Social Cohesion in Southern Border Provinces of Thailand

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Abstract

The study of social cohesion in the southern border provinces of Thailand aimed to measure overall social cohesion of the three southern border provinces of Thailand and test some of the factors that are likely to be associated with social cohesion. The questionnaire, which was initially developed by the European Foundation on Social Quality, and later adjusted by the Asian Consortium of Social Quality was employed to obtain the data from the samples, which were the eligible voters or those 18 years of age and above in the southern border provinces of Thailand. The procedure used was multi-stage sampling with a total number of 978.

The survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage, inferential statistics, the Chi-square test to prove the relationship between independent and dependent variables. From the research, we found that most people had a low level of trust, and said they needed to be very careful in dealing with people. Most of the samples said they are proud to be Thai. In addition, the aptitude towards the tension between groups in the southern border provinces, the respondents think there is tension between every groups. The research indicated that several factors significantly related to trust, including age, religion, education, the sufficiency of income, discrimination experience because of nationality, discrimination experienced because of religion, confidence in achieving higher social or economic status by themselves, and expectation of help from the government or non-government organizations. In addition, the research also found that age, religion, employment status, discrimination experienced because of religion, confidence in achieving higher social or economic status by themselves, and expectation of help from the government or non-government organizations were significantly related to the feeling of being proud to be Thai.
Keywords: Social cohesion, Trust, Identity, Southern border provinces

Introduction

Social cohesion is among the four dimensions of social quality; socioeconomic security, social inclusion, social cohesion, and social empowerment. Refined social quality is compelled to incorporate the characteristics specified by Walker (1998, p. 109). It must be a society whose members possess capacities and participate in social activities addressing social and economic matters. Such participation also occurs in the environment providing a springboard for fundamental potential development and appropriate welfare within a community. In terms of participation capacity, each member must have an acceptable level of economic security, social inclusion, cohesive communities, and empowerment in order to achieve full potential development.

Social cohesion is therefore considered a link, or a factor that strengthens society's unity, as Karuna Daengsuwan (2010, p. 16) defines "cohesion" as consensus in thinking, and further notes that in the case of Thai society today, there is an additional scope of meaning in terms of unity, forgiveness, and cease fighting or arguing with each other.

In the case of the three southern border provinces comprising Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala, it is an important strategic point where unrest continues. Since the gun robbery incident at the 4th Pattana Battalion Barracks (Narathiwat Rajanagarindra Regiment Camp), Cho-airong District, Narathiwat Province, on January 4, 2004. The Deep South Watch Center (2022) found that from January 2004 to March 2022, there were a total of 21,485 incidents of unrest in Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala provinces, as well as connecting areas in four districts of Songkhla Province, namely Chana, Thepha, Na Thawi and Saba Yoi, with 7,344 people killed and 13,641 injured.

From the incident, no one can deny that these problems have seriously affected the social quality of the southern border provinces of Thailand identified by Beck, van der Maeson, and Walker (1997, p. 3) as the extent to which people can participate in the social and economic life and development of their communities under conditions which enhance their wellbeing and individual potential, primarily, in term of social cohesion which is one of the four dimensions of social quality as defined by Bureekul (2008), as how society can work together as opposed to social divisions.

The issue of social cohesion among the people in the three southern border provinces is a much-talked-about issue among academics and practitioners working there. Instead, it has found a need for more empirical data to confirm the problem's existence. Therefore, this study of the social cohesion of the people in the three southern border provinces is a preliminary necessity to help confirm the problem. At the same time, the study will test some of the factors that are likely to be associated with social cohesion to guide policy formulation to address the problems that arise.

Literature review

Social quality

This research is based on the conceptual framework of social quality developed by the European Foundation on Social Quality (Beck et al., 2001). The four dimensions of social

quality, including socioeconomic security, social inclusion, social cohesion, and social empowerment, are elaborated as follows:

Socioeconomic security

Socioeconomic security refers to the extent to which people have resources over time, including financial resources, housing and environment, health care, and employment.

