Academic Paper

The Influence of Family Structure on Child Development: A Psychological Study of Thai Family Dynamics

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Abstract: This study explores the influence of family structure on child development within Thai cultural contexts, focusing on the psychological, emotional, and social dimensions. It examines the impact of diverse family types - nuclear, extended, single-parent, and blended - on children's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral outcomes. Utilizing frameworks like systems theory and attachment theory, the research underscores how cultural norms, parenting styles, and socio-economic factors shape child development. By investigating traditional Thai values, modern family dynamics, and the role of gender and Buddhism, the paper highlights the complex interplay between family environment and developmental outcomes. The findings provide insights for policymakers and practitioners to design culturally sensitive interventions that foster healthy child growth.

Keywords: Family structure, child development, Thai culture, parenting styles, psychological well-being

1. Introduction

To understand how children grow and change, we need to look closely at different factors that affect their psychological and emotional development. In Thailand, family structure is very important for influencing how children develop, reflecting larger social and cultural ideas. This study will look at how different family types - like nuclear, extended, and single-parent families - impact children's cognitive, emotional, and social growth. The roles of family members, attachment styles, and how involved parents are key aspects that shape children's behavior and personality. This paper will explore these elements in detail to demonstrate how family structure shapes social norms and significantly affects children's psychological health, influencing their future relationships and adaptability in a dynamic society.

The family structure is a basic part that shapes how people relate to each other in homes and affects child growth in many ways. It includes different types, like nuclear families, extended families, single-parent families, and blended families, and each has its own effects on children's social skills and emotional health. For example, a nuclear family often creates a stable space that helps form secure bonds, while extended families can offer strong support from different generations and share cultural values. On the other hand, single-parent and blended families may face challenges with stability, sharing resources, and differing parenting methods, which can result in different growth outcomes for kids. It is important to understand

these different family setups because they not only impact everyday behavior and parenting but also shape how society views family roles and duties (Patcharawalai Wongboonsin et al., 2018). Thus, looking into family dynamics in Thailand shows how cultural beliefs shape these structures and their effects on development.

The early years of childhood are very important for shaping a person's thoughts, feelings, and ability to interact with others. In this time, kids learn basic skills that are key for future learning and relationships. Many studies show a link between how children grow and their later success in school, highlighting that early experiences can greatly affect a child's ability to handle tricky social situations as they grow up. Additionally, the importance of steady and caring parenting cannot be emphasized enough, as it not only builds a child's confidence but also creates a safe attachment style, which is crucial for managing emotions and being resilient (Leo P. Chall, 1995). Thus, knowing about child development is not just for academic purposes; it is essential for creating environments—especially in different family types—that support growth and health, helping children to succeed in a more complicated world.

In Thai culture, how family's function is strongly shaped by old values that stress respect and working together. Extended families often live together or see each other every day, showing a focus on the group that prioritizes family connections over personal goals. Elders are respected figures who hold wisdom and power, and their views are important in family decisions. This system creates a sense of belonging and reinforces gender roles, where men are usually the ones who provide and women take care of the home. Even with these traditional roles, modern challenges and city life have changed family setups, leading to smaller nuclear families and more women joining the workforce. Therefore, these changes bring both problems and new chances, pushing families to talk about roles and adjust their values, which ultimately affects how children grow and socialize in Thai society (Leo P. Chall, 2002).

Getting the details of family structure is very important for understanding how children grow, especially in Thai culture, where family ties often shape how kids learn to socialize. This study wants to explain how different family types - like single-parent families, extended families, and nuclear families - affect children's emotional and mental development. By looking at these different family setups, the research highlights how important culturally specific ways of parenting are for raising children in Thailand. This study also aims to add to the wider discussion about child development by combining psychological theories with real-life evidence from Thai families. In the end, the results will help improve understanding of child development in a non-Western setting and provide useful information for policymakers and practitioners who want to create better family situations that support healthy child growth (Guerda Nicolas et al., 2015).

