

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This descriptive research aimed to examine the attitudes among Muslim Thais in Muang Chiang Mai district, towards the problems in the southern border provinces of Thailand and to explore ideas about solutions.

Research Design

The study was conducted between November and December 2006. The mixed methods research was used in this study. The data collection survey was done by purposefully distributing questionnaires to willing participants. After the participants filled in the questionnaires, the questionnaires were collected by the researcher with the respondents remaining anonymous. Most of the questions were multiple-choice with a final option left blank for respondents to answer as they wished. Opinions of respected community members were gathered sequentially by an informal interview in order to confirm findings and expand an understanding of the representatives.

Population Characteristics and Sampling Group

Population

The population of this study was Muslim Thais, who live in one of the four Muslim communities: two Yunnanese communities, located in Chang Klan and San Pah Koy sub-district, and two Pakistani communities, located in Chang Klan and Chang Puerk sub-district in the city of Chiang Mai.

Sample

Purposive sampling was used to select participants from four Muslim communities with an estimated population of 4,000 in the city of Chiang Mai. The eligibility criteria were as follows:

1. Age 18 years and older.
2. Ability in speaking, reading and writing the Thai language
3. Healthy mental and physical condition
4. Willingness to participate in the study

The sample size of 260 was estimated using the formula developed by Yamanae (cited by Sith B., 2000).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4000}{1 + 4000 \times 0.06^2}$$

$$n = 259.74 = 260$$

where

n = desired sample size;

N = the number of desired population members;

e = six percent error.

In order to reach the goal of 260 respondents, 350 questionnaires were distributed. Therefore, the researcher gathered the total number of 270 questionnaires in collecting the samples.

Three respected community members were purposively selected for this study. Informal interviews were conducted personally with three communities' leader; each of them was from one of the four Muslim communities.

Data Collection

Research Instruments

The instruments used to collect data in this study were a questionnaire and an informal interview.

A. The Questionnaire was consisted of four main parts as follows:

1. Demographic Data – used to gather information on age, gender, and education.

2. Religious Commitment – questions to measure how strong the respondent's commitment to religion is.

3. Media Exposure, Perception and Satisfaction – This section consisted of two parts.

Part 1 was a series of question about accessing to media and the frequency in following on the news events. The respondents were asked to check the media sources that they accessed from the box list and their frequency in using the sources. Five items of media sources were given in the box list. The frequency of media exposure were given in four points as follows:

- Every day
- Two to three times a week
- Once a month
- Never

Part 2 This questionnaire was designed to collect respondents' opinions about the media neutrality in presenting situations in the southern border provinces.

As this set of questionnaire was related to the first part, the same media sources were given for the respondents to rank the media neutrality. The answers were classified into 5 scales as follows:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| “least” | means that the medium neutrality is very poor; |
| “less” | means that the medium neutrality is poor; |
| “medium” | means that the medium neutrality is moderate; |
| “more” | means that the medium neutrality is good; |
| “most” | means that the medium neutrality is very good. |

4. Attitudes and Opinions Towards the Problems and Solutions. - This section consisted of six parts.

The first part was a series of questions to assess the respondents' opinions about the causes of the problems in the southern border provinces by using the Likert Scale. Fifteen questions posed were based on literature review, researches, and articles. The respondents were asked to express their ideas using 5 scales as follows:

- “strongly agree” means the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs absolutely agree with the statement;
- “agree” means the respondents feelings, opinions and beliefs agrees with the statement;
- “neutral” means the statement is neutral to the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs;
- “disagree” means the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs disagree with the statement;
- “strongly disagree” means the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs absolutely disagree with the statement.

The second part was designed to have the respondents rank the causes of the problems in the southern border provinces. Seven items were given and each item was ranked from 1 – 5

- “1” means the respondent ranks the cause of the problem in the least important level;
- “2” means the respondent ranks the cause of the problem in a slightly important level;
- “3” means the respondent ranks the cause of the problem in a moderately important level;
- “4” means the respondent ranks the cause of the problem in a quite important level;
- “5” means the respondent ranks the cause of the problem in the most important level.

The third part asked the respondents' attitudes toward the violence that was committed by insurgent groups. Five items were given and each item had five choices as follows:

“strongly agree”	means the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs totally agree with the statement;
“agree”	means the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs agree with the statement;
“neutral”	means the statement is neutral to the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs;
“disagree”	means the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs disagree with the statement;
“strongly disagree”	means the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs absolutely disagree with the statement.

The fourth part was designed to assess the respondents' attitudes toward the government's actions in solving problems in the southern border provinces. There were eleven items with 5 choices for the respondents to select as follows

“strongly agree”	means the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs totally agree with the statement;
“agree”	means the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs agree with the statement;
“neutral”	means the statement is neutral to the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs;
“disagree”	means the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs disagree with the statement;
“strongly disagree”	means the respondents' feelings, opinions and beliefs absolutely disagree with the statement.

The fifth part was a questionnaire that assessed the satisfaction level of the respondents concerning the former and current government's actions in solving the problem. Five choices were given as follows:

“strongly satisfied”	means the respondents are totally satisfied with the statement;
“satisfied”	means the respondents are satisfied with the statement;
“moderately satisfied”	means the respondents are moderately satisfied with the statement;
“unsatisfied”	means the respondents are unsatisfied with the statement;
“strongly unsatisfied”	means the statement are totally unsatisfied with the statement.

The sixth part asked the respondents for their expectations about the situation in the southern border provinces to worsen, improve, or reach a peaceful solution.

