The Problem And Obstacle Of The Thai-Malay Muslims' Small And Medium Enterprises (Sme) In Southern Thailand's Conflict

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ABSTRACT

The issue and challenges facing small and medium-sized companies (SME) in southern Thailand's conflict are the subjects of this study; Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat are southern border provinces with mixed Thai-Malay Muslim cultural influences. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to answer the question, "What is the difficulty and obstacle of small and medium-sized firms of the Thai-Malay Muslims in the three southern border provinces of Thailand?" The procedure of this research comprises 1) the issue and barrier to small and medium-sized firms moving forward and 2) the fundamental requirements in supporting small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Office of Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion (OSMEP) members, who are listed as the legal representatives of a total of 97 businesses in Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, make up the sample groups of small and medium-sized firms (SME). The tool used in this research was a series of questionnaires (only 60 firms replied), which were separated into two parts: part 1, which covers basic information on SME owned by Thai-Malay Muslims in Thailand's three southern border provinces. Information about perceptions is included in part two. Additionally, there is a questionnaire for 15 entrepreneurs from the three southern border provinces who will be participating in in-depth interviews.

The study's findings revealed that 86.7 percent of respondents overall agreed that the business's source of finances is a challenge and disruption. Marketing and management come next.

Keywords: Problem and Obstacle, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Thai-Malay Muslims in the three southern border provinces of Thailand.

BACKGROUND INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant activities for the economic system in terms of production, service, and consumption is business operation. According to Brown (2018), the significance of small and medium-sized firms is emotionally entrenched in local communities via trading with friends and neighbors. The value of small businesses in rural regions and large cities is further shown by the financial advantages of doing your shopping locally. The Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Act of Thailand, B.E. 2543 (A.D. 2000), categorizes small and medium-sized businesses based on their size, kind, and number of fixed assets and workers. Small businesses employ no more than 50 individuals, whereas medium-sized businesses employ between 51 and 200 workers. Additionally, small businesses limited their assets to 50 million baht (1.47 million USD) and medium-sized businesses to between 51 and 200 million baht (1.5-5.9 million USD).

Small and medium-sized businesses play a major role in the service and retail sectors, but historically, both the agriculture sector and the country's diminishing export industry have had an impact on the total domestic output of the nation. In addition, a slowdown in the industrial sector, which was gradually reviving the economy, forced financial institutions to exercise caution when making loans, resulting in a somewhat higher growth rate for private credit than in the previous year.

SME in southern border provinces are affected not only by the economic crisis but also by regional political unrest and insurgency. The shortage of liquidity caused by the economic slump, which has led people's buying power and consumption to decline, has forced SMEs to slow down or cut their production and distribution or until the firm closed itself. The insurgency has played a significant role in this. The Muslim Thai-Malaysians who live in the south of Thailand have had a similar dilemma. Numerous studies conducted between 2006 and 2012 revealed that the turmoil had a direct impact on the decline of southern border enterprises. It's because company owners lack faith in the security of people and their property. The loss in industrial power and employment, which is accompanied by a higher cash outflow than cash inflow, are clear signs of the recession (Bodetti, 2019). People in the neighbourhood are struggling to save money because of unemployment and declining salaries (Ek-uru et al., 2013, p.25). In addition, there were issues with a lack of a market for production support and a shortage of working capital (Bodetti, 2019, Online), which meant that the villagers had to rubber tap during the day rather than at night because of living in dangerous locations and a reduction in raw rubber output. As a consequence, less rubber is being produced, which has an impact on the economy as a whole.

Therefore, this research was to question on "what is the problem and obstacle of small and medium-sized enterprises of the Thai-Malay Muslims in the three southern border provinces of Thailand? The data obtained from this study can be used to plan for industrial promotion and development by the relevant departments to be able to meet the needs of entrepreneurs and the government policies. It is especially for use as information to assist small and medium-sized industries. It includes the development of training courses on managing small and medium-sized businesses, the establishing guidelines for developing and upgrading small and medium-sized industrial entrepreneurs in the region of the country.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

1. 1. To identify the issues and challenges faced by Thai-Malay Muslim-owned small and medium-sized enterprises in the three southern border provinces.