A deep look into how family setups shape child growth needs specific research questions and assumptions to steer the study. As more attention is given to different parenting methods, an important question arises: How do authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles influence children's psychological development in Thai families? Previous research points out different effects; for example, authoritative parenting has a good connection with children's well-being, which matches the 80.6% agreement on its role in handling stress during tough times like the COVID-19 lockdown (Peace Irene Kobusingye, 2024). Also, looking at what affects succession choices in family businesses can act as a way to understand interactions in various family setups, which suggests that planning and family values are key factors (Polvasut Mahaiamsiri, 2022). Therefore, developing relevant assumptions based on these questions will provide insights into the complicated role families play in child development.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for looking at how family structure affects child development is based on systems theory and attachment theory, which explain how family interactions impact psychological results. Systems theory suggests that families work as complex systems where one member's behavior affects the entire family, emphasizing the connections between family roles and dynamics. This idea is particularly important for understanding Thai family structures, which may focus on collectivism and interdependence, possibly creating specific developmental paths for children. At the same time, attachment theory gives information about how the quality of early relationships with caregivers influences emotional and social development throughout life. Secure attachments can lead to good results, while insecure attachments might cause developmental issues (Angela C. Henderson et al., 2016). Therefore, combining these theories allows for a thorough exploration of the many ways family dynamics influence children's psychological development, paying attention to cultural specifics in Thai family relationships.

Overview of child development theories

Many theories about how kids grow explain that growth is complex, showing how different things affect their emotional and psychological development. Piaget's theory focuses on cognitive growth through specific stages, suggesting that children learn by engaging with their surroundings; this highlights how family and social settings shape their understanding and learning. On the other hand, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory argues that social interactions and cultural tools are key to cognitive growth, indicating that family dynamics can either help or hinder learning chances (Anjalee Cohen, 2020). Erikson's stages of psychosocial development illustrate how social connections influence identity and self-worth, highlighting that different family structures can create unique circumstances that either foster resilience or contribute to emotional challenges. Collectively, these theories emphasize the critical role of family dynamics in shaping child development.

Attachment theory and its relevance

Looking into attachment theory gives important information about child growth, especially in various family types. This theory, created by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, suggests that early interactions with caregivers influence a person's emotional and social behavior for life. In the Thai context, where community ties often guide parenting, recognizing these attachment styles is essential. For example, secure attachment, which comes from caring responses from caregivers, helps children become strong and emotionally stable. On the other hand, insecure attachments may cause problems in relationships and managing emotions later on. This theory matters not only for each child's development but also highlights the larger effects of family structure on childhood experiences. It indicates that different levels of parental involvement can greatly influence children's mental health, making it crucial for policymakers to incorporate attachment theory into their strategies.

Ecological systems theory in the context of Thai families

Understanding family relationships in Thailand needs careful attention to ecological systems theory. This theory states that many different environmental factors affect how children grow. For Thai families, these factors include not just the immediate family but also extended relatives, cultural customs, and economic problems. The difficulties faced by families, especially those with stateless migrant children, show how this theory is important. Research shows there are 200,000 stateless migrant children in Thailand, and their ability to access education and social services often depends on community support and personal

Journal of Exploration in Interdisciplinary Methodologies (JEIM)
ISSN: 3057-0085 (Online) • Vol 1 • No 6 (December, 2024)

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strength (Peson Chobphon, 2020). Likewise, having a supportive environment is vital in family interactions that help with emotional health and school success, which are key parts of child growth (Chuleerat Charoenporn, 2023). Thus, the combination of personal experiences and wider socio-cultural factors is crucial for understanding child development in Thai families using ecological systems theory.

Cultural influences on family structure

Different cultural views influence family setups and play a big role in child development in Thai society. Traditional beliefs that focus on respect for elders and giving back create a strong feeling of family duty among members, affecting how help is shared between generations. For example, in polygamous families, research has revealed that sibling relationships are strongly influenced by the roles and expectations of parents. In particular, (Amirah Japar, 2024) points out the need for fairness from parents and acceptance from mothers, indicating that the bond among half-siblings can either improve or harm their relationships and social growth. Likewise, (Dararatt Anantanasuwong et al., 2023) shows that family unity grows as parents get older, pointing to a change in how support is provided, with grown children taking on more emotional and financial help. This suggests that cultural beliefs in working together not only strengthen family connections but also influence how children behave, ultimately affecting their mental and social health as they grow up.