Social inclusion

Social inclusion is the extent to which people have access to and are integrated into, the various institutions and social relations that constitute everyday life. Access to social services is particularly crucial for those who lack resources. Such additional resources can help them to return to mainstream society (Chan, 2007, p. 50).

Social cohesion

Social cohesion is the extent to which social relations, values, and norms are collectively shared and accepted. Social cohesion includes trust, which comprises generalized trust and specific trust, social networks, and identities.

Social empowerment

Social empowerment is the ability to act and interact in various domains' content of social relations. It is the extent to which social relations enhance the personal capabilities of individual people and their ability to act. Social empowerment includes knowledge-based, and labor markets on control over an employment contract, prospects of job mobility, and reconciliation of work and family life.

Social cohesion

Myriad definitions of social cohesion have been proposed by many scholars as follows.

- McCracken (1998) stated that social cohesion was characterized by the social features concerning the association and relationship of societal units, for instance, between individuals, groups, associations, or areas.

- Ritzen et al. (2000, p. 6) put forward that social cohesion was defined as a group of individuals based in the same regions exhibiting the attitude and behavior in an attempt to constitute change.

- Van der Maesen (2006: 9) perceived social cohesion as a scenario in which a majority of society mutually accepted social relations, values, and standards.

Besides the definitions proposed above, Phillips and Berman (2008, p. 8) coined an exact term definition of social cohesion that it was a sense of unity and integrity conceiving based on shared characteristics or interests which could exert influence on the process of enhancing or trivializing/abolishing a social relation network and social structure accommodating such network. The principal criteria to assess social cohesion are listed below.

1. Trust
2. Integrative Norms and Values
3. Social Networks
4. Identity

Sub-topics and indicators have further elaborated on the four principles as in the table below.

Table 1 Main topics, sub-topics, and indicators of social cohesion

Topic	Sub-topic	Indicators
- Trust	- Overall trust	- The level of trust in the question "Can the majority be trusted?"
	- Specific trust	- Trust in: Government, Member of the House of Representatives, Political parties, armies, law and legislation, labor unions, police, religious institutions, government officers, and business sectors - Significance of trust in families, friends, relaxation, politic, parents, and their responsibility for childcare
- Integrative norms and values	- Making a sacrifice for others	- Volunteer activities, including the number of hours allocated to volunteer activities and blood donation
	- Embracing differences	- Attitudes toward aliens entitled to different benefits and defined by different cultures - Acceptance of different identities, beliefs, behaviors, and ways of life adopted by others -Beliefs in causes of poverty both on individual and structural levels
	- Social contract	- Willingness to pay extra tax upon being assured that it will be used to help those in need -Willingness to pay one extra percent of the tax to help the elderly - Desire to contribute to a community, such as cleaning out trash, buying essentials for the elderly, the disabled, and unwell community members, cleaning streets, Etc. - House chores assignment between men and women in a household.
- Social network	- Network	- Being a member of political movements, charity organizations, and sports associations - Receiving support from families, friends, and neighbors - Frequency of getting in touch with friends and colleagues
- Identity	- National identity/ region/community/group	- Patriotism - Demonstrating an indicator that reflects a national emblem - Emotional connection with regional, communal or local identities - a sense of belonging to one's family and relatives

Research methodology

This study used a quantitative method to investigate the social cohesion of the people in the three southern border provinces. Since, there are four topics to measure social cohesion, the sub-topics and indicators of integrative norms and values and social networks seem to be more complicated and do not fit with the Thai culture. Thus, this research focused only on the two topics; trust, and Identity.

The research samples were eligible voters or those 18 years of age in Thailand's three southern border provinces. The sample size was calculated according to Taro Yamane's formula with an error value of 0.05. 1,200 samples were used as the sample size, 400 samples from each province. The questionnaire, initially developed by the European Foundation on Social Quality (Gordon, 2005) and later adjusted by the Asian Consortium of Social Quality

(Wang, 2009), was employed to obtain the data from probability samples of communities in collecting the data from southern border provinces. The procedure was multi-stage sampling based on the three provinces; Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala. At least half of the districts in each province were randomly selected. Finally, 400 people were selected by accidental sampling, with a similar number from each district.

