Meanings and Social Network Creation of the Animal Lottery in an Industrial Factory

1. Miss Kanokraekha Chantarawongkitti, M.A. student in Human and Social Development, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University
2. Asst. Prof. Kettawa Boonprakan, Assistant Professor, Ed.D., Department of Educational Foundation, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University

Abstract

The objectives of this study were to investigate: 1) meanings given to an animal lottery by workers in an industrial factory, and 2) social network creation among workers in an industrial factory through an animal lottery space. The data of this qualitative study were collected through observations and in-depth interviews with informants. In data analysis, the data were classified into topics, decoded, interpreted, and arranged. The results of the study could be grouped into two aspects. The first aspect was on the meaning of the animal lottery given by workers in the industrial factory which was a way of making income for workers who were sellers and buyers who hoped to have more income. The second aspect was that the creation of the animal lottery social network took place among workers and began from people who knew each other, friends, and relatives who worked in the same factory, and used the animal lottery as a medium to link workers into groups and to have interactions through getting into groups, communication, talking, and exchanging opinions and experiences. They had interactions and became closer to each other faster than they normally would, and this resulted in unity of the group. The animal lottery made the social network creation rapid through a word of mouth.

Keywords: defining meaning, social network, animal lottery
Introduction

Presently, informal economy is crucially important for Thailand as it plays an important role in driving the economic growth of the country not any less than the formal economy (The Office of National Economic and Social Development Board, 2004). Studies on informal economic activities found that economics of gambling is part of the informal economy and the size of the economy of illegal gambling is larger than that of legal gambling in terms of population and the amount of money involved. There were at least 14 categories of gambling that were popular in 2001 with a total of 83 million gamblers (one gambler could choose to gamble in more than one category). The popularity of gambling in the order of the number of the population involved was: 1) the underground lottery (23.7 million), 2) the government lottery (21.2 million), 3) the Government Savings Bank lottery (7.8 million), 4) gambling in gambling dens (4.2 million), 5) the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives lottery (36 million), 6) the Thai Stock lottery (2.0 million), 7) Football betting (2.0 million), 8) folk games (1.3 million), 9) boxing or TV boxing (8.1 hundred thousand), 10) Chap-Yi-Ki, a Chinese gambling game (2.6 hundred thousand), 11) Pingpong lottery (2.3 hundred thousand), 12) Horseracing (80 thousand), 13) Internet gambling (30.6 thousand), 14) lotteries from other countries (10.8 thousand), and 15) other categories of gambling (2.9 hundred thousand).

In addition, surveys of the amounts of money involved in gambling revealed that the seven most popular categories of gambling in 2001 in the order of the amount of money involved were: 1) gambling in gambling dens (113,958 million baht), 2) underground lottery (92,073 million baht), 3) Football betting (51,085 million baht), 5) the Thai Stock lottery (16,156 million baht), 6) the Government Savings Bank lottery (9,341 million baht), and 7) the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives lottery (3,471 million baht), (Sangsidh Piriyarangsan, 2001). Nowadays, the animal lottery which is a type of betting is very popular in the southern part of Thailand, in communities, in government and private organizations, on the Internet, and in industrial factories. In the animal lottery, many kinds of animals are used to represent the numbers from 0 to 9, and the kinds of animals are used for betting instead of numbers. There are 36 kinds of animals used in the lottery, most of which are common such as the pig, the dog, the cat, and the bird. However, there are also animals that do not actually exist such as a golden cat, a golden deer, a dragon, etc. Results of the animal lottery are announced twice a day, once in the morning and the other in the evening. This makes the lottery very popular among a lot of people who are fond of gambling.
From reviewing research literature, it was found that underground lotteries had built social networks. According to a study by Arisa Samosorn (2011) which studied meanings of the underground lottery and social network creation, the underground lottery refers to hope to have extra income in addition to the income from the regular occupation in the daily life the lottery tickets buyers. Selling underground lottery tickets is a second job and there is also hope for the seller to win the underground lottery at the same time. The underground lottery is a medium that builds relationship, and provides entertainment for groups of people involved. The underground lottery also creates social networks that are derived from other types of relationship that have already exist among people who are involved in the underground lottery, and as a result, other types of social activities take place among them.