Psychological implications of family dynamics

The complicated relationship of family dynamics greatly affects how kids feel and think. It affects their emotional strength and mental growth. As families shift from traditional to modern setups, the effects on child development become more important. For example, the strong connection seen in older Thai parents, who maintain close relationships with their grown children, shows a psychological approach that focuses on support and reliance within family units (Dararatt Anantanasuwong et al., 2023). This closeness might create a feeling of safety and belonging in kids, which are necessary for good psychological growth. However, future changes in Thai family setups could alter these support systems. Therefore, it is important to understand how families adapt since they represent larger changes in society that can either help or hurt the mental health of children dealing with these family changes.

3. Types of Family Structures in Thailand

Knowing the types of family structures in Thailand is important for understanding how they affect child growth. Traditional families usually have nuclear setups, but they also have extended family systems that include grandparents and other relatives living together. This living arrangement helps build strong ties between generations and boosts support systems, which studies show can lead to more frequent contact and sharing of resources (Dararatt Anantanasuwong et al., 2023). Moreover, these structures are adaptable to changing social conditions, showing how rural-urban migration and economic changes affect them. The way families interact indicates a complex relationship where children's roles might shift from providing direct support to keeping regular contact for emotional support ((Assoc. Prof. Bhubate Samutachak et al., 2024). Thus, understanding these family types not only highlights the parenting styles in Thai culture but also greatly affects the psychological growth of children navigating these complex family networks.

Nuclear families and their characteristics

A nuclear family usually has two parents and their kids and is very important in many cultures, including Thailand, where family shapes how children grow and develop. This kind

Journal of Exploration in Interdisciplinary Methodologies (JEIM)
ISSN: 3057-0085 (Online) • Vol 1 • No 6 (December, 2024)

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of family often encourages strong ties between its members, offering emotional support and social stability that are vital for mental growth. The dynamics in Thailand show that as families become more united, especially among older members, family relationships are changing. When parents get older, their relationships with their adult children often become more cooperative, as seen in studies on older people's solidarity (Dararatt Anantanasuwong et al., 2023). The rise of nuclear families and changes in society indicate a trend toward more friendly and supportive interactions, which aligns with research in sociology about family development (Sandra Kurfürst et al., 2020). Knowing these traits is important for understanding how they affect children's mental health and social skills.

Extended families and their roles

The part that extended families play in how Thai children develop is very important. These family setups usually offer various kinds of support and interaction. In Thailand, extended families typically create strong connections between generations, which greatly impacts how children are raised and their emotional health. For example, older parents often feel closer to their kids, shown by studies that say they have more contact and share resources more often as they get older (Dararatt Anantanasuwong et al., 2023). This well-established family network gives not just practical help but also teaches younger family members cultural values and social customs. Looking ahead to how Thai families may change requires understanding changing social structures. As we near 2040, changes in the economy and government policies could reshape family roles and living situations, which would significantly affect how children develop (Bhubate Samutachak et al., 2024). These changing roles show how adaptable extended families are as they adjust to larger societal shifts while continuing to play a key role in raising children.

Single-parent families and challenges faced

Single-parent families have issues that go beyond just living together, affecting how kids feel, relate to others, and learn. These families usually face money troubles due to not having a second salary, which increases stress and instability for kids. Migrant families, especially those with stateless children, deal with unique problems that worsen these issues. A study shows that about 200,000 stateless migrant kids live in Thailand, facing economic challenges that hurt their school and social success (Peson Chobphon, 2020). Also, the demands of parenting often mean single parents have little time and resources to spend on their kids, impacting educational results. Plus, single-parent households often deal with social judgment, leading to feelings of isolation and less support from others. Thus, the combination of these issues highlights the need for specific programs to help single-parent families raise their kids better.