The collected data were analyzed by using the SPSS statistic program. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, were employed. Descriptive statistics were used to describe basic information about personal data and socio-psychological factors, including frequency and percentage. On the other hand, inferential statistics were used to determine the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The statistics used to analyze the relationship between variables to test the hypothesis was the Chi-square test.

Results

Based on the 1,200 total sample size, a total of 978 samples were collected, representing 81.5 percent of the total number, of which 302 samples were from Narathiwat province, 331 samples from Pattani province, and 330 samples from Yala province, with the missing of 15 samples (Table 2).

Table 2 Number of samples from each province

Province	Frequency	Percent
Narathiwat	302	30.9
Pattani	331	33.8
Yala	330	33.7
Missing	15	1.5
Total	978	100.0

Demographics

Approximately 38.3 percent of the respondents are males, and 61.1 percent are females, 27.1 percent are those with age between 21-30 years old, and 23.6 percent are 0-20 years old, and 21.9 percent are 31-40 years old, 15.8 percent are 41-50 years old the rest are those with over 50 years old.

Regarding religion, 64.1 percent of the respondents are Muslims, and 34.8 percent are Buddhists. 43.5 percent got a Bachelor's degree, 27.9 percent finished secondary school, and 8.25 percent finished primary education.

Social cohesion

In this study, 20.3 percent said that most people could be trusted. The majority of the people or 63.3 percent said, that we need to be very careful in dealing with people (Table 3).

Table 3 Trust in people

Trust	Percent
Most people can be trusted	20.3
You cannot be too careful	63.3
Do not know	10.3
No answer	6.1
Total	100.0

For the trust in various groups of people, most respondents trust the people in the same family (91.8 percent), 36.9 percent trust Personal acquaintances, 34.7 percent trust doctor, 13.6 percent trust on neighbors, 7.6 percent trust national political leader, 2.4 percent trust foreigners, and 2.2 percent trust people with a different religion. The least trust goes to strangers (1.0 percent) (Table 4).

Table 4 Trust various groups of people

Groups of people	Degree of trust in various groups of people						
	Total	Trust them completely	Trust them a little bit	Do not trust them very much	Do not trust them at all	Do not know	No answer
1) Family	**100.0**	91.8	6.1	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.1
2) Neighbors	**100.0**	13.6	74.7	9.3	0.8	0.6	1.1
3) Personal acquaintances	**100.0**	36.9	47.2	11.9	2.1	0.8	1.0
4) Strangers	**100.0**	1.0	7.0	33.9	54.3	2.5	1.2
5) People with different religion	**100.0**	2.2	24.4	39.1	26.1	7.0	1.2
6) Foreigners	**100.0**	2.4	12.2	36.7	38.2	9.4	1.1
7) Your doctor	**100.0**	34.7	40.1	8.3	6.6	8.7	1.7
8) National political leader (such as the overnor, president, party leader etc.)	**100.0**	7.6	34.1	26.9	20.3	9.4	1.7

For the trust in various organizations, most respondents trust the religious organization (89.8 percent), 82.3 percent trust the banks, 78.8 percent trust the university, 76.9 percent trust the judiciary, 72.8 percent trust the charitable or humanitarian organizations, 69.3 percent trust the scientists, 68.0 percent trust the army, 66.8 percent trust the TVs, 66.2 trust the administration, 64.7 percent trust the police, and 64.1 trust the newspapers. The least trust goes to the political parties (47.2 percent) (Table 5).

