

A Case Study of the Impact of COVID-19 to Parents

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Abstract

The Ministry of Public Health of Thailand announced the coronavirus disease 2019, or "Covid-19" as a dangerous communicable disease, effective on 1 March, 2020. Bangkok Metropolitan Administration ordered the closure of 26 types of public places such as shopping malls, markets, restaurants, fitness, massage, spas, boxing stadiums, parks, entertainment venues and educational institutions at all levels from March 22, 2020. Therefore, this study of the effects on the epidemic of the Covid-19 virus which had surveyed the parents of the children developmental center, Kids Plus, in Bangkok as the respondents. The data was collected between 25-27 April, 2020 which the Covid-19 virus epidemic situation had improved with the lower number of new infected cases. Basically, the Covid-19 has decreased the respondents' household incomes while it has increased their household expenses. The 74.05% of respondents felt the most to moderate stressful from the Covid-19 situation. To reduce the risk of infection with Covid-19 virus, the Work from Home (WFH) is widely adopted. About 66.75% of respondents rated their WFH's performance at the highest to moderate effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, the parents have to take care their children at home which almost 75% of respondents felt exhausted, busy, and burdened at the highest to moderate level. The large number of parents (79.60%) are willing to wear mask, wash hands, and keep physical distance at the highest level. There were no one rated this willingness at the low to lowest level. Anyhow, the 53.65% of respondents would like the government allowing some public places (department stores, restaurants, barbers) to reopen on 3 May, 2020. But about 61.46% of respondents encouraged the schools' reopening on 1 July, 2020 as the government's announcement. Lastly, the largest number of respondents of 242, counted as 60.96% would like to stay at home, work at home and refrain from outside home activities such as shopping at malls, and eating at the restaurants for another year from now if there is no vaccine against the Covid-19 virus. Here, it can say that respondents are quite ready to adjust themselves to live with the Covid-19 virus as the new normal.

Keywords: COVID-19, Dangerous Communicable Disease, Work from Home

1. Introduction

Thailand has found the first case of the new version of the corona virus on January 13, 2020, which was a Chinese tourist. (Corona virus: What does public health tell us about the Covid-19 patients found in Thailand in 50 days?; <https://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-51701394>; 2 March, 2020) Later, on January 15, 2020, the first Thai found to be infected with corona virus who returned from China. (Go back 100 days in a timeline of the "Covid-19" situation in Thailand.; <https://www.bangkokbiznews.com/news/detail/875664>; 12 April, 2020) At that time, there was no notification from Thai government about the spread of the Covid-19 virus, until the Ministry of

Public Health of Thailand announced the coronavirus disease 2019, or "Covid-19" as a dangerous communicable disease, effective on 1 March, 2020 (Corona virus: The Royal Gazette has announced that the disease "Covid-19" is a "dangerous communicable disease" effective tomorrow.; <https://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-51686166>; 29 February, 2020) From the first case of Covid-19 infected in Thailand until March 2, 2020, the total of 43 people have been infected. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially announced that the world has now spread to the Covid-19, which has spread to many countries, at least 109 countries in different regions around the world. Currently, there are more than 121,564 coronavirus cases worldwide. The virus has killed at least 4,373 people across the globe, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. (The World Health Organization announces "Covid-19" entering a global pandemic.; <https://www.hfocus.org/content/2020/03/18661>; 12 March, 2020)

