

วารสารสำนักงานคณะกรรมการวิจัยแห่งชาติ
Journal of the National Research Council of Thailand

WAY OF THINKING OF ELDERLY AND IMAGE OF
SUCCESSFUL AGING

วิถีคิดของผู้สูงอายุและภาพลักษณ์ของการเป็นผู้สูงอายุที่ประสบความสำเร็จ

Phuanjai Rattakorn
เพื่อนใจ รัตตากร

Faculty of Associated Medical Sciences, Chiang Mai University
คณะเทคนิคการแพทย์ มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาวิถีคิดของผู้สูงอายุและภาพลักษณ์ของการเป็นผู้สูงอายุที่ประสบความสำเร็จ มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาวิถีคิดของผู้สูงอายุต่อการมองภาพลักษณ์ตนเองในฐานะ “ผู้สูงอายุ” เพื่ออธิบายการให้ความหมายและเกณฑ์การตัดสินการเป็นผู้สูงอายุที่ประสบความสำเร็จ ตามทัศนคติเชิงตีความของผู้สูงอายุ ตลอดจนการประเมินตนเอง และเพื่อศึกษาเงื่อนไขสำคัญที่สนับสนุนและขัดขวางต่อการเป็นผู้สูงอายุประสบความสำเร็จ ตามทัศนคติของผู้สูงอายุ โดยใช้กระบวนการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ ผลการศึกษาสะท้อนให้เห็นว่าวิถีคิดของผู้สูงอายุถูกยึดโยงอยู่กับวิถีแห่งการดำเนินชีวิตเพื่อนำไปสู่เป้าหมายสำคัญคือความสมบูรณ์และความสำเร็จของชีวิต ประสบการณ์ของผู้สูงอายุมีความรุ่มรวยและหลากหลายตามลักษณะบริบททางวัฒนธรรม วิถีการใช้ชีวิตที่ผู้สูงอายุสร้างและออกแบบขึ้นมาเอื้อให้ผู้สูงอายุมีความละเอียดลออในการปฏิบัติตนให้เหมาะสม ผู้สูงอายุจึงใช้การดำเนินชีวิตเป็นเครื่องนำทางให้ตนเองก้าวไปสู่การเป็นผู้สูงอายุที่มีความสุข มีคุณภาพชีวิตที่ดีและเป็นผู้สูงอายุที่ประสบความสำเร็จในมุมมองของตนเอง การให้ความหมายของการเป็นผู้สูงอายุที่ประสบความสำเร็จ ถือเป็นปรากฏการณ์ที่ผ่านกระบวนการคิดของผู้สูงอายุแต่ละคนที่ผ่านประสบการณ์ชีวิตมาเป็นระยะเวลาอันยาวนานของผู้สูงอายุ

ที่ประสบความสำเร็จจะต้องปรับเปลี่ยนบทบาทหน้าที่ ที่ผู้สูงอายุควรทำในสิ่งที่เหมาะสมกับศักยภาพที่มีอยู่ ความต้องการหรือความอยากมีอยากได้เพื่อตนเอง เปลี่ยนไปเป็นความต้องการให้แก่ผู้อื่น ความต้องการที่จะเห็นความสำเร็จของผู้ที่อยู่ใกล้ชิดหรือต้องการที่จะช่วยเหลือผู้อื่นมีมากกว่าที่จะคิดถึงเพื่อตนเอง ผู้สูงอายุที่ประสบความสำเร็จจะต้องมีกระบวนการดูแลตนเองเพื่อให้ถึงพร้อมในทุกด้านจะต้องมีภาวะด้านสุขภาพกายและสุขภาพจิตที่ดี สามารถพึ่งตนเองได้ มีการตระหนักถึงคุณภาพชีวิตที่ดี เตรียมใจให้พร้อมรับการเปลี่ยนแปลงที่เกิดขึ้นได้ มีความเชื่อและศรัทธาเป็นเครื่องยึดเหนี่ยวในการดำเนินชีวิต มีความสามารถทางด้านสังคมและเศรษฐกิจ เป็นผู้ที่มีประสบการณ์ มีความรู้ ความสามารถ เป็นผู้นำทางความคิด ยึดถือในศีลธรรมอย่างเคร่งครัด เอื้ออาทรแก่คนรอบข้าง ทำงานเพื่อชุมชนหรือสังคมเป็นการทำคุณงามความดีและทำประโยชน์ให้แก่ส่วนรวม นำไปสู่ชีวิตที่มีคุณภาพในช่วงเวลาที่เหลืออยู่ในบั้นปลายชีวิต ซึ่งปัจจัยที่เป็นตัวกำหนดกรอบความคิดตามบริบท ทั้งปัจจัยเงื่อนไขที่สนับสนุนและขัดขวางต่อการเป็นผู้สูงอายุที่ประสบความสำเร็จตามทัศนะของผู้สูงอายุ ได้แก่ สุขภาพกายและสุขภาพใจ ความมั่นคงในการดำเนินชีวิต การยอมรับจากสังคม และการมีพื้นที่ทางสังคม ที่ช่วยให้เกิดระบบคุณค่าส่วนบุคคล แสดงถึงความมีตัวตนของผู้สูงอายุ

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to study the ways of thinking of the elderly about their self-image as “aging”; to explain how to define and to judge successful aging based on interpretation and self-evaluation of the elderly; and to study key conditions for supporting or impeding successful aging from the elderly’s perspective. Using qualitative research methods, the results show that the way of thinking links to the individual ways of life and leads to the ultimate goal, which is the perfect and successful life. The elderly’s experiences are rich, and diversified by cultural contexts, so their ways of life are created and designed. Lifestyle also affects the daily lives ability of the elderly, and they use it as a guide to step into aging with happiness, with quality of life, and to age successfully from their point of view. Defining the word “successful aging” is a thinking process through life-time experiences. Successful elders have to readjust their roles. They should do what is suitable for their existing competency. Their needs or desires for themselves are changed to the need to contribute to others. They want to see success of their close ones, or to help others rather than themselves. Successful aging requires the self care process to be well-equipped in every aspect: physical and mental healthiness, self-dependency, awareness of quality of life, well-prepared for changes either physically or socially, having belief and devotion as attachment tool to lead the life, well-rounded in social and economy, having experiences, knowledges and ability, being a thought leader, strictly adhere to

morality, having kindness and generosity to people around, working for community or society to be virtue and benefit for common. All of these lead to a higher quality of life during the final year of life. The factors influencing successful aging are physical and mental health, security in life course, social acceptance, and social sphere to create self-value and promote “self” of elders.