Chayut Piriyarit (2007) conducted a study on the process of playing the underground lottery, a case study of a southern province reflecting the process of playing the underground lottery in order to use the results of the study to solve the problem of underground lottery gambling. The study found that the process of playing the underground lottery consisted of buying lottery tickets, and selling lottery tickets. Some conditions were found to affect people involved in lottery gambling. For the economic condition, when the economy was down, more people were found to be involved in the underground lottery. For the environmental condition either at home or at work, if any member buys lottery tickets regularly, then there is a member who sells them. For the condition concerning government officials, suppression of illegal lottery business is not effective because government officials take bribes from lottery tickets sellers. For the reword condition, when winning the underground lottery, buyers get more money than when winning the government lottery, therefore, people prefer the underground lottery. As for the condition concerning socio-culture and the Thai way of life, people have close family relationships and do a lot of activities together, and as a result, more people were involved in the underground lottery because they trust each other in relaying messages.

Even though many studies have tried to reflect on various problems arising from the underground lottery, the Thai society which is known to be a Buddhist society is faced with such problems that are entirely in contrast with the Buddhist way of life while more types of underground lottery have emerged.

These phenomena have prompted the researcher to have questions about what meanings workers in industrial factories give to the animal lottery, and how the animal lottery social networks have been created. The data obtained would provide understanding of the meanings of the animal lottery from the perspective of workers and how the social networks
have been formed among workers involved in the animal lottery in an industrial factory in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province. The data would also provide the entrepreneur with reflection on the workers’ quality of life and cost of living so that the entrepreneur could review and give more importance to the workers’ living condition.

**Research Questions**

1. How do workers in an industrial factory define the animal lottery?
2. How do workers in an industrial factory create social networks through the animal lottery space?

**Definitions of Terms**

Social network creation refers to workers in an industrial factory creating relationships and linking them with their involvement in the animal lottery through communication, opinion exchange, interdependency and help among them.

Animal lottery refers to a type of betting similar to the underground lottery but it includes guessing riddles, and when the guess is correct, a certain amount of money is paid.

**Scope of the study**

For this study, the main concept used is the concept on social networks by Phra Maha Suthit Aphakaro who describes that a social network is relationship in human society that can be at the individual level or relationship between individuals and groups, or groups and groups, or groups and networks. He describes human behavior and relationship with other things such as activities, communication, cooperation, interdependency, and knowledge exchange. These are relationships with many different structures and forms. Therefore, social networks exist at different levels of proximity and illustrate different behaviors of people in the society who have various types of relationship with each other. This is in accordance with this study and can be used in analyzing social networks of workers in the factory.

According to a study by Panithee Suksomboon (2002) on Social networks and adjustment of women street vendors: a case study of North-East women street vendors living in Nang Leuang Community, social relationships that the street vendors had with persons or groups of people were in the form of contact, information exchange, food, trading and service, and interdependency. The social networks affected their living, and families living in Nang Leuang Community had interdependency and help among them. In addition, the social
networks of the women street vendors in Nang Leuang Community indicated that the emergence of the social networks was related to illegal shares, gambling, and lotteries among the street vendors themselves. However, their relationships were flexible; they could borrow money from each other because they were from the same hometowns or were relatives.

The researcher of this study, therefore, employs the concept on the social networks in analyzing the phenomena related to the animal lottery taking place in this industrial factory including the social network creation in order to know what forms of relationship have emerged and what good effects the animal lottery social networks have.

Research Methodology

This study is a qualitative study for which the data were collected mainly from the field employing the following research procedure.

1. The study area was an industrial factory in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province where an animal lottery took place, and the people involved ranging from workers to executives who were department heads. The factory had 548 employees: 310 males and 238 females. Seventy-five percent (75%) of all the employees were involved in the animal lottery.

2. The informants of the study were divided into two groups. The first group was key informants who were employees that bought and sold the animal lottery tickets in the industrial factory. The second group was the secondary informants consisting of executives and employees who were not involved in the animal lottery. They were asked for their general opinions on the animal lottery.

3. The research instruments were:
   3.1 Observation forms to record the observations of the selling and buying of the animal lottery tickets.
   3.2 Interview forms used as guidelines for questions asking for information from the informants

4. Data collection
   4.1 Data were collected from documents on concepts and theories including books, journals, articles, research papers and theses related to studies on animal lotteries.
   4.2 Data were collected from the field:
      - Participatory observations where the researcher participated in the animal lottery process with workers in the factory while at the same time observing the
animal lottery tickets selling and buying methods. Non-participatory observations were also conducted by observing the general environment and the workers’ selling and buying activities in how they talked and how the network was created.