Table 5 Trust in various organizations

Organizations/ Institutions	Percent
1) Religious organizations	89.8
2) Army	68.0
3) Newspapers	64.1
4) TVs	66.8
5) Labor unions	58.8
6) Police	64.7
7) Judiciary	76.9
8) Administration	66.2
9) Political parties	47.2
10) Parliament (or equivalent, depending on your country's system)	55.5
11) NGOs	56.6
12) Major Companies	53.3
13) Scientists	69.3
14) University	78.8
15) Charitable or humanitarian organizations	72.8
16) Banks	82.3

For the groups that would not like to be the neighbors, most respondents mentioned drug addicts (84.9 percent), 77.7 and 73.7 percent mentioned people with heavy drinkers, and someone with a criminal record.

In a different direction, people in the southern border provinces prefer to stay close to people of a different race (9.3 percent), people who speak a different language (14.8 percent), and people of a different religion (19.6 percent) (Table 6).

Table 6 People that would not like to have as neighbors

Neighbors	Would not like to have as neighbors				
	Total	**Mentioned (would not like to be neighbors)**	**Not Mentioned**	**Don't know**	**No answer**
1) Drug addicts	100.0	84.9	10.3	2.9	1.9
2) People of a different race	100.0	9.3	84.3	4.3	2.2
3) People who have AIDS	100.0	54.1	36.3	7.5	2.2
4) Immigrants/foreign workers	100.0	40.7	45.8	11.2	2.4
5) Homosexuals	100.0	40.6	49.4	7.7	2.4
6) People of a different religion	100.0	19.6	72.4	5.5	2.5
7) Heavy drinkers	100.0	77.7	16.2	3.8	2.3
8) Unmarried couples living together	100.0	46.0	45.9	5.7	2.5
9) People who speak a different language	100.0	14.8	76.9	6.6	2.3
10) People with a criminal record	100.0	73.7	19.0	5.2	2.2
11) Someone with a mental health problem	100.0	69.0	21.6	7.0	2.4

For the pride of being Thai, 61.8 percent said that they are very proud, 21.4 percent said that they are pretty proud to be Thai, 1.81 percent said that they are not very proud, and 0.9 percent said that they are not proud at all (Table 7).

Table 7 Being proud to be a Thai

Level of pride	Percent
total	**100.0**
1) Very proud	61.8
2) Quite proud	21.4
3) Not very proud	1.81

Level of pride	Percent
total	100.0
4) Not proud at all	0.9
5) Don't know	1.24
6) No Answer	12.88

In terms of identities, we found that 88.5 percent of the people in southern border provinces said that they feel close to their neighbors, and 55.8 percent of the people in southern border provinces said that they feel close to the residents in the same city. 20.8 percent of the people in southern border provinces said that they feel close to the residents in the same metropolis or province, 32.9 percent of the people in southern border provinces said that they feel close to being a Thai, and 38.0 percent of the people in southern border provinces said that they feel closed to be the member of a Thai ethnicity (Table 8).

Table 8 How close to or distant from do you feel about the following identities you might have?

Identities	How close to or distant from do you feel					
	Total	Very close	Close	Distant	Very distant	Don't Know	No Answer
1) Resident of my neighborhood	100	28.6	59.9	9.8	0.6	0	1.1
2) Resident of my city	100	7.1	48.7	37.5	3.1	2.4	1.2
3) Resident of a metropolis or province	100	2.4	18.4	59.8	13.5	4.8	1.2
4) A Thai	100	8	24.9	34.4	24.6	7.1	1
5) Member of a Thai ethnicity	100	7	31	30.7	23.2	7	1.1
6) An Asian	100	2.2	14.6	36.6	34.4	11.1	1.2
7) A World Citizen	100	2.4	12.3	29.5	41.8	12.4	1.6

For direct contact, 78.2 percent said that they have contact with their family more than once or every day, 59.2 percent said that they have contact with their friends more than once or every day, 69.4 percent said that they have contact with their colleagues more than once or every day, and 57.1 percent said that they have contact with their neighbors more than once or every day (Table 9).