INTRODUCTHION

In Thai society, there is a growing number of aging population. It is stepping into the aging society-accommodating the elders of more than 60 years old over 10 percent of the total population. Though the condition of the aging population is proportionate by criteria but it is not focused on only the aging population or its proportion but it shows the aging of the entire population structure having proportion of gradually decreasing children, and the early working age groups while consistently growing with the middle adult and the aging groups. The increase of both number and the proportion of the aging population in the social structure directly affect the social process such as inter-exchange among the societal members, cooperation, conflict, mutualizing gains, behavioral controls of societal members, and reciprocal dependency. All these social processes are vested with social norm, status, and role of its members as guide to treat each other. In addition, these changes also indirectly affect quality life of living and population health in societies. So, when the equilibrium of population has been shifted to the aging group, societies are observing impacts over regulating culture, politics, and economy at large. By reasons, in the phenomenon of the population change, the elders would meet immediate role change upon stepping into the aging under the traditional paradigm. And, equilibrium believes that the elders are the erosion and the dependent burdens because being elderliness erodes physical vigor and decreases dutifulness. They are counted the non-productive, non-working age group and a nation with a greater productive population would better optimize economy than otherwise. The elders under this paradigm become the burdens of the country to load and a part to entail problems impeding the national economy and social developments. The situation turns from being the giver of the economic system into the receiver. Results are the elders are helpless to support or assist economy as in the past. But in fact, under another paradigm, it views the elders as the persons of experiences, intelligence and potential like other population groups in societies. They own rights and duties to help develop the nation in the economic and social system with their maturity, qualification and experience accumulated along their entire life span. Though the increase of the life span affects the cultural, social, political

and economic norms as a whole but viewing the elders in deep as the world population vested with acumens of life experiences, it would find that they are invaluable resources worth for societies and for people in general. What necessary today is communities and societies have to play more roles to systematize supervisions and to seek way ready to meet what is happening based on ideas prioritizing the elders as a potentialized unit of societies.

When social shift under restless development, it gears to modernization and directly and indirectly affects the elders. The Thai family structure is shifted from the extended family to the nucleated family more. Proportion of the elders isolated and co-stay with spouse is increasing while the proportion of the two generation family is slightly decreasing and the three generation family or more is dramatically decreasing. Such consequences prove that tendency of the elders in the extended family is proportionately decreasing. (Office of the National Statistics, 2003: 15). This in turn allows the status and roles of the elders accumulated, and inherited transferring to the new generation is decreasing. In association with, the social values defines the aging as erosion, elderliness, de-potentialization, job halts, and isolationism leading to ageism (Cockerham, 1997: 23). It directs to hating the elders in the societies which is vividly found in the western countries. They have deep consciousness of hating aging and view it as devaluing, uselessness and unable to further exist as the economic vigor or giver to the societies. By reasons, effective workforce is key in production and to compare the young with old workforce, the first better contributes to the production system and the elders is counted burdens for societies to attend more. So, under the societies valuing effectiveness, competitiveness to increase production and rationalization, those inside this system have to turn themselves similarly effective and rationalizing. The elders in the western societies begin to treat themselves to exist efficiency regardless interest or attentive to image, health, nutritional feeding, selective to supplementary diet, and exercising for ever fitness. The “successful aging” is used as strategy and indicator of efficiency of an individual believing that even the number of the elders is growing but if they have complete life physically and spiritually able to look after themselves, self-dependency, properly handling problems, environmental relevancy, and social values, they will increase “profit” and drive the national development on economy, and social with consistency and efficiency. So, the attempt to apply the successful aging as modes/forms of subjectivation is critically necessary to build the identical image of the modern elders in order to allow people in societies find evolution to aging more positively.

Turning to the Thai societies, even the problems happen seem not as serious as the western societies but there is a question to what extent societies and the elders are ready to such change under the volatile social transition, under the needs of the restless national development to

the modernization within the capitalism. At the moment, perspectives over the “aging” phenomenon in the Thai society are differed in giving the meaning and values of the elders in the modern societies even entering the aging is the gradual process rather than contingency. Additionally, all of us have seen and know those entering the old age but none understands such feeling till by self-experience. The individual perspectives to the physical change are diversified. Some fear and worry that the body changes while some can accept. The individual perception over one’s aging; parts are the social and cultural perception surrounding oneself drawing diversified life perspectives and models of lifestyles caused by belief and values each society defines the elders. People in the remote rural areas might not likely take interest or worry with their weary bodies but the urban people are aware and worry the aging status defined by societies. Though with happy life and amid modern public utilities but one forms a negative perspective over one’s aging. So, defining the process and evaluation of an individual entering the physical aging is a social constructed reflecting technique of thinking from belief and values found in each culture and historical time span.

While societies encountering challenges of the elders population and the government sector is still seeking measures, planning or setting policy to enhance potential for the elders and seeking various techniques to meet the problem of the elders in future but evident conclusions is unfound. By reason, human course of life covers with sensitive nature and exists in the volatile situation and complexity more than the rules to be fixed and complete for each one ion society to follow without any suspicions or questioning. So, the successful aging is an alternative leading to building the image of the modern elders. It is the image of the successful aging by potential under dimension of the Thai societies. The study of the successful aging through the ways of thinking and viewing self image as the “elders” and the self-evaluation and conditions is supporting or impeding to be the successful aging based on the belief that the ways of thinking of human are complicated and diversified and the same phenomenon can be differently viewed and treated with different ways of thinking. This will point out the critical issue related to the successful aging from the thinking process of the elders based on perception, culture and belief, which are the origin leading to the consciousness to one own meaning. And, it is counted the preparation at the individual level. Then the study of the ways of thinking, the image perception of “the elders”, defining and criteria of being the successful aging as well as the self-evaluation of the elders leads to preparation and self dependency in all aspects. Findings would be present in evident data to rouse the elders ready to have image of the elders with potentials, better quality life counted as important and most necessary amid the present social transitions mainly focusing human efficiency and quality. At the same time, the evident data could be developed into the knowledge and important foundation for further systematic analyses in order to prepare the social

structure as guidelines to provoke the government agencies or persons involved conscious of its significance leading to preparation of both the policy and readjustment of strategy further directing to the society of the successful aging.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study the ways of thinking of the elders on self-image as being the “aging”
2. To explain how to define and to judge the successful aging based on interpretation of the elders and self-evaluation.
3. To study key condition supporting and impeding being the successful aging by the elders' perspective.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is to investigate the process of the successful aging by individual views and cultures of self care. To be the successful aging is phenomenon to pass over the thinking process of each elder and there might have been factors to frame diverted ideas economy, education, social and status of each one.

The investigation view about the process entering the successful aging of the elders by holistic studies conditionalized by the cultural and social data is the investigation of the social phenomenon of the elders in the current world by thinking perspective; the elders will narrate their direct experience under their conceptual framework to seek the truth and to perceive their thought, affection, rational and recommendations by considering the environmental phenomenon in all dimensions.