- In-depth interviews were performed with the informants asking questions that were relevant to the purposes of the study.

5. Data analysis—The researcher classified the data into aspects according to the purposes of the study, then the data were decoded, interpreted, synthesized, written and presented in a descriptive form.

**Results of the Study**

The results of the study are presented in two aspects. The first aspect is the definitions of the animal lottery given by the workers in the industrial factory, and the second aspect is the animal lottery social network creation.

1. The definitions of the animal lottery that were derived from the field study—Workers in the factory defined the animal lottery as a way of getting extra income from selling and buying animal lottery tickets even though it was illegal and they could not do anything related to the selling and buying openly. From the study carried out in the field by interviewing workers in the industrial factory who were sellers and buyers of the animal lottery, their opinions were as follows:

   “…the animal lottery is money. It gives us more income. Gaining and losing don’t matter. It’s just normal.”

   (Phi Yot (Pseudonym). Interviewed on June 9, 2012.)

   “… When I buy it, I have to win. If I don’t win, I stop and will come back to buy it again. Otherwise the profit I’ve made will be all gone…”

   (Phi Sa (Pseudonym). Interviewed on June 9, 2012.)

   “…I want money so I have to invest. If I win, I’ll have some money to continue with it…”

   (Phi Nan (Pseudonym). Interviewed on June 9, 2012.)
“…If I win, I’ll a little money to buy some snack but if I don’t, I’ll just keep buying it. It’s fun because I have something to talk about with friends…”

(Phi Ad (Pseudonym). Interviewed on June 10, 2012.)

“…The reason I sell the animal lottery tickets is because I hope to get some commission for savings. In the past, not many employees bought the tickets but recently more and more of them buy more and more tickets. I used to get six to seven thousand baht from selling them but now I get almost twenty thousand baht. So I have saved some money now and I think I’ll continue selling them.”

(Phi Maew (Pseudonym). Interviewed on May 12, 2012.)

From the excerpts above, it can be seen that all of them reflect that involvement in the animal lottery gives sellers and buyers of the lottery tickets hope to have more income in addition to their regular income from their work each day. These workers provided the same meaning to the animal lottery that it gave them hope and extra income.

2. The animal lottery network creation

The animal lottery is not only a way of getting extra income for workers but also results in relationships among the workers in the factory. Buying lottery tickets is a result of persuasion from people around the buyer such as relatives or co-workers. From the field study interviewing workers who were involved in the animal lottery and those who were not, the following was found.

“…I didn’t know the seller; I watched them get together at the canteen and saw them buy something, so I bought it, too. After a few times, I got to know the seller…”

(Phi Kai (Pseudonym). Interviewed on May 20, 2012.)

“…I started it with a friend. A friend persuaded me to buy it and I found that it was fun and I got to know a lot more people, too…”

(Phi Kung (Pseudonym). Interviewed on May 24, 2012.)
“…The animal lottery gave me a chance to make more friends. Sometimes I asked friends that I made from involving in the animal lottery for help like to clock in for me…”

(Phi Khiew (Pseudonym). Interviewed on May 25, 2012.)

“…I don’t want to be involved in it because I’m afraid I might be addicted to it but I see that my friends who play the lottery know more people in the factory…”

(Phi Jai (Pseudonym). Interviewed on June 15, 2012.)

“… I think the animal lottery can create more networks. I have a friend who sells the tickets but I don’t buy it. I can see that a list is longer than before. She has more and more customers…”

(Phi Nong (Pseudonym). Interviewed on June 15, 2012.)

The above data reflect that the animal lottery made social networks happen that link people who are relatives, friends, and people who do not know each other to get together in groups and have interactions through the groups, communication, talking, and exchanging viewpoints and experiences. In addition, the researcher also interviewed other workers who were not involved in the animal lottery and discovered that they too, found that the animal lottery was useful if looked at optimistically because it provided chances for workers to interact and become closer to each other quicker than they usually would. It also resulted in unity in the group. The animal lottery speeded up networking through word of mouth. Some people who did not win the lottery said that they would not buy it any longer still returned to it when they saw others were still involved in it. Other workers said that they did not want to be involved in it because they did not want to become addicted to it. However, they admitted that watching others play the lottery was more fun and that people who were engaged in the animal lottery got to know each other through the lottery. Moreover, they would talk to each other even though they did not know each other.

