

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

At present, humans seem to be more concerned about their health. Thus, varieties of recreational activities were created. People participate in those kinds of activities, which we generally know as sports, not only to maintain or to improve physical appearance, but to gain enjoyment which positively reflects emotional expression also. Furthermore, sports help to widen our society by making new friends. In the Victorian period, the middle class was greatly interested in sports since many of them saw it as a way of contributing to the good of society. (Sleap, 1998, p. 92) This still happens in some types of sports, particularly horseback riding.

According to Wikipedia, a free online encyclopedia, a stallion's dead body with a bit in its mouth was found as evidence that horses had been ridden for an estimated 6,000 years ago. Since the Olympic Games were founded 776 B.C., there was a game associated with horseback riding. Even though the beginning of the horse sport is unknown, we know that horses have played important roles in Thailand since the historical period, especially in warfare. However, the first official Thailand Equestrian Federation was established in 1976.

Besides being a sport, a way to relax one's mind, or a way to communicate with horses, horseback riding also serves as therapeutic riding. Riding for the handicapped began in Scandinavia as an inspiration from a polio rider who won a silver medal in the 1952 Olympic Games. From fact sheet No.2, National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, North American Riding for the Handicapped Association, they suggested that horses helped to motivate speech in children with cerebral palsy while the horse's movement helped to improve the smoothness of the breathing system, swallowing and sound production. The rhythmic motion, shape, warmth and naturally motivating quality of the horse could also be helpful for children with disabilities. According to a pilot study on Physical Impact of Therapeutic Riding by Carolyn M. Gatty which showed that children who participated

in therapeutic horseback riding showed a significantly positive increase in self-esteem of the riders. It meant that horseback riding therapy could exercise both the rider's body and the spirit.

However, horseback riding seems to have higher risk than other kinds of recreational activities. Whether the riders are professional or amateurish, accidents can occur from minor injuries to death. A recent terribly shocking case happened in the 2003 Asian Games in Doha City. Kim Hyung-Chil, 47, an experienced South Korean rider, died after falling from horseback and was crushed by the horse which landed on his head.

Horseback riding itself can have both advantages and disadvantages. To therapists, it tends to be very helpful for the disabled. To some parents, it can be too dangerous to let children do horseback riding. To horse lovers, it can be both harmful and joyful. Some horse lovers might feel that horses suffer from being ridden while others feel that their favorite animals will be happy with their owners on their backs. As the researcher is associated with equestrianism, she wants to find out what people think about horseback riding as a sport in order to use the information to establish a horseback riding club that serves those horseback riding lovers in Kanchanaburi.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The research problems are as follows:

1.2.1 Main Problem

- What is the attitude of people toward horseback riding?

1.2.2 Sub Problems

1. What are the local people's opinions on horseback riding?
2. What are the influential factors that affect their attitude?
3. What are the services the horseback riding club should provide for its members?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Main – Objective

- To ascertain the local people's attitudes toward horseback riding.

1.3.2 Sub – Objectives

1. To reveal the local people's opinions of horseback riding.
2. To find out the personal factors contributing to the local people's opinions or attitudes toward practicing horseback riding.
3. To examine what services they want from the horseback riding club.

1.4 VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS

1.4.1 Variables

Independent Variables

The independent Variables were the personal background of the parents, i.e., sex, age, education, occupation, monthly income and horseback riding experience since these were expected to affect their attitudes toward horseback riding.

The independent variables for the students included sex, age, school type, school level and horseback riding experience since these were expected to affect their attitudes toward horseback riding.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable was the attitude toward horseback riding as measured by a 5-point Likert scale.

1. Parents

Independent Variables

Personal Background

- Sex
- Age
- Education
- Occupation
- Monthly income
- Horseback riding experience



Dependent Variable

Attitude of parents who are local people in Maung district, Kanchanaburi toward horseback riding

2. Children

Independent Variables

Personal Background

- Sex
- Age
- School type
- School level
- Horseback riding experience



Dependent Variable

Attitude of children who are local people in Maung district, Kanchanaburi toward horseback riding

1.4.2 Definitions

In order to understand the terms used in this study, the researcher provides the definitions of terms as follows:

1. Attitude toward horseback riding refers to what local people in Muang district, Kanchanaburi think about horseback riding as an exercise, as a symbol of social status, as a challenging sport, as horse abuse.

2. Horseback riding refers to riding a horse as an exercise, as a way to relax one's mind, as a way to play with a favorite animal and also as a recreational activity.

3. Local people refer to

3.1 Parents are either mothers or fathers who live in Muang district, Kanchanaburi. They are believed to play an important role in supporting their children's activities.

3.2 Children are students who are studying in primary schools, secondary schools, and high schools from both private and government schools in Muang district, Kanchanaburi. They are the targeted customers of the club.

4. Education refers to the education level of the respondents who are either mothers or fathers. It is believed to contribute to a different attitude of the parents toward horseback riding.

5. School levels refer to the education levels the students are studying. In this research, school levels are divided into three levels, which are primary school, secondary school and high school.

6. School Type refers to the type of schools in which the students are studying. The school types are divided into two types as follows:

6.1 A government school refers to a school that is operated by the Ministry of Education.

6.2 A private school refers to a school that is operated by a private group.

7. Monthly income refers to money that the respondents, either mothers or fathers, earn every month.

1.4.3 Research Hypotheses

1. Parents

1. Mothers have a more positive attitude toward horseback riding than fathers.

2. Older parents have a more positive attitude toward horseback riding than the younger ones.

3. Parents with a Bachelor's Degree or higher have a more positive attitude toward horseback riding than those with secondary school or below.

4. Parents with different occupations have a different attitude toward horseback riding.

5. Parents with different monthly incomes have a different attitude toward horseback riding.

6. Parents with horseback riding experience have a more positive attitude toward horseback riding than those without horseback riding experience.

2. Children

1. Female students have a more positive attitude toward horseback riding than the male ones.

2. Older students have a more positive attitude toward horseback riding than younger ones.

3. The students from private schools have a more positive attitude toward horseback riding than those from government schools.

4. Students from different school year levels have different attitudes toward horseback riding.

5. The students with horseback riding experience have a more positive attitude toward horseback riding than those without horseback riding experience.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focused on the attitude of local people toward horseback riding. Due to time constraints and a limited budget, only one hundred and ten questionnaires were included. The sampling groups consisted of 50 parents, either fathers or mothers, and 60 students in primary school, secondary school and high school from both private and government schools. The subjects of this study were limited to local people in Muang district, Kanchanaburi.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study helps to identify the attitude of local people in Muang district, Kanchanaburi toward horseback riding. Based on the findings, this study will serve as a beneficial guideline to the equine business and also for the researcher's business to be established in the near future.

This study will also be an inspiration for other researchers or those who are interested in similar topics to do further study.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This paper is divided into five chapters.

Chapter one presents the introduction including background, research questions, objectives of the study, variables and definitions, scope of the study, significance of the study and organization of the study. Chapter two presents the relevant studies which are likely to affect people's perception toward horseback riding. Chapter three describes the methodology and the instrumentation used for collecting data including the procedures employed in the analysis of the data. Chapter four shows the results of the study in which the statistical approach is used to indicate

the facts. The last chapter is the conclusions of what has been mentioned and discovered including discussions and recommendations for further study.

