaviours (HPLBs) in the context of northeastern Thailand. A sequential mixed methods design enables an exploration of the relationships among sense of coherence, identity status, and HPLBs in the first phase, and an inductive analysis of the impact of Thai cultural context in the second phase. In study A, three instruments: the Health-Promoting Lifestyle Behaviors Profile II (HPLP II), the Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOM-EIS), and the Orientation to Life Questionnaire (SOC-29), were used with 350 senior college women. Sense of Coherence was significantly correlated with achieving a sense of identity, lessening diffusion identity and engaging in health-promoting behaviours. Although a considerable proportion of the variance (26.7 %) for engaging in HPLBs was accounted for by SOC, identity achievement, and identity moratorium, the magnitude of the unexplained variance was considerable. This led to inductive exploration of other variables influencing HPLBs in Study B. By data-driven thematic analysis, the Model of the Mindful Self emerged from in-depth interviews with 25 college women. The model describes three main themes: (a) the cultural background and the surrounding ongoing influences which impact on the development of Thai women's sense of self and their health-related behaviours, (b) the sense of self and identity formation in the Thai context, and (c) the health-related behaviours that stem from the sense of self. Sense of self and its behaviours are socially constructed within the specific culture in which individuals are embedded. The social phenomena and research outcomes are interpreted under the lens of social constructionism. The knowledge generated by this study provides guidance for teaching about health promotion in Thai undergraduate nursing programmes and also provides a basis for initiating health-promoting programmes based on the individual's sense of self for female adolescents in Thailand.

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A hundred times a day I remind myself that my inner and outer life depends on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the measure as I have received and am still receiving.

- Albert Einstein

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GLOSSARY

Pāli-Sanskrit

A

Abhijāta-putta or *atijāta-putta*: superior-born son

Anatta or *Anatman*: without self entity or empty, state of being not self

Anicca: impermanence, transience, having the nature to arise and pass away

Anujāta-putta: like-born son

Avajāta-putta: inferior-born son

Arogya: non-diseased-ness

Atta, *Bhava*, and *Karma* : self, condition, and the law of cause and effect

B

Brahmavihāras: holy abiding, sublime states of mind, the Four Abodes of the Buddha:

Mettā: loving-kindness, friendliness, goodwill

Karunā: compassion

Muditā: sympathetic joy, altruistic joy

Upekkhā: equanimity, indifference, neutrality, poise

(Thais pronounce *Oo-baehk-khaa*)

D

Dāna: giving, generosity, charity, or benefaction

Dukkha: of suffering and unsatisfactory nature

K

Kataññū or *Katanyu*: gratitude

Katavedī or *Katavedi*: to offer reciprocal kindness to one's benefactors

Khan-ti: to be patient

M

Madhyama pratipad, *Majjhima patipada*: the Middle Path

P

Pañña: discriminative wisdom

Puja: to worship

S

Sila: moral virtue, the basic codes of conduct recommended by the Buddha for his followers, precepts

Samadhi: concentration or one-pointedness of mind, meditation

Samsāra : transition, conditioned existence, the rebirth cycle

Sati : mindfulness, recollection

U

Uppamahoti arnayoung: happiness for living parents

Thai

B

Bplohg-Dtohk or *Bplohg*: make right understanding of the nature of things and let things be

Bun: merits

Bun khun: total benefits that another has bestowed upon one

C

Chaow phoa: a male spirit guardian

D

Doo lae tua eng: to take care of one's self

Doo tua eng: to look at one's self

G

Gruoad nam: to pour water through one's hand during a sermon after making merits to monks

H

Hai wela tua eng: to give time for one's self

J

Jad karn tua eng: to manage one's self

Jai ron: hot mind

Jai yen: calm mind, cool mind

K

Kalatesa: time and place

Kidd buab, *Kid dee*: to think positive, to think good thoughts

Kidd eng tam eng: think and do things by one's self autonomously

Kooy gubb tua eng: to talk to one's self, self-talk

Kreng-jai: to be considerate

L

La: to let things be, to let go, to detach

La tithi: to let go one's thought or one's stubborn

M

Mai Mi Roak Pai Khai Jeb: no diseases, harms, fevers, and pains

Mor-Din-Daeng: Khon Kaen University

Munn jai nai tua eng: to be self-confident

P

Pen baeb yhang: to be a role model

Pen tua khong tua eng: being one's self

Pii, nong, loong, paa, naa, aa: older sister/brother, younger sister/brother, uncle, or aunt. These are pronouns to call others in a seniority-oriented Thai culture.

Ploay-wang: let things be without forming attachment with them

Poom jai nai tua eng: to be proud of one's self

Puao-dee: balance, just-right manner

Pueng tua eng: to be self-reliant, self-reliance

Pure: for

R

Rak tua eng: to love one's self

Roo koon-ka tua eng: to know one's self-value

Roo tua eng: knowing one's self

S

Sabai-jai: eased mind, happy mind

T

Taang Saii Klang: the Middle Path

Tam Bun: to make merits

Tam Dee: to do good deeds

Tam Jai: to accept the way things are

Tam Jai Pen Klang or *Klaang-klaang*: to be neutral, keep in the middle

Tam puer krob krua: to do things for family

Tam puer sung kom: to do things for society

Tam puer tua eng: to do things for one's self

Thamm tua eng: to ask one's self

Tua eng: Self

W

Wang choei: to be stoic

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