Discussion

From investigating the definitions and the animal lottery social network creation, it was found that there are two aspects. 1) Definitions of the animal lottery—From the field study, it was found that workers in the factory defined the animal lottery as a way of
getting extra income by being sellers and buyers of the lottery tickets. Even though the animal lottery is illegal and cannot be carried out openly, from the interviews, many workers in the industrial factory who were sellers and those who were buyers gave reflections on the animal lottery that it gave them hope in making more income. 2) The animal lottery social network creation links workers together and they have interactions through their get together, communication, talking, exchanging ideas and experiences. They become closer to each other in a shorter time than they would normally. This results in unity in the group. Therefore, the animal lottery makes social networks happen quickly through word of mouth.

A study by Arisa Samosorn (2011) in definitions and social networking of the underground lottery states that social networking of the underground lottery helps foster good relationships among people in the community. It is also an activity that creates social networks. Likewise, the animal lottery also creates unity among workers who are involved in the animal lottery and who help each other. The animal lottery creates good relationship among the workers.

In accordance with Panitee Suksomboon’s study (2002) on Social networks and adjustment of women street vendors: a case study of North-East women street vendors living in Nang Leuang Community, it was found that social relationship that the women street vendors had with other individuals or groups was in the form of contact, exchanging of information, food, trading and services, interdependency and helping each other. Consequently, social networks took place. This is in concordance with the animal lottery social network creation where workers in the industrial factory have interactions through their getting together, communicating, talking, exchanging opinions and experiences, and as a result, they become connected to each other and become social networks.

Furthermore, social network creation through the animal lottery was also in line with the concepts of Phra Maha Suthit Aphakaro (2004) who defines a social network as relationships in human society at the individual level, and relationship between individuals and groups, groups and groups, and groups and networks. He describes behaviors and relationship related to other things such as activities, communication, cooperation, interdependency, and knowledge exchange that are relationships with diversified structures and forms. Each network has a different origin or has been created by different methods which can be classified into three main groups. Networks that are formed naturally; networks that are created, and networks that take place through evolution. In this study, the networks are formed naturally because they originated from people who have the same opinions, have similar kinds of work or face the same kinds of problems; these people get together in order
to exchange opinions, experiences, and together they seek a better new way of existence for members of the groups.

**Recommendations**

1. The study revealed that workers in this industrial factory defined the meanings of the animal lottery as another way of earning more income, and it is also a medium that helps build relationship among workers in the industrial factory which brings about their getting together into groups and their social network creation.

2. For the social network creation, it was found that buying the animal lottery tickets was an informal way of building networks. Governmental and private organizations should use this strategy to build networks in communities. Moreover, the factory executives should oversee welfare of their workers by taking into account the cost of living so that these workers have better quality of life through the use of an informal method which could bring people to get together better. As a model:

![Informal way of building networks model](image)
3. Recommendations for further studies—There should be studies on risks or effects of the animal lottery, or on comparison of social network creation through the animal lottery space in the southern part of Thailand and other parts of the country.

References


List of Interviewees

Phi Kung (pseudonym), (2012, May 24), Interviewee. Kanokraekha Chantarawongkitti, Interviewer. At an industrial factory in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province.

Phi Kai (pseudonym), (2012, May 20), Interviewee. Kanokraekha Chantarawongkitti, Interviewer. At an industrial factory in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province.

Phi Jai (pseudonym), (2012, June 15), Interviewee. Kanokraekha Chantarawongkitti, Interviewer. At an industrial factory in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province.

Phi Nong (pseudonym), (2012, June 15), Interviewee. Kanokraekha Chantarawongkitti, Interviewer. At an industrial factory in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province.

Phi Nan (pseudonym), (2012, June 9), Interviewee. Kanokraekha Chantarawongkitti, Interviewer. At an industrial factory in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province.

Phi Maew (pseudonym), (2012, May 12), Interviewee. Kanokraekha Chantarawongkitti, Interviewer. At an industrial factory in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province.

Phi Yot (pseudonym), (2012, June 9), Interviewee. Kanokraekha Chantarawongkitti, Interviewer. At an industrial factory in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province.

Phi Sa (pseudonym), (2012, June 9), Interviewee. Kanokraekha Chantarawongkitti, Interviewer. At an industrial factory in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province.

Phi Ad (pseudonym), (2012, June 10), Interviewee. Kanokraekha Chantarawongkitti, Interviewer. At an industrial factory in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province.