A qualitative data collection leads to descriptive information in writing, wording and behaving of the subject of observation to study the ways of thinking of life style, self-evaluation and condition leading to be the successful aging. It is focused on the elders involved in social activities or grouping for doing activities where there are associations, discussion, and exchanges of opinions related to health condition. It is counted a tactic to improve the elders' competency and unlikely non-burden to societies by self-dependency drawn from organizing activities or having a learning process to handle problems together and helping each other to gain details of perspectives, the ways of thinking and culture of self care analyzable to observe effectively entering the successful aging.

1. Method of selecting sites and Informants

Chiang Mai elder population is counted top three of the national population in association with accommodating the community culture respecting the importance of the elders since ancient. This originates the study of the ways of thinking and the self care process of daily living in order to investigate how the successful aging has been defined.

They are the members of Baan Piyamal Elder Center, Amphur Muang, Changwat Chiang Mai on account of being self-reliance and helping others, efficient in organizing their own activities, and having regular and ongoing activities.

To visualize model, the ways of thinking, valuing, and clear model of adaptation in these investigations, the informant group is vested with following differences.

1.1 Age: informants of different age span - the new elder and the older elders

1.2 Gender: informants of each elder group contain both the male and the female because of the Thai customs and culture differently formulated thinking system for the female and the male by the social roles.

1.3 Education: informants of each elder group contain different education levels. The high educated is likely more advantageous to access services or information.

1.4 Economic Status: informants of each elder group contain different economic status. The wealthy is likely easier to access living means, facilities, and health welfare.

1.5 Residence: informants of each elder group own different residence either single home or extended home.

2. Method of data collection

The researcher coordinates with the chairperson of Baan Piyamal Elder Center, Amphur Muang, Changwat Chiang Mai for data collection. Methodology is as following procedures and details.

2.1 A documentary research, i.e. textbooks, journals and documents related to the concepts and researches including data related to the targeted samples.

2.2 The field research: after data have been investigated for a certain level, the research enters the site to study the physical context; social, cultural and economic contexts; functions of Baan Piyamal Elder Center and conditions affecting its function including conversations with elders based on basic question, e.g. age, occupation, education, marital status, residence and so on. Participatory observation has been used during interview such as observing appearance, gestures, way of talking and dressing and so on.

2.3 When some informants have been gathered, they will be interviewed in deep based on principles of interview questions to collect data to ensure that data are best complete to be used in the summary of the investigation including perspectives over the successful aging, self care process and conditions leading to the successful aging.

2.4 Data are analyzed, interpreted and grouped based on the research conclusions.

3. Data analyses

It is a process of many activities aiming to understand the investigated data, i.e. the interpretation for conclusion, typology, data comparisons, linkage of phenomenon, seeking explanation and all conclusions to answer whether able to understand the phenomenon. It is critical in a research. Its factors are the data, concept of analyses, and issues to be analyzed. Analyses can be completed along with interviews till they are satisfactory. Even the qualification will be in adequate of numerals; it can methodologically convey with clear structure and is auditable. Analyzing interviews leads to understand hidden meaning.

3.1 Domain Analysis: primarily, it requires reading contents of the interviews and fieldwork records and fulfilling the content analyses to find similarity/difference of all statements to seek general idea or typology and separately record in the cover term.

3.2 Taxonomy Analysis: a step to elaborate the primary step attempting to identify relationship between main idea and sub-idea, how do those ideas have relationship or been positioned. Nature of relationship might come from informants or from conclusion. Then a symmetric grouping must be made.

3.3 Componential Analysis: it aims to check attributes or components of each core statement item whether it is either correct or repetitive of differed.

3.4 Theme Analysis: it is to find relationship between the core topic linking the whole in order to find conclusion in each investigation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Baan Piyamal Elder Center for the aged: social sphere

A study of the way of thinking and the perception of elders' image; definition and criteria of the successful aging as well as self assessment of elders leading to preparing and self-reliance in all aspects and considering condition leading them to success as the start to lead them to awareness in defining oneself and it is counted preparation at the individual level from the thinking system of the elders by perception, culture and belied reflecting the understanding of

elders to themselves. This will link to understanding definition and image of the successful elders who are the societal members in each society. So, there is learning about way of thinking and different expression by environment or the actual facts of society. Environments make elders think and behave differently. Elders with social activities or group dynamism leading to discussions, exchanging opinions on health condition which is counted a technique to improve competency of the elders useful to societies rather than being too burdensome to society by self-reliance from activity. Or, it is a learning process to handle problem together and help each other. Important thing is “activities” will draw ability of “self-direction and decision-making” of the elders to arouse perception in selecting life style and develop ability of different sides so that the elders will find their own competency and skills. They can select technique to promote their health condition appropriately. An identical grouping of the elder is the establishment of the elder center generated from basic concepts of supporting health condition in all aspects to increase capacity in controlling and developing the desirable health conditions. Individual adaptation is close relationship with social activities and if elders have more activities they can thus adapt themselves.

Elders being members of Baan Piyamal Elder Center group themselves because they have more free time caused by the past routine tasks have closed down and needs of substitute activities are increasing. The beginning of needs to have substitute activities comes from the elders think that even they have to stop routine task but it does not mean to stop also activities of the life style. They try to retain activities containing the previous ones and the new interested ones. They still continue interested and desirable activities. In addition, grouping is counted important and play role in life style of elders more in this group dynamism. It is not only the opportunity to help each other but being useful to the community. Their grouping in Baan Piyamal Elder Center is to create self-confidence, and to perceive their ability that they can handle things and allowing them to think that they are worthwhile, having opportunity to associate and to exchange opinions, and to convey narration for each other. Additionally, their strong grouping creates bond, affection, trust and awareness of their ability able to run activities by themselves. This makes them sense their values rather than isolated from societies. They have opportunity to associate, to exchange ideas, to convey narrations for each other. It enhances their vigor and competency. Both internal and external societies accept them. Movement of present societies is directed to the learning society turning them to move to dimension of economy and culture. The way of thinking in society are liberal and they turn elders to seek freedom of life style, individualistic, self-dependency and selectiveness to life course enabling to adapt to changes surrounding. Grouping of elders in Baan Piyamal Elder Center is like a social structure that elders as members learn through interaction with self and

different groups of people influencing perception and self-formation and it leads to defining themselves of the elders. Activities are the content attract for grouping. There is contestation for exchanging experiences about health, daily life activities, economic problems, environment, politics, entertainment and learning from trial and error such as exercises, recreation, religious rites, handicrafts, arts, culture, social works and projections and so on. When elders have opportunity to exchange learning among each other, it draws diversified learning what members own and trained for others. The knowledge and ability is used regularly then skills are increasing and applicable more. Advantages gain by elders is their competency is increase with pride and freedom. They are happy both in their mind and their body, if there is movement and existence of regularly physical, mental and social activities. Besides being a center and counted open the social floor for elders, their regular grouping with continuing activities, part comes from the sense of “ownership” with transparency of the goal to tell Who is the elder, What do they have in common? and What are their expectations? This is an inclusive center all member can access the participatory process without discriminations of gender, religion, social and economic status. The center leads to interactive. All elders have opportunity to express their idea, listen to others with aesthetic conversation. Being a center, it is responsive to needs and necessity of elders. It transforms individual values and all perception for those joining the transformative process, which leads to generate self value and develop elders to be well-rounded, active and cooperative to contribute more usefulness.