Table 9 Thinking of people living outside of your household, how often do you have direct (face-to-face) /indirect (by phone, e-mail, by post) contact with

Contact Persons	Total	More than once a day	Every day or almost every day	At least once a week	Once or twice a month	Several times a year	Less often	Don't have such relatives	Don't know	No answer
1) Family	100.0	42.9	35.3	12.8	3.1	3.4	0.9	0.1	0.5	1.1
2) Friends	100.0	16.3	42.9	26.7	5.3	4.6	1.6	0.2	1.0	1.4
3) Colleagues	100.0	16.6	52.8	12.9	4.4	3.5	1.0	1.1	5.9	1.8
4) Neighbors	100.0	9.9	47.2	23.3	9.4	4.3	2.6	0.8	1.1	1.4

When asked about the tension between the following groups in this country, half or more than half of the respondents think there is tension between every group of people. For instance, the tension between men and women is 49.3 percent (severe and somewhat profound), the tension between older adults and young people is 44.9 percent (severe and somewhat profound), tension between different racial and ethnic groups is 40.8 percent, and the tension between different religious groups is 47.5 percent (severe and somewhat serious) (Table 10).

Table 10 How much tension is there between the various groups in this country?

Groups	Total	Very serious	Somewhat serious	Not very serious	Not serious at all	Don't know	No answer
1) poor and rich people	100	15.9	46.1	26	7.5	4.1	0.9
2) management and workers	100	23.3	41.5	24.3	4.5	5.3	1.13
3) men and women	100	5.9	43.4	36.2	9	4.1	1.47
4) older people and young people	100	4.3	40.6	37.1	12.8	4.1	1.24
5) different racial and ethnic groups	100	4.6	36.2	36.6	14.9	6.3	1.36

6) different religious groups	100	8.4	39.1	34.5	11.1	5.5	1.47

For the aspect of life and institute that are important for them, most respondents think that family is the most important (93.1 percent), followed by respect for parents (84.3 percent), work (82.0 percent), religion (73.8 percent), the duty to children (60.9 percent), friends (54.0 percent), leisure time (43.2 percent), and politics is the least important (28.6 percent) (Table 11).

Table 11 For each of the following aspects, indicate how important it is in your life. Would you say it is?

Aspects	How important it is						
	Total	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not very Important	Not important at all	Don't know	No answer
1) Family	100.0	93.1	2.3	1.7	0.3	0.5	2.2
2) Friends	100.0	54.0	40.5	2.9	0.5	0.2	1.9
3) Respect for parents	100.0	84.3	12.4	0.8	0.3	0.1	2.0
4) Duty to children	100.0	60.9	33.1	3.2	0.3	0.1	2.4
5) Leisure time	100.0	43.2	39.8	14.1	0.6	0.2	2.2
6) Politics	100.0	28.6	44.8	19.8	3.5	1.2	2.2
7) Work	100.0	82.0	13.5	1.5	0.5	0.3	2.3
8) Religion	100.0	73.8	21.2	2.2	0.5	0.2	2.2

Factors Related to Trust and Being Proud to be Thai

Since social cohesion is important for area reconciliation, factors affecting social cohesion should be studied. This study employed a Chi-square test to analyze the relationship between independent variables, including seven demographic variables, four psychological factors, and two important social cohesion indicators, trust and, pride in being Thai.

For the variables that related to trust were age, religion, education, and sufficiency of income, and all four psychological factors, including discrimination experience because of nationality, discrimination experience because of religion, confidence in achieving higher social or economic status by themselves, and expectation of help from the government or non-government organizations (Table 12).