2. To explore the needs of support for small and medium-sized businesses of the Thai-Malay Muslims in the three southern border provinces.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to find the collaboration between the conceptual framework for the research and the relevant literature, the researcher has compiled ideas about the issues and obstacles faced by small and medium-sized businesses, developed those ideas into a conceptual framework, and reviewed the relevant articles. The population consists of the 3,500 small- and medium-sized company owners who registered as corporate types in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. Smalland medium-sized company owners that were chosen at random using a purposeful strategy made up a portion of the sample groups. There are 97 small and medium-sized enterprises run by entrepreneurs. According to Krejcie and Morgan's scale, a sample size of about 10% is offered. As a result, the sample is drawn from the 97 individuals who have registered as juristic persons with the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (in this

research only 60 people can be asked). Two elements of a series of questionnaires were utilized as the study's main instrument.

Part 1 covers basic information about Thai-Malay Muslim small and medium-sized enterprises in the three southern border provinces. The surveys, which were divided into 5 categories and focused on the employees of 97 shops in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, were distributed. The questions asked about the following: 1) the sort of company, 2) its size, 3) its duration, 4) its location, and 5) the amount of cash invested in the firm. The frequency questionnaire and the 5-level estimate questionnaire were the instruments utilized to gather data (Likert Rating Scale). Statistics like percentages, means, and standard deviation were used to examine the data. Additionally, the T-test and F-test statistics were examined to determine the value difference.

Part 2: The data on perceptions were collected using questionnaires of two different types: checklists and open-ended questions. The likelihood of the study was calculated using the checklist by subtracting the percentage from the other options (1. Problematic 2. Not Problematic). It interviewed 15 company owners who were specified candidates and able to supply the information, totaling 5 persons per province, for the section of the open-ended questionnaire. Additionally, the questions were divided into categories like 1) appropriate company size, 2) financial source issues, 3) management issues, and 4) marketing issues. The steps for developing research tools include knowledge of small and medium-sized business theories, concepts, and management, knowledge of qualitative research methodologies, including data analysis, and advice from knowledgeable lecturers to comprehend the research protocol for the study's accuracy and pertinent issues, and c) the creation of interview questions from a review of related literature. The interview also focused on topics like 1) the needs of small and mediumsized business owners with regard to government policies or measures, 2) the

economic impact of small and medium-sized businesses, and 3) the guidelines for government policies or measures in the area of promoting small and medium-sized businesses.

The five business sectors that made up the majority of the data gathering were 1) groceries, 2) construction material sales, 3) food sales, 4) gold sales, and 5) metal welding services. This is to research the issues and challenges that come up while running small and medium-sized enterprises. It covered business owners' perspectives on government initiatives and regulations affecting small and medium-sized enterprises. Additionally, there were observations made without any involvement. It is a self-observation based on the operator's personality and the overall state of the enterprise. This is done in order to clarify how the data collected relates to the study's goals. The validity and certainty tests, as well as the quality inspection of the instruments, were utilized in part to ensure that the research's objectives were met while maintaining precision and consistency. To ensure that the material in the data analysis section was accurate and full, qualitative data from interviews and observations were collected. By combining the data, the content analysis that divided the data into categories based on educational concerns was interpreted to provide a summary of the study's methodology and goals. This will give the findings of the comparison research and discuss each study component in light of its goals.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

In this study, the researcher has accumulated thoughts regarding the issues and challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises, organized those ideas into a conceptual framework, and analyzed pertinent literature to determine how well the conceptual framework works together. The 3,500 small and mediumsized company owners who registered as corporate types in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat make up the population. The small- and medium-sized company owners who were selected at random using a purposeful manner made up the sample groups' portion. 97 firms altogether, including small and medium-sized enterprises run by entrepreneurs. The sample size is given at the sacredness level of 10%, according to Krejcie and Morgan's scale. As a result, the sample is drawn from the 97 members of the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion who registered as legal entities (in this research only 60 people can be asked). A series of questionnaires, separated into two sections, served as the study's main instrument.