The elders' center is similar to a tool and center to link individual elder together, opening social floor for them to have position and expression of their selfness necessary for the successful aging had quality life. It brings sense of pride, and life value enabling to lead life in society with full competency and sense of usefulness to societies.

2. Selfness of the “aging”

Questions allowing the aging to see themselves are the assessment from real experience of the aging. It reflects from the aging dimension to systematically view deep on the thinking process. Viewing oneself of the aging being the aging happens of telling oneself and show how one sees oneself positively and negatively to understand situation, when one physiologically changes into the aging. This affects the perception image the person who is ever strong, workable, and earning to be conscious in the physical situation with lower efficiency causing changes of private and social daily life. However, many elders reflect similar feeling that they accept aging criteria announced at 60 year as and elder. But some admit they have to retire and to be laid off from every work they do because of physical deterioration. The aging admit when common people see or the acquainted see and call the aging by physical condition

but it does not mean that they cannot do anything. In fact, even over 60 years but sensing ability to fulfill duties as normal even physical changes but he mind, senses and self-viewing sees that life can go on like those who are not yet 60 years.

Such perception is the insight for changes of self- image or those found and accepted by all in society. It is found that most elders accept that these images are normal for the body when growing older. So sensing that there is no problem happens except elders accept that it contains many factors deteriorating body, physiological changes, and leaving routine. All relatively reason that ability to work is the indicator of aging able to work even not the hard one as before but by possible energy. Though the body cannot tolerate heavy work by age and unavoidable life cycle but the mind is still strong and can live happily. Elders accept that they are old but will not reduce their social roles believing that even having the social criteria fixed at 60 years but not always true. But some elder s are more than 60 years still working like people of other age group and are able to take responsibility of their families because ages cannot impede working. Healthy persons can then work like any youth.

Further, what gains from conversing with elders about their way of thinking through image social perceive about “aging” raising issues elders can reflect thoughts, belief, and perception as population encountering direct situation. Data gained help see perspectives and facts of feeling among elders reacting against social and people around them. By their ideas they see by definition fixed by society that an elder is the aged accumulating experiences longer than other ages. These experiences are useful to the new generations because of their long experience of the world; they must have knowledge higher experience than the new generation and that knowledge are applicable to train new generations.

However, most elders accept and confine that society view elders’ image that they are benefactors of societies. The new generation respect and prioritize them. But some elders see that perspective of people surrounding especially the young generation unlikely respect the elders, dislike them and it might be values are declining of affection and bond because of the growth in economy, politics, migration, modernization influence, and speedy urbanization. Family members start to work outside. Social begins to prefer popularity and values of individualism rather than the family. Many activities in family are replaced by modern equipment. Rejection of elders among new generations is increasing. Activities of the community development discard elders unlike in the past family intimacy is decreasing turning young generation perceive elders cannot do anything, boring, and irritating. In addition, new generations have to encounter countless problems and leave no time to take interest for the elders and even view them as social burden and try to push this burden into the responsibility of the Welfare Home for the Aged.

Viewpoints that elders reflect on themselves and images perceived by society. It shows the way of thinking about elders. Even some elders negatively reflect about the negative image of elders from people around but most elders positively view and believe that aging does not limit their living. They are still capable to do things like other age groups and their image by society most elders see society still respect them, to be person of knowledge, capacity, think tank and especially surplus experience applicable to societies.

So, questions raised for elders to reflect themselves by their past experiences then reflect the elders' dimension deep into the thinking process. The image perception expresses thoughts affecting action to achieve target and to express their authenticity. Image is the hidden force leading to thoughts, prediction, and behavior. The elders' images come from their relation with others. To know "who are we", elders learn from themselves over the individual and the social environment where elders are living through socialization transferring values, customs and traditions, belief and others bearing understanding and perceiving position in the social structure as a member and others predictions in the position the elders rule. It leads to forming, existing and changing the elders' images in societies. Self-reflection of the elders as aging comes from self-information and shows oneself either positively or negatively in orders to understand situation. Sensing oneself being an elder by physical changes affecting images of strength, workability earning to awareness of decreasing effectiveness of the body and has to change daily living style of privacy and in social. Elders accept that when people in general see them or whom they know look and call them as elder by physical condition; they accept being elders under the social criteria of fixing that above 60 years is announce as elder and have to be retired, laid off from duty previously did because of deteriorating body. But what is unavoidable is efforts to adapt and free time are increasing because of no routine tasks of the past. Status shift and elder roles rising is from examination of biological aging, which view the physiological changes decrease effectiveness of functions of organs, sensory process, perception, mental duty like memory, learning, intellectual, ability of adaptation. The social aging shifts the individual roles and relation of the social structure. The elders are esteemed, honored counselor, instructor and trainer of skills to sibling. By the elders/idea they are higher age with long assimilated experiences more than other age span. These experiences are useful to the younger generation. Long life experiences should be equipped with knowledge, more sophisticated experience than the new generation and applicable to instruct siblings. At the meantime, aging by social definition is the respect and esteem social pays to elders. It is gained from their usefulness contributed at present. Leaving home to work is normal in society leaving raising sibling and order at home come under the duty of the elders - opportunity to instruct, advise, counsel and role