Table 12 The relationship between individual and psychological factors and trust

Individual and Psychological Factors	Trust on People			
	Most people can be trusted	Can't be too careful	Don't know	Total
1) Sex				
– Male	24.5	67.1	8.4	100.0
– Female	21.9	66.6	11.5	100.0
(Chi-square = 2.746, d.f. = 2, p = 0.253)				
2) Age				
– 0-20 Years	25.7	57.1	17.3	100.0
– 21-30 Years	21.2	68.0	10.8	100.0
– 31-40 Years	20.7	68.7	10.6	100.0
– 41-50 Years	28.9	67.6	3.5	100.0
– 51and more	13.6	84.1	2.3	100.0
(Chi-square = 36.654, d.f. = 8, p = 0.000)				
3) Religion				
– Muslim	22.7	64.3	13.0	100.0
– Other religion	23.1	72.1	4.9	100.0
(Chi-square = 15.074, d.f. = 2, p = 0.001)				
4) Marital status				
– Single	24.2	63.0	12.8	100.0
– Married	20.9	70.7	8.4	100.0
– Divorced	18.2	77.3	4.5	100.0
– Other	29.4	64.7	5.9	100.0
(Chi-square = 10.099, d.f. = 6, p = 0.121)				
5) Education				
– Primary school or lower	16.3	77.8	5.9	100.0
– Secondary school (Grade 7-9)	19.4	66.7	13.9	100.0
– Secondary school (Grade 10-12)	19.4	64.2	16.4	100.0
– Bachelor degree	24.6	66.8	8.6	100.0
– Higher than bachelor degree	45.9	49.2	4.9	100.0
(Chi-square = 38.184, d.f. = 8, p = 0.000)				
6) Employment status				
– Full time	23.0	67.8	9.1	100.0
– Part time	27.4	66.1	6.5	100.0
– Self employed	18.2	74.0	7.8	100.0
– Retired or unemployed	24.1	62.9	13.1	100.0
– Government service	33.3	33.3	33.3	100.0
(Chi-square = 13.368, d.f. = 8, p = 0.100)				
7) Sufficiency of income				
– Save money	23.4	70.3	6.3	100.0
– Just get by	19.4	72.0	8.6	100.0
– Spent some savings	25.5	50.0	24.5	100.0
– Spent savings and borrowed money	30.0	60.0	10.0	100.0
– Don't know	32.0	32.0	36.0	100.0
(Chi-square = 59.498, d.f. = 8, p = 0.000)				
8) Discrimination experience because of nationality				
– Yes	27.1	63.5	9.4	100.0
– No	22.4	68.2	9.3	100.0

Individual and Psychological Factors	Trust on People			
	Most people can be trusted	Can't be too careful	Don't know	Total
– Don't know	18.5	44.4	37.0	100.0
(Chi-square = 23.082, d.f. = 4, p = 0.000)				
9) Discrimination experience because of religion				
– Yes	18.6	72.6	8.8	100.0
– No	23.5	66.6	9.9	100.0
– Don't know	38.1	28.6	33.3	100.0
(Chi-square = 21.096, d.f. = 4, p = 0.000)				
10) How likely that one can achieve higher social or economic status by their own effort				
– Very likely	26.7	62.2	11.0	100.0
– A little likely	24.3	69.3	6.4	100.0
– Neither likely nor unlikely	9.5	85.5	5.0	100.0
– A little unlikely	7.1	92.9	0.0	100.0
– Very unlikely	31.2	62.5	6.2	100.0
– Don't know	23.3	37.2	39.5	100.0
(Chi-square = 82.589, d.f. = 10, p = 0.000)				
11) Expectation of help from the government or non-government organizations when facing trouble				
– Very much help	25.2	50.5	24.3	100.0
– A little help	26.0	68.2	5.8	100.0
– Neither much nor little help	25.4	68.0	6.5	100.0
– Little help	29.4	65.9	4.8	100.0
– Very little help	13.4	82.3	4.3	100.0
– Don't know	17.1	58.1	24.8	100.0
(Chi-square = 85.020, d.f. = 10, p = 0.000)				

When testing the relationship between demographic and psychological factors and feeling of being pride to be Thai, we found that the variables that related to the feeling of pride in being Thai were age, religion, and employment status, and three psychological factors, including discrimination experience because of religion, confidence in achieving higher social or economic status by themselves, and expectation of help from the government or non-government organizations (Table 13).