In Part 1, which discusses small and mediumsized enterprises run by Thai-Malay Muslims in the three southern border provinces, basic information is provided. In all, 97 shops in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat received the surveys, which were divided into 5 categories and focused on the employees. The questionnaires asked about the following topics: 1) the kind of company; 2) the size of the business; 3) the length of time the business has been operating; 4) the location of the business; and 5) the amount of money invested in the business. The frequency questionnaire and the 5-level estimate questionnaire served as the data collection's primary instruments (Likert Rating Scale). Standard deviation, averages, and percentages were used to examine the data. In addition, the statistics Ttest and F-test were evaluated to determine the value difference.

Part 2: The data on perceptions were collected using two different types of questionnaires: checklists and open-ended forms. The likelihood of the study was determined by subtracting the percentage from the alternative responses (1. Problematic 2. Not Problematic) using the checklist. Five persons from each province were questioned as part of the openended section of the form, making a total of 15 company owners who were qualified candidates and able to offer the information. The questions were then divided into categories like 1) appropriate company size, 2) financial source difficulties, 3) management challenges,

and 4) marketing problems. The steps for creating research tools include: a) knowledge of small and medium-sized business theories, including concepts and management; b) knowledge of qualitative research methodologies, including data analysis; and c) advice from expert lecturers to understand the research protocol for the accuracy and the pertinent issues of the research study. The interview questions are created from a literature review related to the topic. The interview also concentrated on topics like 1) small and medium-sized business loans; 2) the economic impact of small and medium-sized businesses; and 3) the principles for government policies or measures in the area of promoting small and medium-sized businesses, including the needs of the entrepreneurs toward the government policies or measures.

The majority of the data came from five company sectors: 1) supermarket, 2) construction materials, 3) food, 4) gold, and 5) metal welding services. In order to operate small and medium-sized firms, there are a number of issues and challenges that must be studied. There were entrepreneurial viewpoints on governmental policies and programs affecting small and medium-sized firms. There were other observations made without any involvement. It is an internal assessment of the operator's personality and the overall state of the enterprise. This is done so that the relationship between the research's aims and the information gathered may be explained. For trustworthy accuracy and compliance with the study goal, the tools' quality was inspected in part using tests of validity and certainty. To ensure the accuracy and completeness of the material in the data analysis section, qualitative data from interviews and observations were collected. By combining the data, the results of the content analysis used to group the data into categories based on educational concerns were summarized and interpreted to provide a general picture of the study's methodology and goals. This will outline each research

component in accordance with the study's goals and offer the comparison study's findings.

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Position	Problem	No Problem	l	Means	S.D.	Level	Ranking
1. Obstacle of the capita	1 52	8		-	-	-	-
2. Sales increasing more	often.		1.73	0.86	low		3
3. Goods increasing bett	er than 5 years a	go.		1.70	0.83	low	4
4. Staff increasing more	than 5 years ago).		2.33	1.04	low	1
5. Goods supplying bette	er than 5 years ag	go.		2.30	1.01	low	2
Total	52 (86.7%)	8 (13.3	%)	2.02	0.94	low	

 Table 1
 Perception to the capital (Source: Researcher surveyed between Mar. 2019-Jan. 2020)

Regarding management, a total of 32 respondents (53.3%) said that the management in the three southern border provinces was an issue and a barrier to the Thai-Malay Muslims' ability to do business. The problem with the

business's profit-loss comparison approach has improved over the last five years; the means are now 3.20 and 0.90, respectively, and the conversion rate is still at a medium level. It is rated first (see Table 2)

Table 2 Perception to the management (Source: Researcher surveyed between Mar. 2019-Jan.2020)

Position Problem		No Pr	oblem	Means	S.D.	Level	Ranking	
1. Management	32	28		-	-	-	-	
2. in Business better than 5 years ago				2.83	0.94	mediu	m	
3. Qualified staff more than 5 years ago.			3.02	3.02 0.60 medium				
4. 5 years experience on accountancy			3.15	0.82	mediu	m		
5. 5 years experience	e in profit-lo	DSS		3.20	0.90	mediu	m	
Total		32 (53.3%)	28 (46	5.67%)	3.05	0.82	mediun	1

42 respondents (70.0%) agreed that marketing was a challenge and barrier for the Thai-Malay Muslims in the three southernmost regions. Problems with marketing are handled by employees who lack previous expertise. The conversion remains high, with the averages at 3.90 and the standard deviation at 0.95. It is rated first (see Table 3).