On the 21st of March 2020, Thailand has a dramatic increase in the number of people infected with the Covid-19 virus. The 89 new cases of laboratory-confirmed Covid-19 were announced by the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand (MOPH), bringing the total number of cases in Thailand to 411. (Public health announces that 89 more patients have been reported in the Covid-19 cumulative number of 411 cases.; <https://www.bangkokbiznews.com/news/detail/871901>; 21 March 2020) The Thai Government's needs to issue measures to close a variety of public places to prevent and mitigate the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Bangkok Metropolitan Administration ordered the closure of 26 types of public places such as shopping malls, markets, restaurants, fitness, massage, spas, boxing stadiums, parks, entertainment venues and educational institutions at all levels from March 22, 2020 to April 12, 2020 (Totaling 21 days). (Governor of Bangkok announces closure of risky locations to prevent "Covid-19" epidemic; <https://www.thairath.co.th/news/society/1800524>; 21 March, 2020) The other provinces throughout the country have announced preventing the Covid-19 widespread with the similar measures as Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. Thai Prime Minister announced that as of 24 March, 2020, he has implemented the emergency decree to control the Covid-19 pandemic situation in Thailand, which was applied to all areas in Thailand from 26 March, 2020 to 30 April, 2020 (Emergency Decree regulating Covid-19 : What are somethings that people need to know; [moneyguru.co.th/lifestyle/articles/ Emergency Decree regulating Covid-19](http://moneyguru.co.th/lifestyle/articles/Emergency%20Decree%20regulating%20Covid-19); 24 March, 2020). In addition, he also requested to close various public locations. Later, the Bangkok governor announced the extension of the closure time for 34 types of public places according to the duration of emergency decree prescribed by the prime minister until April 30, 2020 (Bangkok announces new Emergency Decree to extend the closing of 34 shopping-markets at risk areas 28 March, 2020 to 30 April, 2020; <https://www.prachachat.net/general/news-439258>; 27 March 2020) The government has also announced to postpone the reopening of all schools for the new semester to July 1, 2020.

Due to the severe and sudden closing all these public places, all the stakeholders including shop owners, staffs, workers, and lessors could not be dealt with the damage in a timely manner. It is also impossible to predict what the economy will be going to be in the future. In short term, there are many groups of Thai people who need urgent state remedies to sustain their daily lives, especially the daily labor workers. All these people have been suffering from no daily wages. However, it turned out that the Thai government was unable to provide assistant to these large group of people in time. The Covid-19 crisis has also affected to the middle class people, whether an individual who is an employee, self-employed and various small and medium enterprises (SMEs), especially businesses operation in the closed places. Not only the economic impact, but the outbreak of novel coronavirus has also affected people's way of life. People must concern much on preventing themselves from Covid-19 infection by wearing a mask, using an alcohol-based hand sanitize, washing hands, and keeping physical distance. Moreover, people must refrain from outside home activities such as eating out, using of the fitness center, spa, massage, haircut and more. Children

cannot go to school on their regular semester. They cannot either attending any special classes such as arts, music, and sports. The Covid-19 virus epidemic has created concern and stress for all groups of people and all economic classes.

Therefore, this study of the effects on the epidemic of the Covid-19 virus as a case study which had surveyed the specific group of people, the parents of the children developmental center, Kids Plus as the respondents. Kids Plus mainly provides the occupational therapy treatments to the children. The service fee is approximately 750 - 900 baht/session (hour)/person. Each child will come to the service for twice a week, which is average cost about 5,000 baht/month/person. According to this information, it can be said that the parents of Kids Plus are the middle class people. In addition, the epidemic of the Covid-19 virus is quite different in each province. So, this study has selected only Kids Plus parents who use services from branches located in Bangkok. There are 4 branches are located in different areas which are Suan Luang, Bang Khen, Bang Phlat and Khlong San. The study has two main objectives:

1. To find out how the impact of the Covid-19 virus epidemic to the middle class of Bangkok people (Kids Plus's Parents) on their incomes, stress worry and anxiety, including the effective and efficient of work from home, burden of childcare at home and postponement of the school's semester
2. To find out their opinions of abstaining from outside home activities and the agreement if the government has allowed some certain types of businesses to re-operate in early May, 2020, as well as how they think about the confrontation with the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus in one year from now

The researcher has created the questionnaire that has focused on easy-to-understand language, concise, and consistent with the objectives by the classified in two parts: 1) The effects of the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus; and 2) The opinions on the government's orders, including coping with the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus for a year from now. Then, this questionnaire had been sent to the three experts examining the validity of the query. They had analyzed the objectives consistency index by using the Index of-Item-Objective Congruence (OIC) formula, which was resulted at the average of 0.80. The quality of the questionnaire has also been tested with 30 respondents. This reliability of the questionnaire was resulted of the Cronbach' s alpha at 0.722. Next, the completed questionnaire has been created by using the google form which is an online platform to collect the survey results. This research would like to survey the parents' opinions about the spread of the Covid-19 virus. This survey was conducted while the Covid-19 virus epidemic situation had improved that the new numbers of infections were continuously decreased since 21 April, 2020 onwards. The official report from the Department of Disease Control has been shown as the details in Table 1(Covid-19 Situation Report; <https://covid19.ddc.moph.go.th>; 7 May, 2020.)