Additionally, in each part there was some blank space left for supplementary comments from the respondents in any way they wished.

B. Informal Interview

Three respected community members were selected purposively for interview and agreed to participate in the study. A researcher would ask permission to record the interview from an interviewee before starting the recording. The General Interview Guide Approach was used to obtain information on knowledge, feelings and opinions. This approach was intended to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee. The predetermined series of questions were typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, while still allowing them to express themselves freely or to decline to answer any of the questions (McNamara, C., 1997).

Validation of Research Instruments

The research instruments were validated by one researcher and two professors; one from the Social Science Faculty, and the other from the Political Science Faculty, Chiang Mai University. After review by the experts, the instruments were corrected

to clarify the question context, and provide appropriate order of questions and language usage.

Reliability

The questionnaires were piloted with 10 samples to assess for reliability according to the suggestion of the experts and researcher. The results of the reliability piloting are as follows:

1. Media Exposure, Perception and Gratification Questionnaire has reliability of 0.7552
2. Attitude and Opinions toward the Problems and in solving Problems was reliabilities as follows:
 - 2.1 Part One has reliability of .7491
 - 2.2 Part Three has reliability of .9821
 - 2.3 Part Four has reliability of .7172
 - 2.4 Part Five has reliability of .6482

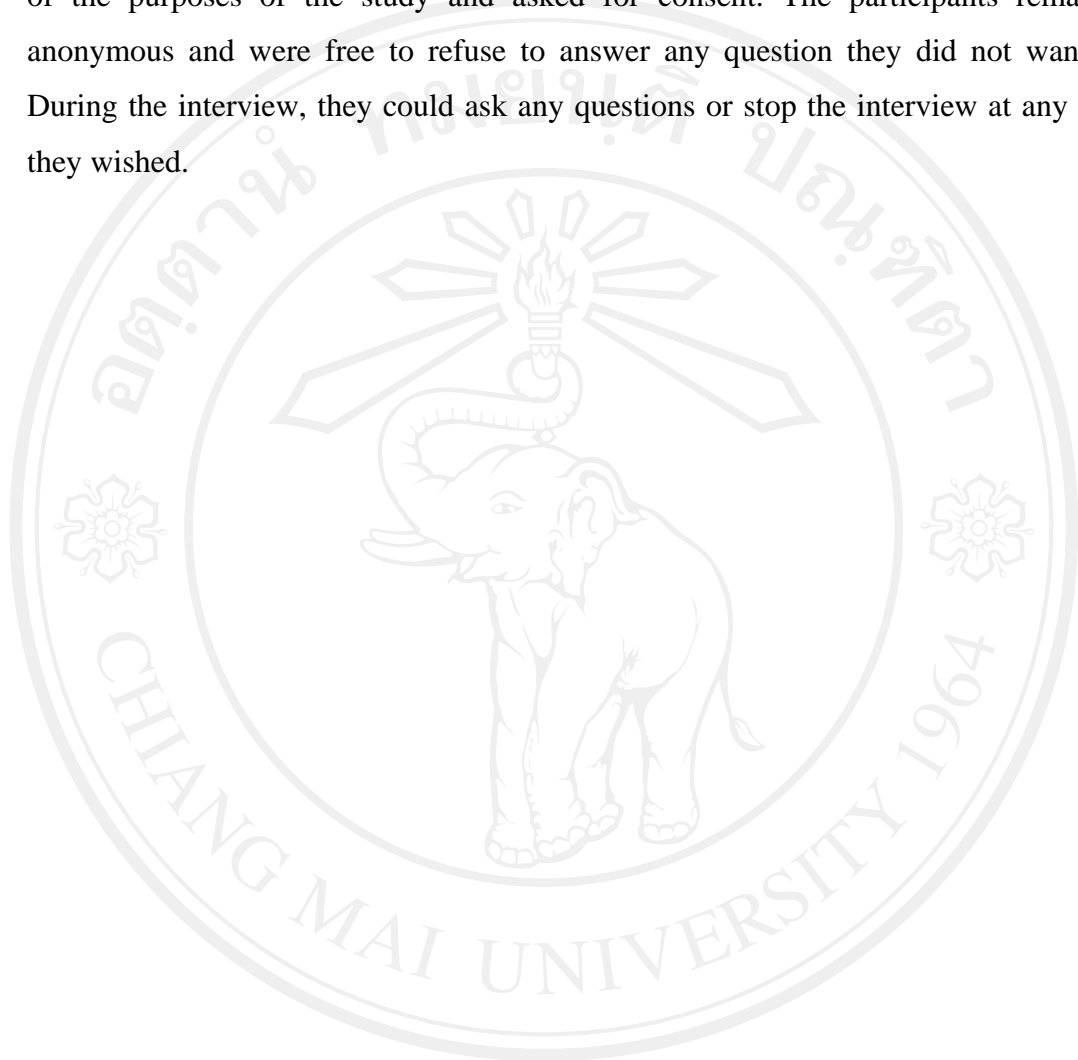
Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data obtained in the following way:

1. Demographic data was analyzed by frequency distribution and percentage
2. Media Exposure, Perception and Gratification Questionnaire was classified according to the items and converted into percentage.
3. Attitude and Opinions towards the Problems and solution was classified according to the questionnaire types and items and presented as numerical data.
4. Data from interview was analyzed by generating categories and explicating information.

Protection of Human Subjects

Before collecting the data or interview the researcher informed the participants of the purposes of the study and asked for consent. The participants remained anonymous and were free to refuse to answer any question they did not want to. During the interview, they could ask any questions or stop the interview at any time they wished.



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