Table 13 The relationship between individual and psychological factors and being proud to be Thai

Individual and Psychological Factors	Being proud to be Thai			
	Very proud	Quite proud	Not very proud and others	Total
1) Sex				
– Male	71.1	22.9	6.0	100.0
– Female	71.1	25.0	3.9	100.0
(Chi-square = 2.348, d.f. = 2, p = 0.309)				
2) Age				

Individual and Psychological Factors	Being proud to be Thai			
	Very proud	Quite proud	Not very proud and others	Total
– 0-20 Years	32.9	56.0	11.1	100.0
– 21-30 Years	21.8	68.2	10.0	100.0
– 31-40 Years	24.9	66.3	8.8	100.0
– 41-50 Years	30.2	57.7	12.1	100.0
– 51and more	48.4	45.2	6.5	100.0
(Chi-square = 29.781, d.f. = 8, p = 0.000)				
3) Religion				
– Muslim	26.8	64.8	8.4	100.0
– Other religion	34.6	52.6	12.8	100.0
(Chi-square = 13.743, d.f. = 2, p = 0.001)				
4) Marital status				
– Single	68.4	26.2	5.4	100.0
– Married	73.4	22.8	3.8	100.0
– Divorced	68.4	21.1	10.5	100.0
– Other	77.1	18.8	4.2	100.0
(Chi-square = 5.016, d.f. = 6, p = 0.542)				
5) Education				
– Primary school or lower	69.3	26.0	4.7	100.0
– Secondary school (Grades 7-9)	65.5	24.1	10.3	100.0
– Secondary school (Grades 10-12)	70.8	24.5	4.7	100.0
– Bachelor degree	73.1	23.0	3.9	100.0
– Higher than a bachelor's degree	68.4	29.8	1.8	100.0
(Chi-square = 9.260, d.f. = 8, p = 0.321)				
6) Employment status				
– Full time	81.0	17.0	0.2	100.0
– Part-time	72.7	21.8	5.5	100.0
– Self-employed	62.5	30.7	6.8	100.0
– Retired or unemployed	60.9	32.1	7.0	100.0
– Government service	83.3	16.7	0.0	100.0
(Chi-square = 33.259, d.f. = 8, p = 0.000)				
7) Sufficiency of income				
– Save money	70.9	26.2	2.9	100.0
– Get by	68.3	23.3	8.3	100.0
– Spent some savings	76.2	21.8	2.0	100.0
– Spent savings and borrowed money	72.3	24.6	3.1	100.0
– Don't know	66.7	29.2	4.2	100.0
(Chi-square = 14.121, d.f. = 8, p = 0.079)				
8) Discrimination experienced because of nationality				
– Yes	64.6	25.6	9.8	100.0
– No	71.4	24.6	4.1	100.0
– Don't know	75.0	12.5	12.5	100.0
(Chi-square = 8.566, d.f. = 4, p = 0.073)				
9) Discrimination experienced because of religion				
– Yes	57.1	36.5	6.4	100.0
– No	74.8	21.0	4.2	100.0
– Don't know	92.9	0.0	7.1	100.0
(Chi-square = 27.729, d.f. = 4, p = 0.000)				
10) How likely that one can achieve higher social or economic status through their effort				
– Very likely	74.9	22.0	2.9	100.0

Individual and Psychological Factors	Being proud to be Thai			
	Very proud	Quite proud	Not very proud and others	Total
– A little likely	67.7	25.1	7.1	100.0
– Neither likely nor unlikely	63.7	31.0	5.3	100.0
– A little unlikely	42.9	50.0	7.1	100.0
– Very unlikely	86.7	13.3	0.0	100.0
– Don't know	73.0	16.2	10.8	100.0
(Chi-square = 23.331, d.f. = 10, p = 0.010)				
11) Expectation of help from government or non-government organization when facing trouble				
– Very much help	80.0	16.7	3.3	100.0
– Moderate help	70.2	26.3	3.4	100.0
– Neither much nor little help	68.8	25.6	5.6	100.0
– Little help	81.1	15.2	3.8	100.0
– Very little help	61.0	34.0	5.0	100.0
– Don't know	71.1	24.3	4.6	100.0
(Chi-square = 22.101, d.f. = 10, p = 0.015)				

Conclusion and recommendations

The study of social cohesion in the southern border provinces of Thailand aimed to measure the overall situation of social cohesion in the three southern border provinces of Thailand and test some of the factors that are likely to be associated with social cohesion. The questionnaire, which was originally developed by the European Foundation on Social Quality, and later adjusted by the Asian Consortium of Social Quality was employed to obtain the data from the samples, which were the eligible voters or those 18 years of age and above in the southern border provinces of Thailand. The procedure used was multi-stage sampling with a total number of 978.