Table 1 The Covid-19 Outbreak in Thailand during on 21 - 27 April, 2020

Date	New Confirmed Cases	Cumulative Number of Cases	Hospitalized Cases	Recoveries
21 April, 2020	19	2,811	655	2,108
22 April, 2020	16	2,826	426	2,352
23 April, 2020	13	2,839	359	2,430
24 April, 2020	16	2,854	314	2,490
25 April, 2020	63	2,907	309	2,647
26 April, 2020	19	2,922	277	2,594
27 April, 2020	9	2,931	270	2,609

These questionnaires were distributed to the 612 respondents (Kids Plus's Parents) via LINE Application which is enable and suitable for timely data collection. Due to the expiration date of the command for closing many public places is on 30 April, 2020. Then, these questionnaires had to be collected in a short period of time (25 – 27 April, 2020) because the respondents' opinions are directly sensitive to the Covid-19 situation from time to time. There were 397 respondents, counted as 64.87%, returning back the completely filled-in questionnaires in time. The Part (1) of the questionnaire had been asking about the effects from outbreak of the Covid-19 virus in various aspects which the respondents rated their effects on each of aspect into 5 levels which are highest, high, moderate, low, and lowest. The Part (1) survey results are as follows:

Part (1) The effects of the outbreak from the Covid-19 virus with details as in Table 2

Table 2 The Effects of the Outbreak from the Covid-19 Virus

Impacts in Various Aspects	Highest	High	Moderate	Low	Lowest
Family incomes are decreased.	31 = 7.81%	77 = 19.39%	166 = 41.81%	100 = 25.19%	23 = 5.79%
Family expenses are increased.	15 = 3.78%	76 = 19.14%	172 = 43.32%	118 = 29.72%	16 = 4.03%
The stress and worry about the Covid-19 situation	25 = 6.30%	65 = 16.37%	204 = 51.38%	80 = 20.15%	23 = 5.79%
The Effective and Efficient Work from Home (WFH)	9 = 2.27%	59 = 14.86%	197 = 49.62%	100 = 25.19%	32 = 8.06%
Child care at home make you exhausted, busy and burden.	36 = 9.07%	92 = 23.17%	169 = 42.57%	74 = 18.64%	26 = 6.55%
Willingness to wear mask, wash your hands frequently, and keep physical distancing for one year from now	316 = 79.60%	71 = 17.88%	10 = 2.52%	0 = 0.00%	0 = 0.00%

From Table 2, it was found that 31 respondents, counted as 7.81 %, had the highest impact on their household incomes. The 77 respondents, counted as 19.39%, had the high impact on their household incomes. The 166 respondents, counted as 41.81%, had the moderate impact on their household incomes. The 100 respondents, counted as 25.19%, had the low impact on their household incomes. The 23 respondents, counted as 5.79%, had the lowest impact on their household incomes. At the same time, the respondents have increased their family expenses that had affected in different levels. The 15 respondents, counted as 3.78%, had increased their household expenses at the highest level. The 76 respondents, counted as 19.14%, had increased their household expenses at the high level. The 172 respondents, counted as 43.32%, had increased their household expenses at the moderate level. The increasing of respondent's household expenses may be caused by buying materials to prevent infection from the Covid-19 virus, including sanitary masks, alcohol gel and antiseptics, which are more expensive than usual. This is one of the serious issues that Thai government could not manage the fair prices of these Covid-19 preventing materials. There were 118 respondents, counted as 29.72%, had the low impact on their household expenses. The 16 respondents, counted as 4.03%, had the lowest impact on their household expenses. In addition, the researcher had also investigated the respondents' psychological and emotional impacts, how they feel the stress and worried on the current Covid-19 situation. It found that the 26 respondents (6.55%), felt the most stressful, the 65 respondents (6.55%) felt more stressful, and the 203 respondents (51.13%) felt moderate stressful. Whereas the 80 respondents (20.15%) felt low stress, and the 23 respondents (5.79%) felt the lowest stress.