model to sibling. Elders can help the family by their ability. Elders will be refuge for sibling as shade to secure their happiness and spiritual refuge providing warmness, cool and shady, good role model and respectful to sibling. Reflecting self-image of the aging is from social interaction counted as symbolic process run by the elders through socialization. It is the transition process of values, customs and tradition, beliefs and others from social groups (Apinya Fuemgfusakul, 2003: 27-28)¹⁷. When elders know their own changes either naturally or socially, it leads to learning process and understanding all the time under the cultural environment influencing perception and formation. Meaning, rationally, the Thai societies own cultures and customs communicating respect of the elders who has high status, being refuge and shade to the family and the key players in the role of handling the family properties. They have key roles to raise sibling, counselor, instructors, transferring customs and tradition, arts and culture and sciences of living to sibling and people in community. Elders stay with sibling in the extended family rising the warmness and relationship. Youth respect and obey them and similarly elders are attended by the family members. Socially, elders organize socialization regularly through festivals, ceremonies arranged in the communities. There will be home-visit, if some one got sick. There are often barter of products. Such living makes elders stay with good relationship to each other. Most elders accept and confine that society view elders' image that they are benefactors of societies. The new generation respect and prioritize them. But some elders see that perspective of people surrounding especially the young generation unlikely respect the elders, dislike them and it might be young generation perceive elders cannot do anything, boring, and irritating. In addition, new generations have to encounter countless problems and leave no time to take interest for the elders and even view them as social burden and try to push this burden into the responsibility of the Welfare Home for the Aged. By reasons, sibling or the younger as benefactors have no time to attend elders because they have to leave home for working. Elders are subject to self-dependency more. However, when the government has set policy and measures related to elders' roles as supporters of societies and they should be encouraged to participate in social activities by their aptitude and by each individual capacity. Especially the elders' role as the "giver." For example, they are the transfer of knowledge, experiences and expertise. Such roles surely make them proud in themselves and see their own values and accept elders' roles more both in the levels of family and societies. It also includes abandon previous belief of restricting the elders' role in only temple and raising sibling.

Such perception is the insight for changes of self-image or those found and accepted by all in society. It is found that most elders accept that these images are normal for the body when growing older. So sensing that there is no problem happens except elders accept that it

contains many factors deteriorating body, physiological changes, and leaving routine. All relatively reason that ability to work is the indicator of aging able to work even not the hard one as before but by possible energy. Though the body cannot tolerate heavy work by age and unavoidable life cycle but the mind is still strong and can live happily. Elders accept that they are old but will not reduce their social roles believing that even having the social criteria fixed at 60 years but not always true. But some elders are more than 60 years still working like people of other age group and are able to take responsibility of their families because ages cannot impede working. Healthy persons can then work like any youth. Rationally, based on the Continuity Theory noted about continuity of personality or the development theory of the aged, which are the process of life course resulted from integration of the environmental biology and life experiences. Changes from a condition to another is common, the identical attributes of an individual adaptation made in the past would evolve endlessly. Elders thus maintain activities organized during middle age to be continued to the old age.

3. Definition and criteria of judging the successful aging based on interpretation and self-assessment

To be the successful aging needs to pass through the thinking process of each elder. There might be indicators to identify different conceptual framework of economy, education, social, and each individual status. In addition, complication and volatility of society are situations driving 2 behaviors, i.e. the internal drive, which looks at rationality in the human mind and the external drive, which is the social environment surrounding counted essential as part of the social fact and mandating behavioral pattern. A factor leading an individual seeing its own value is the opportunity an individual use its force for self care or having opportunity to support others to gain importance, belief and trust and achieve what is expected.

Similarly in the study of viewpoints of elders reflect the perspective in living under the concept of successful aging. So, understanding the perspective technique of the successful aging and self care culture of elders is the checking and explanation of the meaning under the social and environment context of each elder by fact. The way of thinking of elders were pinned with the social system and culture. The elderly member of Baan Piyamal Elder Center own their way of thinking of the successful aging is being a value person competent to respond needs of oneself and others, being a person of knowledge and ability to be useful to society. They view the successful aging from the perspective of the elders about the question related to life needs is the most aspiration of life. Elders say passing through long life experience; it is time to change roles and duty what elders should do to meet the existing competency. Needs or craving wealth and earning for oneself changed to crave for other, needs to witness success of the close one or needs to help other is

exceeded to think for oneself. Elders note their 4 life needs as follows:

3.1 Needs to witness the success of siblings-elders say they wish no more than the opportunity of witnessing their sibling have stable status, job, no suffering, good family, leading a happy life. Siblings are successful is counted the success of the elders because it proves that they have nurtured them well.

3.2 Needs of good health-elders reason that good health help them do things by themselves and burden to none either self care on daily affairs, travel, earning such as trading, gardening, handicrafts, and helping other and society such as social works and volunteering and so on.

3.3 Needs of retreat-elders reason that after spending life in working and working for others; so the rest of life is for one's needs especially rest, de-loading and detaching.

3.4 Needs to be useful to others and society-elders say a kind heart leads to give, generosity, and sharing, Elders want most about fruitfully behaving for others around; opportunity to give religious alms; opportunity to help the disadvantageous and the needy so that they will be like them, especially the helpless or the sick, those without relatives; and spending life of the rest period to be fruitful and virtuous by efforts and ability.

Additionally, the elders comment and define the "successful aging" which can be classified as personal causation as follows:

1) The successful aging-is referred to the value elder not growing older but devaluing but the elder behaves to gain value either related to the work or being useful and the interpretation is relying on other or society viewing how the elder is.

2) The successful aging-is referred to an elder doing thing by oneself and without depending on anyone, a burden to no one, being useful to other and able to help other.

3) The successful aging-is referred to an elder with experience, knowledge, ability, work experience and life experience being trust by siblings and accepted on knowledge.

4) The successful aging-is referred to an elder both intrinsically and extrinsically good: extrinsically, one who is strong, no illness, agile, independent travel, self-caring on appearance, dressing to age and intrinsically, the one who is good at heart, helping others, generous, sharing, behaving usefully to others around.

5) The successful aging- is referred to the one of good behavior, respected by others especially by siblings, non drinker, non-gambler, non-rover, non misbehaving to create problem, rational and reliable

6) The successful aging- is referred to the one who abide in moral practices, leader of thoughts, and role model for society, strictly adhere to morals, kind and generous to people around.

7) The successful aging- is referred to the one being respected, senior, and symbolic to siblings, accepted and recognized by society with reasons that all elders journey across the world, experiences, producer to society before. The Thai society reveres seniority so they are honored, principal of home and community, dignitary by their behaving, goodness banking, never fail to good things worth duties and roles such as training siblings to be good, providing good counseling for others.

8) The successful aging- is referred to the one who sacrifice and devote oneself for common, working for community or society to do good deeds and usefulness for common and counted being accepted by society and reliable.

9) The successful aging-is referred to the one who is firm in living and proud achievement is working with endurance enabling to raise children grow and common people admire of diligence even being aging, earning income adequate for living and supports for family, siblings and the suffering.

By way of thinking viewing self-image as a successful aging, it is said that the self-image of a successful aging being member of Baan Piyamal Elder Center have to be healthy, self-dependency, burden to none, worthwhile behaving, respected, knowledge-edged, able with work and life experience, sacrificing for community or society in common, fruitful behaving, instructing siblings to be good, able to give good and proper advice, generous and sharing and able to help others.