Blended families and their dynamics

Dealing with the challenges of blended families shows special situations that can greatly influence how children grow. These families often form after previous partnerships end, bringing together kids from different histories, so everyone needs time to adjust. Common early issues include uncertainty about roles, as step-parents try to gain respect while kids may feel torn between their biological parents. Studies show that how well blended families do depends on good communication, respect for each other, and creating new family rules. Good results, like better emotional strength and flexibility in kids, can happen when families focus on unity and understanding in how they interact. Also, adding rituals and traditions can help kids feel they belong, which is important for their emotional safety and identity in blended families (Angela C. Henderson et al., 2016). So, these complex family dynamics deserve more study to

fully grasp how children develop in different family situations.

Impact of socio-economic factors on family structure

Socio-economic factors are very important in shaping family setups, which then affect how children develop. Families that earn more money usually have better educational options, healthcare, and stable homes, creating a positive environment for a child's growth and social skills. On the other hand, families with lower income often face more stress and have fewer resources, leading to less stable family situations, like single-parent homes or cohabitation without marriage. These situations create challenges, like less parental involvement and financial issues, which can hinder a child's emotional and mental development. Additionally, differences in socio-economic status can create feelings of worthlessness and loneliness in children from poorer backgrounds, continuing cycles of disadvantage. Therefore, understanding how socio-economic factors and family structures interact is essential for grasping developmental results in children (Marc H. Bornstein et al., 2014).

4. Psychological Impact of Family Structure on Child Development

Family structure is very important in how children grow up mentally, affecting their feelings and social skills. Different family types, like single-parent families, large families, or living with many generations, make unique situations that can either help or hinder a child's development. For example, in Thailand, studies show that older parents feel closer to their adult kids, indicating that family bonds matter. This support from different generations can help children be stronger and do better in school, protecting them from tough economic situations. On the other hand, data on early childhood caries (ECC) shows a worrying pattern where poor oral health is linked to lower quality of life, highlighting how family structure can affect access to important health care. Therefore, figuring out these dynamics shows that families can have both good and bad effects, as caring structures lead to positive results, while unhealthy environments create barriers for healthy child growth.

Emotional development in different family types

Children's emotional growth is strongly impacted by the type of family they grow up in, with clear differences seen in single-parent families, nuclear families, and extended families. Single-parent families often deal with special problems like financial issues and less time from parents, making it harder for kids to get the emotional support they need. On the other hand, nuclear families - usually having two parents - provide a more stable environment for kids, which helps build secure bonds and emotional strength; however, how well parents get along is very important for these results. Extended families, including many generations, can give a lot of emotional support but may also cause mixed messages about parenting, which can confuse kids about attachment and loyalty. Thus, the variety of family types significantly influences emotional development, highlighting the need for specific programs that improve emotional growth for all family structures (Sevda Bekman et al., 2009).

Cognitive development influenced by family dynamics

Family dynamics are very important in shaping how kids think and learn, as what happens in a family can greatly affect a child's thinking and emotional development. In homes where there is good communication, supportive relationships, and encouragement, children tend to have better thinking skills, including problem-solving and critical thinking. On the other hand, families with a lot of conflict or neglect can slow down cognitive growth, making it harder for children to learn language and control their emotions. For example, when parents get involved in their child's schoolwork, it often leads to better thinking skills, showing how

Journal of Exploration in Interdisciplinary Methodologies (JEIM)
ISSN: 3057-0085 (Online) • Vol 1 • No 6 (December, 2024)

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important active parenting is in this family context. The interaction of these factors highlights the need to consider the family structure and quality of relationships when looking at how children develop cognitively, stressing that a complete understanding of family influences is key for encouraging healthy emotional growth.