Both of the public and the private sectors had widely adopted the practical approach of “Work From Home (WFH)” to reduce the risk of infection with Covid-19 virus. The concept of Work from Home (WFH) encouraged people staying home to stop the spread of the Covid-19 virus for the sake of the nation by reducing travels and refraining from outside the home activities. Therefore, the study would like to survey the effectiveness and efficiency of WFH’s performance. It found that only 9 respondents (2.27%) answered that their performance of WFH are the most effective. The 59 respondents (14.86%), rated that the WFH is more effective. About 197 respondents (49.62%) rated the WFH’s effectiveness and efficiency at the moderate level. The 100 respondents (25.19%) rated the WFH’s effectiveness and efficiency at the low level. Lastly, the 32 respondents (8.06%) rated the WFH’s effectiveness and efficiency at the lowest levels. If we grouped the respondents who think that the WFH’s performances from the moderate to the most effective and efficient level was counted as 66.75%. Of the results showed that the WFH may be a new way of life (New Normal) in the future. Exactly, the WFH may be compatible for some types of businesses which the advanced technology of high-speed internet, robotic, and artificial intelligence (AI) can make the WFH came true. Whereas most of Thai SMEs are the service providers who may not apply the WFH to their business operations. They have still needed actual shops with a good location to provide services to their customers such as massage, spa, haircut, children development, physical therapy, and so on.

According to the government had closed many public places and delayed the regular school semester that make parents become full-time childcare providers at home. Then, the study asked about their feeling of exhausted, busy, and burdened to take care children at home. As the results, the 36 respondents (9.07%) felt exhausted, busy, and burdened at the highest level. The 92 respondents (23.17%) felt exhausted, busy, and burdened at the high level. The 169 respondents (42.57%) felt exhausted, busy, and burdened at the moderate level. While there were respondents of 74 (18.64%) and 26 (6.55%) felt exhausted, busy and burden to take care of children at home at a low and the lowest levels, respectively. This study showed that almost 75% of parents felt exhausted, busy, and burdened to take care of their children at home, but they are willing to do to ensure the safety of children. This result was consistent with the aspect of the willingness to wear a face mask, wash hands frequently, and maintain physical distance from others continuing for another year. The largest number of 316 respondents, counted as 79.60%, answered that they are the most willing to wear mask, wash hands, keep physical distance. The 71 respondents, counted as 17.88%, answered that they are the more willing to wear mask, wash hands, keep physical distance. Only 10 respondents, counted as 2.52%, answered that they are the moderate willing to wear mask, wash hands, keep physical distance. Not surprising, there were no one answered that they are willing to wear masks, wash hands, and keep a physical distance at the low to lowest levels for one year from now. Here, it can conclude that most Bangkok people do understand how the protect themselves from infecting the Covid-19 virus. This may be the main reason that make the new infected Covid-19 cases continuously decrease from time to time.

The Part (2) of the questionnaire had been surveyed the agreements on the government's orders which the respondents can express their opinions into 4 levels which are strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The Part (2) survey results are as follows:

Part (2) The opinions on the government’s orders in some aspects with details as in Table 3

Table 3 The Opinions on the Government's Orders

The Government's Orders	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Department stores, restaurants, and barbers will be allowed to open from early May, 2020 under a national relaxation of the government stringent orders.	27 = 6.80%	186 = 46.85%	170 = 42.82%	14 = 3.53%
The government order to postpone the reopening of all schools for the new semester on July 1, 2020	92 = 23.17%	244 = 61.46%	59 = 14.86%	2 = 0.50%

