

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the child rearing practices of Thai middle class mothers in the Bangkok-Thonburi area.

A sample of 70 Thai middle class mothers in Bangkok-Thonburi were selected for interviewing. These subjects were the mothers of Mathayom Suksa 1, 2, and 3 (grades 8, 9, and 10) boys and girls in a Demonstration School in Bangkok.

The interview schedule was divided into 8 sections:

- the size and family background
- feeding
- toilet training
- achievement, independence and responsibility training
- attention and care
- punishment
- educational aspirations for their child
- relationship between father and child

The results of the interviews by each of the above sections were as follows:

FAMILY SIZE AND BACKGROUND

Most of the households were fairly large, the average size being 9.9 persons. The average number of children was 4.6. Almost all the families were ethnic Thai and Buddhist. The median income of the families

was 6,400.5 Baht/month. Most fathers had finished their education up to the university level and most mothers had finished up to the pre-university or professional college level. Generally, the fathers were government officials and the mothers were mostly housewives.

FEEDING

Most mothers breast fed their child first and bottle fed their child later; some of them gave the child both at the same time. Most mothers were not strict about the time of feeding. The average length of time for breast feeding was 8.94 months.

TOILET TRAINING

The mean for starting bladder training was at the mean age of 9.33 months old and the training was completed at about 2.89 years old. The mothers started bowel training their children at a mean age of 9.2 months and completed bowel training at a mean age of 3.8 years. In comparison with American middle class mothers, Thai mothers took a longer time to bowel train their children than did U.S. mothers.

ACHIEVEMENT TRAINING, INDEPENDENCE TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITY TRAINING

On the average, Thai middle class mothers expect their children to achieve earlier than they expect them to be independent. Thai mothers tend to desire their children to achieve at about the same time as American or Brazilian mothers, but they want their children to be independent at a much later age. Most mothers want their children to be able to feed and wash themselves at an early age but expect their children to look after younger siblings at a much later age.

ATTENTION AND CHILD CARE

Most mothers had someone to help them in bringing up the children, such as a nursemaid or grandmother. These people helped in comforting, bathing, dressing, feeding and punishing the child. Most mothers said they always paid attention to their child until the child was 4 years old, but at about the age of four, six, and eight years they showed a decreasing amount of attention to their child. The reason that the mothers gave for giving their child less and less attention was that the child was either going to school or getting older.

PUNISHMENT

Thai middle class mothers use serious psychological and physical punishment mainly for actions against the parents, such as obstinancy, disobedience, telling a lie, and stealing. For actions such as crying with no reason, making things dirty, etc. the mothers use mild psychological punishment. Mothers rarely use deprivation as a form of punishment and use beating and scolding quite often. The threat most often used is "rejection" of the child. Both mother and father almost always demand immediate obedience from their children.

EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Most mothers said that parents should have a great deal of influence in their children's choice of career and education, and most of the mothers would like their sons to be doctors and their daughters to be teachers. Almost all the mothers expected both boys and girls to have a university education.



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FATHER AND CHILD

Most mothers said that fathers should participate in bringing up their children and should pay attention to education, discipline, and give permission for the child to do things. In general, the father is indulgent of the child's desires and does not often punish the child, except regarding very important things.

It was stated that Thai middle class mothers seem to be more indulgent than mothers in the United States or Brazil in such areas as breast feeding, bowel training, punishment, and independence training. In general, it was stated that the philosophy of child rearing among Thai middle class mothers is that the child should be indulged in almost all of his desires. In doing this, the mother is helped by her own mother and a nursemaid. However, two major exceptions were noted - the child must be obedient to his parents and the child must perform well in school. It was pointed out that the difference between the age of independence and achievement training may be a good indication of the mother's feelings about the child achieving in school.

A question was raised as to the possibility that the achievement pressures on the child that start at about the time he goes to school would lead to problems because the child has never had to do things on his own before this period.