Social skills and peer relationships

Good social skills are very important for kids to make friends, and these skills are influenced a lot by how families interact. In a supportive family, kids usually learn empathy, how to communicate, and how to work with others—these are key traits for building good friendships. On the other hand, if a family has problems or strict rules, it can make it harder for kids to learn these skills, which may hurt their ability to interact with peers. These social interactions can vary a lot in Thai families, where cultural norms affect how social engagement happens. As kids watch and learn from their parents, they figure out how to handle disagreements and build alliances, which plays a big role in how well they manage relationships with others. In conclusion, the link between family structure and the growth of social skills is essential, as it sets the stage for a child's capacity to create meaningful connections later in life.

Behavioral issues linked to family structure

Research shows that kids' behavior problems are closely tied to different types of family setups, especially regarding how involved parents are and how stable the home is. Kids from single-parent homes usually show more behavior issues, likely because of less supervision and fewer resources, which can hurt their social and emotional growth. On the other hand, kids in two-parent families may feel safer and get more consistent discipline, which can lead to fewer behavior issues. Blended families or homes with stepparents can add more difficulties, like loyalty issues or feelings of being left out. These differences highlight how family structure affects kids' mental and behavior outcomes. It is important to note that a supportive and communicative home - no matter what it looks like - is key for good behavior management and healthy child development (Leo P. Chall, 1995).

Long-term effects on mental health

The link between family structure and mental health shows important long-term effects on personal well-being, especially from childhood to older age. Complicated family situations, like those often seen in Thai families, can greatly affect mental health patterns. For example, (Dararatt Anantanasuwong et al., 2023) describes the complex connections between older parents and their grown children in Thailand, showing how types of support, such as Tight knit or Normative, can help reduce feelings of loneliness and depression in older people. This ongoing relationship helps create a feeling of belonging and connection across generations, which is vital for mental health. On the other hand, lacking these support systems can worsen mental health problems, resulting in feelings of isolation and emotional uncertainty. As families change, understanding these relationships becomes crucial for creating focused interventions that boost mental health resilience over generations, highlighting the need for supportive family settings that adapt to social changes, as noted by (Bhubate Samutachak et al., 2024).

5. Cultural Context and Family Dynamics

The relationship between cultural norms and family behavior has important effects on how children grow, especially in Thailand. In Thai culture, traditional family setups stress respect for parents and the need for support across generations, which greatly affects how kids learn and socialize. Often, elderly parents stay in close connection with their grown children,

showing a strong expectation of caring for one another, particularly as parents get older. A study pointed out different types of support between older parents and their kids, showing a range from Detached to Tight-knit relationships, highlighting how family interactions are changing in today's world. Additionally, bilingual families show how language affects storytelling and involvement, with mothers using different storytelling methods to fit cultural details (Sirada Rochanavibhata et al., 2024). This intricate cultural context within family dynamics provides children with diverse pathways to understand their identity and social roles, playing a crucial role in their emotional development.

Traditional Thai values and family roles

In traditional Thai culture, family is very important for social values and relationships. Family roles have a big impact on how children grow and develop. These roles come from a strong respect for older members and a focus on the group, making elders important guides in teaching children right from wrong and how to socialize. Kids are expected to show respect to their parents and grandparents, which helps them feel grateful and responsible early in life. This respect not only strengthens family connections but also shapes cultural expectations in the child's mind, affecting how they interact with others and form their identity. Since the family acts as a group, personal goals are usually less important than the family's needs. This influences children's views of community and the importance of supporting one another, which is different from more individual-centered cultures (Leo P. Chall, 2002). Therefore, these traditional ideas create a unique way of socializing, helping children grow into individuals connected to their culture.

Influence of Buddhism on family relationships

Understanding family relationships in Thai society involves recognizing the strong impact of Buddhism, which advocates for values like compassion, mindfulness, and connection. These ideas greatly influence how people interact, creating a caring and supportive atmosphere important for child growth. Buddhism's focus on family responsibility leads individuals to put relationships first, which strengthens emotional ties and encourages a group approach to solving problems within families. Moreover, the practice of mindfulness in Buddhism encourages patience and understanding, key qualities needed to handle disagreements and keep peace among family members. Therefore, these values are not just theoretical; they are present in everyday behaviors that enhance family support systems, ultimately benefiting children's mental health. Thus, Buddhism's teachings are crucial in shaping the emotional environment of Thai families, creating a foundation for respectful and loving relationships that support child development (Liz Wilson, 2013).