When elders conduct self-assessment whether they are the successful aging or not, most say they are successful. By reasons, they are proud to lead their lives freely, self-dependency but also able to help others.

From the way of thinking of members from Baan Piyamal Elder Center shaped by experiences, attitudes, ideas, beliefs, values and cultural contexts conveying into narration and elaborate the viewpoints in self-reflection; it is concluded with criteria of the successful aging as follows: 1) doing things useful to society in common and helping others; 2) self-dependency and burden to none; 3) siblings pay respect and obey, trust and accept the ability and the goodness; 4) healthy and free from illness; 5) morally behaving, adhere to the religious principles and morality and 6) stable life, and sustainable life. Reaching all these is counted being the successful aging.

For the successful aging by views of people surrounding and by perspective of elders, they similarly say others observe as the elders say. They reason that leading life style require watching others how do they watch the elder and one must behave by that. For example, societies believe elders must lead life being respected by others. So we must lead our life

being respected and revered. To be a successful aging, the elders say, it must be important to oneself, to the family and the society because being able to do thing by oneself, ability, active and helping others is counted to be the useful elders having value and proves to be the truly successful aging.

Further, elders say other seeing whether the aging is successful or not depending on self- handling to be well-equipped in all aspects. When the elders can prove that they are happy in their families, self-dependency, strong, firm mind, well associating, and being useful evidently to all. People around will judge the person is the successful aging.

A study of the elders' viewpoints above is counted reflecting viewpoint of living under the concept of the successful aging. To understand perspective thinking on the successful aging and the culture of self care among the elders is the checking and explanation of defining the meaning under the social and environmental context of each elder by fact. Viewing the western community it defines the successful aging by prioritizing the from of subjectivation of the elder to exist potential and efficiency of the individual further leading to ability of producer. With members of Baan Piyamal Elder Center, they view the successful aging that those lengthily journeyed along the life experience, it is the time to change role and duty they should do to meet their competency. Their want and desire to be rich and to have for themselves must change to be for others. The needs to see the achievement of the intimate or to help other must exceed the needs for oneself. Examining the Disengagement Theory saying that, it is common and unavoidable that the elders must reduce their activities and the social roles upon entering aging. They will be gradually separated from major roles to keep the social role for common. Elders attempt to avoid stress by withdrawal caused by sensing their ability is reducing. It is found that it is common and unavoidable that the elders would reduce their activities and their social roles because it is to withdraw their status and role to youth or those better doing duty. But it does not mean that elders will stop all activities. They still continue their activities but adapt to meet their competency because "activity" is the core of life and necessary for elders. By reasons, with the social well-being of the elders is depended on their existing agility. The self-conception and the worldview even how much they are correct they are from association and participation in the social activity.

In addition, the Activity theory confirms that elders can keep the social activities will have high life satisfaction, and positive self-image. To gain life happiness, elders should moderately play social role or activity such as hobby or being membership to an activity group, association or center (Eliopoulos, 1979: 23; Yurick, *et al.*, 1987: 76-78). Elders see that to be thus so, elders must be ready with mind and body, emotion and social. To be strong because when

elders are healthy, free from illness, self care and self-help without other-dependency, burden to none, staying with siblings or family, having opportunity to witness sibling's success, being refuge, and respected by siblings especially, having opportunity to doing useful things for oneself, family and others. This makes elders perceive the rest phase of life is important and meaningful, the time to sense self-value and generate pride to be elders able to use competency to achieve what is useful thing.

4. Way of life

Beside defining the successful aging directly by the elders, the way of thinking links to the self-way of life, self care and life style of elders will link and lead to main goal, which is the perfect life base on the way of thinking of the elders. This will be the checking and defining of the self-successful aging. Way of life is the specific pattern of daily activity identifying an individual dissimilar and non repetitive to none. At the meantime, way of life turns them to seek the common and the social. People select ways of life referendum to other. The peripheral way of life will be line up by sharing some nature of the common. Members of the peripheral will explain the image through model what they share. The structural influence over the way of life of elders counted from the starting point of the transit to the last point is aging. Experiences of elders are rich, diversified, and varied by social process each one has encountered. If viewing the pattern of life spending, it is found that the way of life the elders make and design facilitates them with details and flexible in selection to meet the social structural context and better rationalized matter. Also, it turns the daily life of the elders more stabilized and they use it as guide to step into the aging with happiness, with quality life and to be the successful aging under the eyes of the elders.

Seeking definition of the successful aging through the way of life and self care; for the elders spending their daily life is common that they can do it by themselves. They can look after themselves on daily routine affairs with liberty without any dependency. Daily life of the members of Baan Piyamal Elder Center begins from early morning of 05.00-05.30 hours because they go to bed rather early or around 21.00 hours and they rise early to spend time on light exercise before finish their personal affairs. After that the female elder cook rice for the family beginning from going market, cooking, washing plates and devices followed by cleaning the house, and washing clothes while the male elders clean the compound, collect leaves, trim branches, repair household appliances, which are the work of the male and they are counted as minor exercises and the recreation activities at the same time.

In addition, elders have free time activity by other form such as they group themselves about⁹ to start a music band of Sa Lor Sor Sueng (the northern string musical instruments-a

local concert band) to stage the show during festival or wherever being hired specially during Saturdays and Sundays on “walking street.” the elders make appointment an carry dress and musical instruments for the show. The female elders will sing and dance while the male elder will play music. Each night elders collect more than 200 baht a day but some nights they collect nothing if it rains. The money collected will be equally divided while another share is donated to the Home for the Aged of Baan Thammapakorn, the Home for the Homeless of San Mahaphol, funding for the activities at Baan Piyamal Elder Center, educational sponsoring to children at Wat Tha Satoi School at Baan Piyamal Elder Center, educational sponsoring to children at Wat Tha Satoi School. Elders say it is a happiness to help others especially those are disadvantageous and claim nothing for return. Give of wants to give till they cannot afford to. This brings them pride and sense that they have been useful to their family and society.

With daily living, elders say if leading a daily life one must be strong and healthy, free from illness. All elders say step into aging even with changes especially the body but gradually. So it affects no life leading but needs regular healthcare because a healthy ones can do things what they wish to. Some illness is common because the physical deterioration is the natural process. Growing older, the body erodes like machine endures works must commonly meet depreciation. So it is uncontrollable. In association of weak immune and faster infected but possible to recover into the quality aging process or aging with burden to none. Elders being free from illness and attentive to healthcare will be able to do things by themselves and needed to be always conscious that the physical deterioration comes with growing older and if it is not sustained by simple techniques like careful of eating, taking adequate exercises, adequate rest, and ever cheerful emotion and mind; we weaken our health and become burden to others. So admitting aging and well prepared healthiness and ever old be it but find no illness, one would be strong elder and there will be happiness at the end of life.