The Government has announced the closure of all publicly places in Bangkok since March 22, 2020, until now (late in April, 2020) that made Bangkok people had to refrain from outside home activities over a month. So, there was some social forces the government to allow some types of businesses to resume operations in early May, 2020 such as department stores, restaurants and barber. Then, this study had asked the respondents whether they agree or disagree with Thai Government Covid-19 relief measures. It found that the respondents who strongly agreed to allow some types of businesses to re-operate on 3 May, 2020 are 27 respondents, counted as 6.80%. The 186 respondents, counted as 46.85% agreed to allow some types of businesses to re-operate on 3 May, 2020. While the 170 respondents (42.82%) disagreed and only 14 respondents (3.53%) strongly disagreed to allow some types of businesses to re-operate on 3 May, 2020. If these respondents were classified into 2 groups of people who agreed and those who disagreed. It could count as 53.65% and 46.35%, respectively. This showed that more than half of the respondents wanted the government easing measures for the reopening of some businesses and some outside home activities in early May, 2020. It seemed that the survey result were quite consent with the Government easing announcement. There are 6 types of businesses and activities that are allowed to reopen from 3 May, 2020 as follows (CCSA. allow for 6 businesses beginning May ,2020; <https://www.posttoday.com/social/general/622249>; 30 April 2020)

1. Markets (fresh markets, flea market, floating markets, walking streets, and street-vendor operations);
2. Food shops (food shops, drink shops, street food vendors, dessert and ice-cream shops), excluding those located in shopping malls or department stores.
3. Retail businesses (supermarkets, convenience stores, carts, vendors, telecom shops, and small restaurants, but physical distancing measures must be applied for sit-in customers).
4. Sports and recreation areas: parks activities in the park (walk, Tai chi dance) and outdoor sporting venues such as tennis, shooting, archery, bike, and golf without team players and sport competitions.
5. Beauty salons (only for hair cutting, washing, and drying); and
6. Pet salons and pet nurseries.

The government announced to postpone the reopening of all schools for the new semester from the mid of May, 2020 to beginning of July, 2020 as a measure to control Covid-19. Then, the

researcher would like to find out whether the parents agreeing with opening new semester on 1 July, 2020. It found that the 92 respondents, counted as 23.17%, strongly agreed to reopen schools on 1 July, 2020. The 244 respondents, counted as 61.46%, agreed to reopen schools on 1 July, 2020. Whereas the rest of respondents would like the schools to reopen earlier than July, 2020. The 59 respondents (14.86%) disagreed to reopen schools on 1 July, 2020. And only 2 respondents (0.50%) strongly disagreed to reopen schools on 1 July, 2020. Later, both of private and public schools tried to do on-line classes to their students. But most of schools failed to do on-line classes especially, the primary schools' classes. It showed that the Thai students still need to go to schools as the traditional studying methods. The on-line classes can be only supplement.

As of 8 April 2020, the World Health Organization reported that there are as many as 78 research institutes, drug companies and non-profit organizations have developed a vaccine against the Covid-19 virus. But only 3-4 projects have already been testing coronavirus vaccine in people. Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) said that the research process for the vaccine to prevent the Covid-19 virus is able to expedite testing and approval for general use within the next 1-1.5 years (Covid-19: Vaccine - Medicine Where is the progress 4 months after the outbreak; <https://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-52353124>; 20 April 2020). If vaccines are the key to tackling the Covid-19 virus epidemic that means people must live with the Covid-19 for at least one year. Therefore, a survey was conducted on the parents' opinions how they think about the epidemic of Covid-19 from now to the next year. It found that the 104 respondents, counted as 26.20%, thought the world is unable to produce a vaccine against the Covid-19 virus. Because they believed that it would take longer than a year from now to produce the vaccine. The 95 respondents, counted as 23.93%, thought that the world has already produced a vaccine against the Covid-19. But it will not be enough for all Thais. The 99 respondents, counted as 24.94%, thought that the world has produced a vaccine against the Covid-19 and enough for Thai people. In addition, researcher also asked if the respondents need to live with Covid-19 for another year from now, what do they need? Only 6 respondents (1.51%) want to have their lifestyle as before the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus such as fitness, massage, spa, party and so on. The 63 respondents (15.87%) are ready to do outside home activities such as shopping at malls, eating at the restaurants but they still concern on wearing face masks and washing hands frequently. However, the largest number of respondents of 242, counted as 60.96% would like to stay at home, work at home and refrain from outside home activities such as shopping at malls, and eating at the restaurants. There are 86 respondents (21.66%) who want to support the government's preventative measures as shutting down department stores and closing schools until a vaccine is available to prevent the Covid-19 virus. However, the government is preparing to relax some of its Covid-19 control measures nationwide from May 3, 2020 including reopening stores with guidelines to prevent infections. Thailand's Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) issued legal measures to detect, prevent and control the spread of Covid-19 who proposed the key legal measures were as follows: (The CCSA spokesman reiterated that the people uses 5 key measures to prevent Covid.; <https://www.mcot.net/viewtna/5eb6788ce3f8e40af843d8ba>; 9 May, 2020)