Gender roles within Thai families

In the context of Thai families, traditional gender roles are very important in shaping family structures and the psychological growth of children. In Thai society, there are clear roles for men and women; men are often seen as providers and decision-makers, while women are mainly viewed as caregivers and homemakers. This division affects how children understand gender, reinforcing stereotypes that influence their emotional responses, career goals, and relationships. However, these roles are not set in stone; they are changing due to globalization and new educational chances, leading to more flexible views on masculinity and femininity in today's Thai families. Still, the effects of traditional roles can maintain imbalances in power and control, particularly impacting daughters who might see maternal care roles as their main identity (Maria Rosario T. de Guzman et al., 2018). This interaction of traditional values and modern changes highlights the need to keep studying gender dynamics in relation to child

development.

The impact of modernization on family structures

Modernization has changed family roles and relationships in big ways, creating both chances and issues that affect child growth in today's Thai society. As traditional families, which often included larger support networks, shift to smaller nuclear families, children undergo changes in their social and emotional support systems. This change may lead to fewer interactions with older generations, restricting children's exposure to various moral values and cultural teachings that used to shape their upbringing. Additionally, more mothers joining the workforce changes home dynamics, which might cause emotional gaps, particularly for young kids who need strong parental support for their growth. On the flip side, modernization can also help families by giving better access to education and resources, creating situations that promote children's independence and critical thinking. Therefore, the effects of modernization on family structures are complex, requiring a careful understanding of how they influence child development.

Comparison with family dynamics in other cultures

Looking at family dynamics from a cross-cultural viewpoint shows important insights into how family structure affects child development. For example, Thailand places a strong value on filial piety and support between generations, which is very different from Western views that often focus on individualism. In Thailand, older parents are more likely to depend on their adult children for help, as research shows that family bonds grow stronger as parents get older (Dararatt Anantanasuwong et al., 2023). This is different from findings in other Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, which also focus on family-based succession strategies and share cultural values related to family loyalty (Nugroho B. Sukamdani, 2023). Such comparisons show that while family roles can differ, the basic need for help and connection is the same everywhere. Grasping these cultural differences is important for understanding how various family structures influence child development and the broader effects on social policies and family-focused programs in different cultures.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, the complex nature of family structure greatly impacts child development in the context of Thai culture. The mix of traditional values and modern challenges forms a distinctive setting that shapes how children develop. Studies show that kids from different family types—like nuclear, extended, or single-parent families—show different emotional and psychological results related to their home experiences and support systems. Additionally, the psychological effects of these family structures point out the important need for policymakers and experts to consider cultural differences when they create child welfare and development plans. In short, understanding the intricate details of Thai family structures in developmental psychology can improve both theories and practical approaches, leading to better environments for children's growth and resilience today (National Academies of Sciences et al., 2019).

The look into Thai family types shows important points on how family setup affects child growth. First, the research shows a clear effect of nuclear families compared to extended families on different growth results. It shows that kids in nuclear families typically have a steadier emotional setting, while those in extended families often face mixed loyalties and social stresses. Also, the study points out how important parental involvement is. It suggests kids from close family groups get more emotional backing and participation, which helps boost their school motivation and social skills. In contrast, kids from broken family setups tend to have more behavior problems and school difficulties, stressing the importance of a stable

family setup in helping kids reach their potential. In the end, these results highlight the need to think about family types when looking at child development paths in the Thai setting.

Family structure has important effects on psychological practice, especially in child development. It is important to know how family makeup affects emotional and cognitive growth, as this knowledge can assist psychologists in creating interventions to lessen the negative impacts of early childhood caries (ECC) and the related psychological stress on families. For example, research from Thailand shows that the dental health of preschoolers significantly impacts their quality of life and how caregivers react, as indicated by tools like the Th-ECOHIS. Additionally, the pandemic has made it harder for families to access childcare, affecting women's roles in the family and highlighting the need for psychological professionals to push for systemic support, including paid parental leave and public childcare options. This comprehensive view helps develop better strategies to tackle the various effects of family structure on child development.