Table 3Perception to the marketing (Source: Researcher surveyed between Mar. 2019-Jan.2020)

Position	Problem	No Problem	Means	Means S.D.		Ranking
1. Marketing.	42	18 -	-	-	-	
2. non-experienced worker	s.		3.90	0.95	high	1
3. Unable to get qualified workers.				0.69	medium	3
4. Product is not in line with the demand.				1.10	medium	4
5. Goods brand is unknown by the public.				0.62	medium	2
Total	42 (70.0%)	18 (30.0%)	3.30	0.84	medium	

In the portion of the data that relate to the hypothesis, money is a challenge and impediment to the Thai-Malay Muslims' ability to operate their businesses in each of the three southernmost provinces, and the statistical significance is at the 0.05 level. The likelihood was rated first and is connected to a total of 52 instances (86.7%). (see Table 4). According to

this hypothesis' conclusion, the financing sources are very worried about the commercial

issues facing the Thai-Malay Muslims in Thailand's three southernmost provinces.

Status	Amount	Means	S.D.	t	Sig.		
Problem	52	2.59	0.65	-6.32	0.008		
No Problem	8	4.06	0.22				
Total	60						
*p < 0.05							

- $H0:\mu 1 = \mu 2$ In the three southernmost provinces, funding is a challenge and an impediment to the Thai-Malay Muslims' business operations.
- H1: $\mu 1 \neq \mu 2$ In the three southernmost provinces, funding is a challenge and a barrier to the Thai-Malay Muslims' business operations.
- $$\begin{split} P (\text{probability}) &= 0.008, \, \alpha = (\text{significance level}) \\ &= 0.05 \quad \text{Thus the value of } P \text{ is} \\ &\text{less than } \alpha (\text{equal to Sig.}) \text{ then} \end{split}$$

it is to reject H0 and to accept H1.

In the second hypothesis, marketing poses a challenge and a barrier to the Thai-Malay Muslims' ability to do business in the three southernmost provinces. The 0.05 threshold of statistical significance is used. The likelihood is rated No. 2 and is based on a total of 42 instances (70%) (see Table 5). This hypothesis has found that the business issues faced by the Thai-Malay Muslims in the three southernmost regions of Thailand are likewise of great importance to the marketing sources.

Table 5: Comparison of the marketing (Source: Researcher surveyed between Mar. 2019-Jan.2020)

No Problem 18 3.74 0.37	Status	Amount	Means	S.D.	t	Sig.
	Problem	42	2.38	0.53	-9.90	0.00
Total 60	No Problem	18	3.74	0.37		
	Total	60				

* p < 0.05

- $H0:\mu 1 = \mu 2$ In the three southernmost provinces, marketing is a concern and an obstacle to the Thai-Malay Muslims' business operations.
- H1: µ1 ≠ µ2 In the three southernmost provinces, marketing is a challenge and an obstacle to Thai-Malay Muslim businesses.
- P (probability) = 0.00, α = (significance level) = 0.05 Thus the value of P is less than α (equal to Sig.) then it is to reject H0 and to accept H1.

According to the third hypothesis, management presents a challenge and impediment to the Thai-Malay Muslims' ability to do business in the three southernmost provinces. The 0.05 threshold of statistical significance is used. The likelihood, which is placed third, is connected to the total of 32 instances (53.33 percent) (see Table 6). This hypothesis has come to the conclusion that the business issues facing the Thai-Malay Muslims in the three southernmost regions of Thailand are likewise of great concern to the management sources.

<u><u> </u></u>	A (М	0.0	,	с.
Status	Amount	Means	S.D.	t	Sig.
Problem	32	2.20	0.46	-10.45	0.00
No Problem	28	3.46	0.47		
Total	60				

Table 6:Comparison of the management (Source: Researcher surveyed between Mar. 2019-Jan.2020)

* p < 0.05

- $H0:\mu 1 = \mu 2$ In the three southernmost provinces, management is a concern and a barrier to the Thai-Malay Muslims' business operations.
- H1: $\mu 1 \neq \mu 2$ In the three southernmost provinces, management is a challenge and a barrier to the Thai-Malay Muslims' business operations.