Key for elders to retain healthiness is exercising and eating. Exercising is not necessarily attended when entering aging, all ages and genders should prepare to meet all opportunity. Those taking action first; gains advantages. It is like filling the jar with water, if we fill it often, it will be full and never runs short. To habitualize it and make it routine never fail since young, adulthood and aging, it brings mega advantages to prevent illness and it is the medication without medicine. The members of Baan Piyamal Elder Center strongly prioritize exercising. All will take exercise each day and regularly. If fail they have to compensate by other activities to make movements and using forces. Similarly, eating is counted critical to health; know how to eat and not so much-trying to avoid meat, fat, carbohydrate but take more greens, fruits and water adequately.

Apart from healthcare, another thing elders prioritize is mental and emotional conditions. Elders say only healthiness is insufficient for daily living. It needs mental health too: peace of mind, and always cheerful emotion. By reason, mind associations with body and elders may lead a happy life, fresh, strong, free from illness, fully fruitful to family and self and society requires knowing how to properly live with environment, know how to feed the body and to feed the mind healthily as well as knowing how to set emotion firm applying the religious principles with balance adhering that human will have long life and happy is really by one own self. It depends on how one handle it and must be cautious not to be self-forgetfulness, self-deception, and laissez fait. It needs regularly train body and mind. To train the body requires regular movement in every opportunity while mental training requires firmness, meditation, radiating kindness, leading life of alms, adhering to religious moral principles, optimism, sense of humor, self-seclusion, and avoiding or reducing lust. All these best help to control emotion and consciousness all the time. A tool to adhere for leading a happy life is religion targeting believers and devotees to follow, having a spiritual refuge when suffering or facing problems and giving solution or eradication of suffering. When there is no suffering there is spiritual force of freedom, vigor, and stability to lead the life with goal adhering doing good things and never trouble oneself and others but behaving oneself useful to self and to others, having consciousness upon speaking, doing, and thinking. If it is goodness, efforts must be attempted to yield and sustaining it by doing goodness always, adhering to the purifying the mind by abiding with the precepts, fostering kindness, praying, recollection and meditation.

Elders say when aging it is the age free from task to take responsibility to support the family because of retirement or having sibling to substitute the task. Some elders still work to earn living because they do not want to be burden for their sibling. While able to earn their living and responsible tasks are reducing than before; elders have more time to do thing what they want more. Besides they spend most time in working their occupation, house works and free time activity, another one, which most of them preoccupy before dead bed for moral support and attachment is to fulfill religious rites by heir belief and devotion. This is their hope of better returns in after life and they feel to do more to substitute what they less practice since they were young because most times have been spent for earning and no time for religious rites in association with ignorant to study in deep, they do not see its importance. Critically, if they do not hurry now, it will be late because, alms, doing good and religious practices can do only during alive. The dead cannot but just wait for the return of what they had done when being alive only. This makes the followers have their refuge during alive and when they die there is guideline for hope to solve problem and find solution to reduce it. Such practices are to follow

the social norm of “the old loves temples.” In order to accumulate merits for better in the after life or to go to heaven based on Buddhist belief of “karma”. Elders stay not long and if they do not make merit or do good now either following the Dharma principles, following the precepts, donation, energy, belief, and devotion. Rigid to follow the religious rites of the elders is counted to be the role model for siblings and leading to happiness in society. It is also emphasized endeavor to shape good life as long as one is alive one must proceed. and never cede hope. It cause human not to die understanding that the future will bring some better thing.

In addition, elders believe that leading the simplest life is the best life and the simplest way is to follow morals and it helps those stepping in to aging equipped with quality of life. All quality lives adhere to religion. All religions teach people to do good, i.e. teaching all to be quality and it links to the success of life and its perfection, which will be associated and stepping into the quality living of mind, body, work and family.

Self care by way of life is an intellectual process the elders use in examining and deciding to take for one's good health. By reasons, self care contains steps of examination, decision, action and evaluation. The elders prioritize self care during being in good health to promote health and to prevent illness in lights of healthiness to enable working by themselves. Elders see that doing things themselves with freedom is critically important and necessary even much old but able to lead one's life without being burden to family and others. If ill health, it become the critical factor turning elders unable to normally help oneself but trouble others. It becomes the state of being cared and dependency forever. So, elders prioritize healthcare first and followed by mental care, which is not less than healthcare. If elders have strong spirit, knowing how to let go, but with spiritual attachment, having the balance of give and take, and think to do with goal would easily be achieved. Additionally, elders prioritize grouping of elders following the healthcare so that they can associate with same age span to seek solution for health. Some have techniques how to provide good healthcare and they can share as well as opportunity to convey the past events and the success of siblings. This brings happiness for elders to witness and nurture growth and success of their beloved siblings.

By view of elders and defining; the successful aging is the elder with value, worthwhile behaving either in working or being useful and able to do things by oneself, self-dependency, burden to none, behaving useful to other, able to help other, equipped with experience, knowledge, and ability. Having work and life experiences turn siblings trust and acceptance in their knowledge and ability. The successful aging must be moral, a leader of thought, good role model for social, strictly adhere to morality, being kind and generous to people around, being respected and esteemed,

accepted and recognized by siblings and social, sacrificing and devoting for common. Working for community or for society is a good deed and useful for common and being firm in life course. Success the aging is proud of is working with endurance and able to raise children to growth and common people admire the person who is diligent and endeavoring even aged to earn living sufficiently for living and supporting family, sibling or the suffering. It is seen that the successful aging is referred to being able to retain maturity, to integrate the adulthood personality of oneself when enters aging. The social roles and activities will be continued and retained as worthwhile sensation, dignity and satisfaction. Further, the successful aging will prepare one's standards of the desirable aging rather than adapting the common social norms by emphasizing positive value with the aging that they are the worthwhile aging, well living in society corresponded with their satisfaction and aspiration. They had good health of mind and body, self-dependable, being conscious of quality life, being capable on social and economic issues and use that capacity creatively for themselves, families, other individuals and social by preparing to enter aging with being well prepared in all aspects. They are planning ahead how to spend time, healthcare since youth for good health in aging, preparing the mind ready for change physically and socially, having belief and devotion as attachment tool for life style; accepting conditions imperative with self-pride; having fund left from adulthood, which indicates the stability of life course; having friends and interaction with others, which are worth when enter aging. They help create spiritual supports living, having life goal, and endless learning about things and help the aging well adapt by situation able make use of situations leading to life quality and creativity.