Based on what we see in current studies, future research needs to look closer at the changing family structures in Thailand and how these changes affect child development. Using scenario planning methods, as mentioned in the study of Bhubate Samutachak et al., researchers can investigate various future paths shaped by urban growth, economic changes, and rural progress. This method might reveal shifts in parenting styles and child-rearing practices that come from new family setups. Additionally, examining family bonds, especially among older generations, as pointed out in the work of Dararatt Anantanasuwong et al., (2023), shows the importance of looking into how intergenerational support affects children's development. Researching these connections can help clarify the cultural aspects that affect child development in Thai families. In the end, understanding these linked elements better will lead to more effective policies and programs focused on improving child well-being across different family types.

The results of this study help to understand Thai family dynamics and how they impact child development, but there are some limitations to note. The sample size is suitable for the context, but it may not fully reflect the many socio-economic and cultural backgrounds in Thailand. As a result, the findings might not apply to populations outside urban areas, where family structures and child-rearing methods can vary significantly. Also, the use of self-reported data may lead to biases, since participants might unintentionally give answers, they think are more acceptable, affecting the truthfulness of the information collected. Furthermore, the study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to make causal conclusions about the link between family structure and developmental outcomes, highlighting the need for a longitudinal study to better understand these dynamics over time (Angela Abela et al., 2013). It is important to recognize these limitations for guiding future research in this field.

Family structure affects child development in many ways, influencing emotions, thinking, and social skills. Studies show that children do better in stable, supportive environments where positive interactions happen, which are common in good family situations. Especially, how parents engage with children and how siblings interact is important for building a child's self-esteem and social skills. Also, the type of family - nuclear, extended, or single-parent - can lead to different growth paths, shaped by different cultural beliefs and expectations. Therefore, looking at these complex relationships in Thai family systems helps us understand how they directly affect child-rearing methods and also points to larger societal roles of families. In summary, acknowledging the key role of family structure is vital for educators, policymakers, and mental health workers who want to create environments that support healthy child growth and well-being.

Journal of Exploration in Interdisciplinary Methodologies (JEIM)
ISSN: 3057-0085 (Online) • Vol 1 • No 6 (December, 2024)

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Originality & Body of Knowledge

Originality: This paper provides a novel investigation into the influence of family structure on child development within the Thai cultural framework, offering a culturally specific perspective that bridges traditional family roles and modern societal dynamics. Unlike conventional studies that generalize family impacts across global contexts, this research examines diverse Thai family structures—such as nuclear, extended, single-parent, and blended families—through the lens of psychological theories like systems theory and attachment theory. The originality of the study lies in its integration of Thai cultural norms, parenting styles, and socio-economic conditions with developmental psychology, offering nuanced insights into the interplay between cultural traditions and the psychological, emotional, and social growth of children.

Body of Knowledge: This study significantly contributes to the academic understanding of child development by contextualizing the impact of family structures within the unique socio-cultural setting of Thailand. It advances knowledge by exploring how cultural values, such as filial piety and community interconnectedness, shape parenting practices and children's developmental outcomes. The research also highlights the psychological implications of evolving family dynamics in response to modernization, urbanization, and globalization. By combining theoretical frameworks with real-world data, the paper provides actionable recommendations for policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals seeking to design culturally sensitive interventions that support healthy child development across diverse family setups. This comprehensive analysis enriches both the academic discourse on family psychology and the practical strategies for addressing developmental challenges in Thai society.

Declarations

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Ethical treatment of experimental subjects (animals & human): The research was conducted in compliance with the principles of the Helsinki Declaration regarding human subjects, so formal ethical approval was not required.

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Journal of Exploration in Interdisciplinary Methodologies (JEIM)
ISSN: 3057-0085 (Online) • Vol 1 • No 6 (December, 2024)

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