P (probability) = 0.00, α = (significance level) = 0.05 Thus the value of P is less than α (equal to Sig.) then it is to reject H0 and to accept H1.

Results of the Open-ended Form

According to Table 7's findings from interviews regarding the issues and challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises in the three southern provinces, a factor of labor shortages is the key issue that most firms share. This is due to the fact that each industry demands workers with certain skills and the ability to put in long hours. Businesses in the past continued to struggle with a lack of labor because workers experienced frequent entrance and leave issues. That is, they went out to work in a bigger company with greater pay when they had more experience and competence.

If not, they left to start their own company. Due to this, the quality of the labor was unequal, the development was uneven, and it had an impact on the productivity and product quality. In addition, many operators have a history of late payments with different financial institutions, which makes it difficult to access the system's sources of funding. Last but not least, small and medium-sized firms find it challenging to get capital due to the system's lack of financial sources, which made it practically impossible for them to develop.

Additionally, there is a concern about the lack of advancement in the public sector. It must acknowledge that government organizations should be used to help and promote small and medium-sized enterprises. Particularly for involved individuals in international commerce. For their international marketing, the government must provide assistance. Due to their lack of proficiency in advertising to market their firm, it is difficult for them to raise awareness and establish more crucial credibility with overseas clients. Furthermore, their plan suffers from a lack of cost leadership.

Businesses should strive to operate at the lowest costs possible in comparison to their rivals. Each company must thus get rid of any operational procedures that don't help the company succeed. This will benefit the company's capacity to compete favorably and maintain security and stability. In the field of discontent, it is particularly the business of growing agricultural crops. These crops include palm, coconut, rubber, and far-off fruits where the owner of the orchard has challenges in collecting fruit or traveling to a rubber plantation to sell the fruits. Muslims in the area can have issues with life safety.

DISCUSSION

If we look at the results, the general consensus on the issue of capital conversion is negative. The means were 2.02 and 0.94, respectively, for the standard deviation. However, when comparing the supporting variables, it seemed as if there were more employees now than there were five years ago. The outcome is subpar; it came in first place, with averages of 2.33 and a standard deviation of 1.04. This industry has both difficult and lucrative routes. There are differences between working as an employee and owning your own company. It's because the operating system differs. Regular office employees are expected to arrive at work and depart on schedule. As instructed by their manager or supervisor, they carry out their own position's tasks. This may sometimes impede many workers from being able to completely demonstrate their skills. Due to this, when they announced themselves as company owners, they may have created a need for employing one's skills to the maximum in order to create a business that grows gradually. If conducting such trade, they must use persuasive strategies and skills to get clients to their store to make purchases. As a result, it might be difficult for entrepreneurs to experience and learn more than they would by just working an office job. Owning a company also means that there are many prospects for profit, which is in accordance with Gu & Ku's research from 1997, which noted that financial support for small and medium-sized firms might be a crucial component. The battle will encourage the company to become more suited. And it is consistent with the finance strategy outlined by Wiset (2012), who claimed that the success of Bangkok's local bakery operators depends on the financial sector being at an adequate level (X = 3.52). He responded by saying that business owners need to maintain a steady and solid financial situation. And that has to be regulated and planned for development so that it becomes a common habit in daily life that is "ready to audit."

The general consensus of the management issues was moderate in Table 2. When compared to the supporting variables, it shows that knowledge of how to compare the profitloss in the company has improved over the previous five years, when the means were 3.20 and the standard deviation was 0.90. The means is at 3.05, the standard deviation is at 0.82. The outcome is also at a medium level and came in at No. 1. It is believed that studying financial accounts has a purpose. Three things are known about how to compare the profit-loss in excellent firms. They include things like 1) the capability of using financial figures to depict the corporate history. The reason for this is that financial statements are the tools used to keep track of the past, the knowledge used to summarize how the business is currently doing financially and in terms of each entity's performance and survival when compared to other entities in the same business, and the sufficient knowledge base used to initially predict the future. This is in line with the assertions made by Krasaesin et al. (2016) that the management paradigm is evolving. It's crucial to build a transitional organization's ability to deal with various shifting circumstances or conditions in the past.

