



# Socio-economic status of youth non-participation in Yala province: Population-based study using Thailand 2000 census data

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of demographic and socio-economic factors on youth non-participation in Yala province using data from the 2000 Population and Housing Census of Thailand. The study sample comprised 23,642 youths aged 15–17 years. The binary outcome was youth non-participation (yes/no). The determinants were demographic and socio-economic factors. The demographic factors included gender, religion (Muslim or non-Muslim), and region (subdistrict or aggregated subdistrict) of residence. The proportion of non-participation and determinants was modeled using logistic regression. Youths from families with 5–10 and 11–15 members were more likely to be non-participants. Higher levels of education for the head of household resulted in lower rates of non-participation. Having a family head who worked as a state enterprise employee had a lower rate of non-participation whereas having a family head who worked as a private sector employee had a higher rate than the reference. Muslim males had a high non-participation rate. There was a high non-participation rate in the subdistricts of Tha Sap and Na Tham (5), Betong (7), Bannang Sata and Bacho (10), Taling Chan (12), Krong Pinang and Purong (13), Mae Wat (15), Yaha (16), and Kabang and Bala (19).

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## Introduction

Youth non-participation is a major social problem found in both developed and developing countries. Non-participation is defined as youths either at school or at work. This definition has been used in previous studies (Suwanro & Tongkumchum, 2010, 2011; Tongkumchum, Suwanro, & Tongrong, 2013).

The trend of student drop-out is decreasing in developed countries (Chapman, Laird, & KewalRamani, 2010) but is increasing in developing countries (Hug & Rahman, 2008; Integrated Regional Information Networks, 2007). The drop-out rates among government high schools in Thailand were reported as 2.1–2.3 percent for 2005–2008 (Office of the Basic Education Commission, 2009).

The situation of children being uneducated results in further associated social problems including crime, illicit drugs, and other social problems (Buonanno & Montolio, 2008; United Nations, 2000). Even though the youth unemployment rate in Thailand is less than the global average and is not as severe as in some other countries, the rate is far greater than that of adult unemployment

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(Thongchumnum & Choonpradub, 2008; Thongchumnum, Suwanro, & Choonpradub, 2008).

Non-participation rates among 15–17-year olds in five southernmost provinces using 2000 Population and Housing Census data have been analyzed (Suwanro & Tongkumchum, 2010, 2011; Tongkumchum et al., 2013). The researchers used a statistical model of the non-participation rate for measuring social inequality and they reported that social inequality among demographic groups existed in some regions.

Since the start of the unrest in the three southernmost provinces comprising Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, and some areas in Songkhla in 2004, it can be observed that terrorism incidence has varied with respect to place and time (Marohabout, Choonpradub, & Kuning, 2009). This suggests that studies on social indicators are needed.

Many children and teenagers have stopped attending school for a variety of reasons including psychosocial variables, school factors, demographic, and family factors (Clark, Borg, Calleja, Chircop, & Portelli, 2005). However, very few studies have focused on their socio-economic status because of different views of its meaning and the difficulties associated with measurement. Several studies, including Cowell (2008), have used incomes for measuring inequality within a society, usually justified by findings that dependent children share the socio-economic conditions and well-being of their parents (Avramov, 2002; Buonananno & Montolio, 2008; Figen, 2007). Disadvantage is often generational and Gesemann (2007) concluded that education is the key to integration. Phillimore and Goodson (2008) used education and employment as indicators of integration within a society. Recommendations suggested the collection of multiple indicators.

This study aimed to investigate the effects of demographic and socio-economic factors on youth non-participation in Yala province. The socio-economic situation of youth non-participation before the unrest may create a guideline for government authorities. A focus on participation by young people in education and employment can be used as a guideline for future levels of integration and also probable disparity and tensions in the community.

## Materials and Methods

This paper presents an analysis of a population-based study using data from the 2000 Population and Housing Census of Thailand. Persons who did not state their age, and persons aged less than 15 years or greater than 17 years were omitted, giving a total study sample of 23,642.

The binary outcome was youth non-participation. The adverse outcome was defined as giving the answer “no” to both the questions of “attending school” and “employment status” on the form for the 2000 Population and Housing Census of Thailand as explained by Tongkumchum et al. (2013) and summarized in Table 1. The participants who were in groups E, F, H, and I were defined as non-participants.

The determinants were demographic and socio-economic factors. The demographic factors consisted of gender, religion (Muslim or non-Muslim), and region

**Table 1**

Definition of outcomes

Attending school	Employment status		
	Yes	No	Unknown, not stated or not specified
Yes	A	B	C
No	D	E	F
Unknown, not stated or not specified	G	H	I

(subdistrict or aggregated subdistrict) of residence. Some subdistricts had low populations for either Muslim or non-Muslim residents. To ensure that the statistical analysis was not compromised by such small sample sizes, adjoining subdistricts were combined where necessary to form larger regions, each with a minimum total population of approximately 1,600 Muslim and non-Muslim residents. This reduced the number of residential locations from 58 subdistricts to 19 statistical regions. Table 2 shows the labels used for each statistical region.

The socio-economic factors comprised number of family members and information on the head of the family including literacy, education, and employment status.

In our preliminary data analysis, we compared the prevalence of non-participation within our 19 statistical regions of Yala province by plotting proportions separately for each combination of gender and religion using an area plot. A  $\chi^2$  test was used to investigate the association between outcome and each determinant.

The prevalence of an adverse outcome was modeled using logistic regression, which provides a method for modeling the association between a binary outcome and multiple determinants (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 2000; Kleinbaum & Klein, 2002; Venables & Ripley, 2002). For categorical determinants, the model takes the form shown in Eq. (1):

$$\ln\left(\frac{p_{ijklmn}}{1 - p_{ijklmn}}\right) = \mu + \alpha_i + \beta_j + \delta_k + \gamma_l + \nu_m + \zeta_n \quad (1)$$

where  $p_{ijklmn}$  denotes the probability of an adverse outcome in a combination of determinant factor groups. The terms  $\alpha_i$ ,  $\beta_j$ ,  $\delta_k$ ,  $\gamma_l$ ,  $\nu_m$ , and  $\zeta_n$  thus represent effects of demographic and socio-economic factors.

## Results

Overall the non-participation rate was 19.6 percent. Figure 1 shows an area plot of the non-participation rate in the 19 regions, ordered by the sum of the non-participation percentages for the four demographic groups. The area plot compares percentages by religion and indicates that both Muslim males and females had higher non-participation than non-Muslims. Only in KrongPinang+Purong+ (13) did non-Muslims have a combined non-participation rate for males and females exceeding 20.0 percent, whereas there were 11 regions where the combined non-participation rate for Muslims exceeded 20.0 percent.

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