1. Must often clean floor and surface before and after the services and dispose of waste daily.
2. Traders, staffs, customers must always wear a mask or a cloth mask.
3. Must dispense hand-sanitizing gel service with soap or alcohol gel or antiseptic.
4. Must keep space between the tables and between seats including the distance between the walkway at least 1 meter.

5. Must limit number of customers not to be crowded.

Here, it can say that respondents are quite ready to adjust themselves to live with the Covid-19 virus as the new normal. The basic guidelines are practiced when they do outside home activities, including wearing a cloth mask or a face mask, washing hands frequently with alcohol or soap and keeping physical distance. As a user or customer, it is worth to take actions to reduce the risk of infection with the Covid-19 virus. The daily living's life-style has to be adjusted according to the different economic classes and attitudes. The middle-class of Thais have more options to spend their daily life to be safe from the Covid-19 disease by avoiding the public transportation such as public electric train, Taxi or Grab service. Because most middle-class people have their own private cars. Anyhow, they need to have a better plan for daily travelling including places to go, or car pool. They are also willing to prepare face masks and alcohol gel when going out anywhere. Moreover, they also need to change eating habits by reducing the frequency of eating at restaurants or more selective to have sit-in restaurants. Many restaurants require sitting alone to maintain the government's order that do not allowed to sit together even family groups. It is not practical and conflict with Thai eating cultures which preferred group meals, especially family groups. As group meal, many people share the same meals together with the serving (middle) spoon. But the new normal, we need to separate the serving (middle) spoon to each person. The government has also promoted to use serving (middle) spoons as individual. So, the eating at home will be a new trend which depends on the convenient of own cooking or ordering food at home. Consequently, the food delivery businesses will have a high growth as the new normal of eating habits. But there is not any major food delivery provider has focused the hygiene and cleanliness of pickup trucks, packages, and carriers. This may be a good chance for the food delivery operations to be differentiate themselves with hygiene and cleanliness especially Covid-19 virus protection.

The consequence of Covid-19 virus, people have learned and are strict in sanitation, they will pay more attention to the hygiene and cleanliness on their daily outside home activities. Basically, the washing hands before eating a meal will be a simple and effective way to prevent of Covid-19 infection. In addition, people must carry the alcohol gel or spray to clean their hands when they do outside home activities. Not only hands cleaning, but also all touching items must also need to disinfect viruses and bacteria to ensure the cleanliness and safety, such as food containers, dining tables, seats, and toilet bowls. From now on, cloth masks, face masks or portable alcohol may be commonly used everywhere and commonly sold in convenience stores. The key to the new normal is creating sanitation disciplines for themselves and their family members. The most valuable lesson that people have learned from the Covid-19 crisis is sanitation disciplines and practices. If anyone does not make any changes to the new normal living, then, they will be the losers. Because they have lost opportunities, lost costs, and lost freedom from Covid-19 crisis without learning anything. Parents send their children to school, hoping that they can learn academic knowledge to have a good life. The Company pays the seminar fee for employees to learn to be more skilled. If Thai people have not learned to create sanitary discipline to take care of themselves and their family members' health, it will cause enormous damage, whether the government budget spending to treat the patients, healing people, and supporting the Thai economy. These losses can be turned to be profit if people let the Covid-19 crisis (Crisis Force) changing their behave in the right way of "New Normal" starting from now.

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