The perspectives on the marketing issue were generally moderate in Table 3. When compared to the supporting elements, it indicates that the employees with no previous experience were engaged in marketing issues since the means were 3.30 and the standard deviation was 0.84. 3.90 is the average, while 0.95 is the standard deviation. The outcome is excellent and it came in first place. Making a difference in this area would help the Thai-Malay Muslims' small and medium-sized enterprises, which are one of their vulnerabilities. This remark was amply supported by the study's data as well. To stand out from the competition is the fundamental goal of marketing. It's crucial to consider fresh ideas for enhancing goods and services so that they stand out strongly. The correct thing to do each day is to ensure that the business wheel keeps turning, if we look at the ground. However, you won't have the possibility for long-term competitiveness if you don't concentrate on making a difference, such as by not gazing up at the sky. According to study by Chaloieboon (2016), the challenge with marketing small- and medium-sized firms' goods and services is that they often don't satisfy the demands of the local or domestic market. Additionally, it still lacks marketing expertise, particularly in regards to the global market. Meanwhile, conveniences like quick transit and competitiveness, which includes trade liberalization, are also problematic since they push big enterprises and imported goods into direct rivalry with domestic ones.

CONCLUSION

There is considerable interest in the issue of small and medium-sized businesses' contribution to the economy. The contribution of small and medium-sized firms to the growth of the nation is less obvious, however. Recent studies have attempted to examine the function of small and medium-sized enterprises in a number of areas that have sparked debate about the real nature of the sector, such as the income levels and the nations with bigger SMEs. The SMEs were asked, "Is inequality actually increasing and less prevalent? The existence of a sizable SME sector in the manufacturing sector is a feature of a high-growth economy, claims study based on data from several nations. The scale of big and medium-sized company groupings, however, does not seem to be a significant contributor to the country's quick economic expansion. The development of business-friendly environmental elements, such as sound and enforced intellectual property laws, or opening up of markets to such competition that it has a stronger impact on economic growth (Beck, 2013, p.85). But are small and medium-sized firms truly a significant contributor to the creation of jobs? Even while small and medium-sized firms provide a lot of employment, they are often unsustainable since they have a greater failure rate than bigger companies. Thus, small and medium-sized enterprises may not generate as many employment as they believe if you consider the amount of positions that last over the long term (Beck, 2013, p.85). Additionally, if we consider the wellbeing of the workers, the salary is equally crucial. People working in major organizations are often compensated more than others with same degree and job experience. Furthermore, according to

economic theory, small and medium-sized enterprises are probably not going to have a lot of access to finance. This is so that financial institutions may lend to both small and big enterprises with the same fixed financial transaction costs. As a result, lending to small businesses with low capital requirements has a higher unit cost (the costs here include documentation risk assessment and debt monitoring). Due to their hazy financial transaction history and scarcity of collateralized assets, small enterprises are often considered to be high risk. However, there are still crucial aspects that remain unclear. Do small and medium-sized firms, for instance, have less access to finance than huge corporations? Small and medium-sized firms get less financial services from financial institutions in the system than big organizations, according to a vast body of empirical research. However, certain problems arise when fewer small and medium-sized enterprises utilize the system's financial institutions, such as if this is because the companies don't have their own demands. Will small and medium-sized firms choose to utilize retained revenues or the owner's personal funds first? Is it less expensive than going via a commercial bank to apply for a loan? Cole & Sokolyk (2016) discovered that small and medium-sized enterprises do not apply for loans in response to this. There are those who don't need credit and others who need but hesitate to apply for it out of fear of being turned down. Additionally, Beck (2013, p. 85) and McKenzie & Woodruff (2016) discovered that a significant percentage of micro-enterprises-those run by owners just for survival-often fall within the classification of so-called small and medium-sized firms. They won't broaden their scope to include such larger corporations. Because of this, they don't really need the credit. The outcome of this study still need further understanding, however. If anybody is interested in continuing their study to learn more about the issues facing small and medium-sized enterprises in southern Thailand, they may do so by visiting the researcher's website.

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