5. Conditions supporting and impeding to be the successful aging by elders' views

The way of thinking and viewing self-image about the successful aging from defining and from self care process and can identify that being the successful aging they strongly prioritize freedom of self-dependency and application of the existing competency for the usefulness of living. The life pattern is the behavior the elders conduct to be part of their daily life influencing to the changes of their health and individual success. However, the way of thinking, defining, self care process, and practices leading to be the successful aging contain conditions of supporting and impeding to be the successful aging, which affect thinking techniques and conduct of elders. By discussions with elders, the, it is found that critical conditions affecting the successful aging are:

5.1 Physical and mental health: Elders say to be aging begins from the physiological deterioration naturally. So, if elders are healthy physically and mentally by age without admission on sickbed or infirmity, healthy mind, good spiritual support, siblings never create problems, no anxieties, no stress, detachment, truth accepted, training to accept situations, spiritual attachment especially background of religion, belief in goodness and badness. Consequences of deeds affect

elders' conducts and all these are counted critical factors enabling elders help themselves without being burden to their families. If elders are ill health, they cannot normally help themselves, it would suffer others subject to ever being taken care and other-dependency.

5.2 Security in life course: Elders see that being diligent, enduing, perseverance and suffers all works, saving, economizing, and self-sufficient stay all the time, help firmly step into the aging and moderately live. In addition, elders believe that if they are firm in life with part of income for self care and help other, they will help to fully work things out as want. If they are not firm on the matters, it is impossible to help themselves and others. If elders prepared well on "fund" to lay firm life foundation, it will smoothen the last period of life because to rely on siblings alone it is not correct anymore. Self-reliance on fund allows elders to optimize their own lives.

5.3 Social acceptance: Being accepted by society is part from the cultural feature. The northern culture respects and recognizes seniority allowing surrounding people and society have positive attitude toward the elders. They deserve esteem and their significance able to apply aging for the benefit of society. Part of acceptance is their behavior; they deserve respect through their conducts of their age and accepted by surrounding people. This makes elders worthwhile and dignity. If surround people have negative attitude about them, blocking opportunity and expression of competency, they would be deteriorated without doing any benefits for society.

5.4 Social sphere: Having social sphere for elders is another condition leading to the successful aging because having friends, society and grouping lead to group dynamism. Creating activity in the group allow elders access their own self while creating external activity will draw competency to public in order to build values and benefit for society. Having the social sphere for elders allows them to be accepted by society more.

Being more or less the successful aging, there are conditions affecting their readiness to be the successful aging. The internal factors are the elders who must be ready with physical and mental health. Elders face the deteriorating process naturally. So, if they are healthy in mind and body by their age, spiritual supports no stress, detachment, and spiritual attachment, they are vital factors allowing them self-dependency and not burden to their families. If not, they will trouble others ever subject to care and to other-dependency. They must reach firm life style. They believe that if they are firm and part of income for self care and help others, they can fulfill things they want other wise they cannot help themselves and others. If elders prepared well on "fund" to lay firm life foundation, it will smoothen the last period of life because to rely on siblings alone it is not correct anymore. Self-reliance on fund allows elders to optimize their own lives.

The external factors are building the social area, social acceptance, positive attitude over elders, accepting as respectful, seeing significance, and able to use their competency for the

benefit of society. These lead elders to be worthwhile and dignity. If surround people have negative attitude about them, blocking opportunity and expression of competency, they would be deteriorated without doing any benefits for society. At the meantime, society had to be ready especially in the family and community. By cultural concept believing in the competency of the family structure of close intimacy to be the unit supporting and treating elders like members of society. At level of policy and macro measures, there must be readiness and providing welfare to facilitate and building immune to protect society for the entire family, community and the elders to participate developing their competency. It is counted critical factor allowing the Thai societies step into the active aging and further the successful aging.

CONCLUSIONS

It is believed that the way of thinking of elderly indicate critical issues about the successful aging. By perception, culture and belief beginning the awareness and defining oneself counted as preparation at the individual level, studying the way of thinking, perception of “aging” image, defining the successful aging and self-evaluation of the elders focusing on preparing and self-dependent of all aspects including the examination of conditions leading to the successful aging; it would enlarge picture leading to broadening experiences to other parts of societies. Findings would be as guide for elders to be aware and ready to have the aging image within the modern society with competency and quality of life.

Aging members of Baan Piyamal Elder Center attempt to retain activities of the past and any new “activities” of interested are all advantageous to them to expose their own competency stepping to life success with quality. This is to help elders feel good to themselves being the “receiver” and the “giver” with balance by background of past experiences and enabling to adapt into the social changes and keeping pace with the surrounding able to decide things with efficiency by their own competency.

Grouping is counted important factor and strongly playing roles in the life course of the elders. There are opportunities to help each other and contributing usefulness to community. Grouping of elders to organize activities in Baan Piyamal Elder Center is to create self-confidence, to perceive self-capacity whether still they handle things. Also, it will remind them that they own values, having opportunity to associate and exchange opinions, transferring stories for each other. Additionally, strong grouping create bond, affection and trust awaking self-capacity and able to run activities by themselves. This reminds them they have values rather than isolation in society. They have opportunity to associate, to exchange opinion, and to transfer stories to each other tuning

them more vigor and more competent. Being members of Baan Piyamal Elder Center, they learn through self interrelation and group-interaction, which influence their perception and shaping themselves to defining the self of the aging with activities as source drawing the tie of grouping. There are conversations for exchanging experiences of health, daily living, and problems of economy, environment, politics, entertainment and learning from trial and error together. These entail the multiple learning drawing their knowledge and ability being applied regularly. So their skills are multiple and more applicable. Good things found from elders are increasing competency in association with pride and freedom. They are happy with mind and body because there are regular flows and movements of activities as well as retaining physical, mental and social activities, which are counted necessary for the successful aging to lead their life and their quality life. It springs senses of pride in oneself, sensing life value and enables them to lead their lived in society with full competency and reminding them that they are still useful to society.

Not only grouping important to organize activities together but also the way of thinking of elders allowing them to see values of living for the benefit of themselves and other, lifestyle is also an important thing drawn from their thinking techniques adhering self-dependency as key in association with the awareness and application of healthcare covering the mind, body, social and spirit leading to the successful aging.

Defining the successful aging from their viewpoint through life experiences for longtime, elders have to readjust their roles that they should do thing worth their existing competency, their needs or wants or desires for themselves into the needs for others, needs to see success of the close one or to help other rather than adjusting for themselves. Being the successful aging requires self care process to be well-equipped in every aspect, equipped with physical and mental healthiness, self-dependency, awareness of quality life, well-prepared for changes either physically or socially, having belief and devotion as attachment tool to lead the life, well-rounded in social and economy, having experiences, knowledge, ability, being the leader of thought, strictly adhere to morality, having kindness and generosity to people around, working for community or society to be virtue and benefit for common leading to quality life during the last period of life.

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