From the research, we found that most people or 63.3 percent said that we need to be very careful in dealing with people. Only 20.3 percent said most people could be trusted. The group of people with the highest trust score is family (91.8 percent), followed by personal acquaintances (36.9 percent), and doctors (34.7 percent), respectively. At the organizational level, people in the southern border provinces have less trust in political parties (47.2 percent), private companies (53.3 percent), and the national parliament (55.5 percent). 61.8 percent said they are very proud, and 21.4 percent said they are proud to be Thai.

The respondents have a different attitude toward the people they prefer to stay close to. They prefer to stay close to people of a different race (9.3 percent), people who speak a different language (14.8 percent), and people of a different religion (19.6 percent). On the contrary, they to stay close to people with drug addicts (84.9 percent), people with heavy drinkers (77.7 percent), and someone with a criminal record (73.7 percent). The people in the southern border provinces think that family (93.1 percent), respect for parents (84.3 percent), work (82.0 percent), and religion (73.8 percent) are more important than other aspects of life.

In terms of identities, we found that 88.5 percent of the people in southern border provinces said that they feel close to their neighbors, and 55.8 percent of the people in southern

border provinces said that they feel close to the residents in the same city. 20.8 percent of the people in southern border provinces said that they feel close to the residents in the same metropolis or province, 32.9 percent of the people in southern border provinces said that they feel close to being Thai, and 38.0 percent of the people in southern border provinces said that they feel closed to be the member of a Thai ethnicity.

When asked about the aptitude for tension between groups in the southern border provinces, half or more than half of the respondents think. For instance, the tension between men and women is 49.3 percent (severe and somewhat serious), tension between old people and young people is 44.9 percent (very serious and somewhat profound), the tension between different racial and ethnic groups is 40.8 percent, and tension between different religious groups is 47.5 percent (very serious and somewhat serious). They also need more contracts with their colleagues and neighbors.

The results from the research indicated that several factors that related to trust, including age, religion, education, the sufficiency of income, discrimination experience because of nationality, discrimination experienced because of religion, confidence in achieving higher social or economic status by themselves, and expectation of help from the government or non-government organizations. In addition, the research revealed the relationship between individual and psychological factors and feelings of pride in being Thai, including age, religion, employment status, discrimination experience because of religion, confidence in achieving higher social or economic status by themselves, and expectation of help from the government or non-government organizations.

Since the social cohesion situation in the southern border provinces still has some problems, especially when compared with the overall situation of the country, so the concerned units, especially the Southern Border Provinces Administration (SBPAC), which is the main body to solve the social cohesion problem in the area should formulate and implement the following policies:

1. Since the research found that religion and discrimination experienced because of religion were related to trust and feeling of pride to be Thai, the cultural pluralism policy should be maintained to create identity and unity within the group of people with different religions and high cultural diversification.

2. In response to the expectation of achieving the higher economic status of the people, the government should have a clear development policy to improve the quality of life and infrastructure for southern border provinces to upgrade the current standard of living of the people at the more appropriate level.

3. Empowerment and channel of participation should be opened for the local leader, especially Muslim leaders from all aspects of life, such as religious, local wisdom, academics, officials, trader, and ordinary people; to participate and give suggestion to solve the problems and developing the area.

4. In order to win people heart and lessen the feeling of discrimination, the improving of government units within the area to be more efficiency, and the selection of high performance officials working in the area should be the high government priority.

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