Political Information Seeking from Information Sources of Youths in Three Southern Border Provinces, Thailand

การแสวงหาสารสนเทศทางการเมืองจากแหล่งสารสนเทศของเยาวชนในสามจังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้ ประเทศไทย

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Abstract

This research aims to study the level of political information seeking and compare religions and living places with the political information

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seeking of youths in three border provinces in Southern Thailand. The research was based on surveying, and a self-constructed questionnaire was administered to a sample of 330 youths aged 18 to 25 years who lived in the following three provinces consisting of Pattani, Narathiwat, and Yala. The group was obtained by accidental sampling with a simple random sampling method, and the data was statistically analyzed. The results demonstrated that: 1) Most of the youths were Islamic and were school or university students. Their political information seeking was, in general, at a high level. Most sought the information on the Internet, followed by political information sources and individual information resources. 2) A comparison based on religion and place of residence indicated that Muslim and Buddhist youths differed significantly in their use of mass media and political information sources ($p < .05$). However, no statistically significant difference was found in political information-seeking behavior between youths living in urban and rural areas ($p > .05$). The research results reflect the knowledge and understanding of youths regarding political information sources. The findings can be used to develop information that better responds to youths' needs and to promote appropriate information-seeking behaviors, as well as accurate knowledge and understanding of Thailand's political context.

Keywords: Information Seeking, Political Information, Information Sources, Youths, Three southern Border Provinces

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาระดับการแสวงหาสารสนเทศทางการเมือง และเปรียบเทียบศาสนาและแหล่งที่อยู่อาศัยกับการแสวงหาสารสนเทศทางการเมืองจากแหล่งสารสนเทศของเยาวชนในสามจังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย เป็นการวิจัยเชิงสำรวจโดยใช้แบบสอบถามกับกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่เป็นเยาวชน อายุ 18 ถึง 25 ปี ที่มีภูมิลำเนาอยู่ในพื้นที่สามจังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้ ประกอบด้วย จังหวัดปัตตานี จังหวัดนราธิวาส และจังหวัดยะลา จำนวน 330 คน โดยใช้วิธีการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบบังเอิญ ด้วยวิธีการสุ่มอย่างง่าย และวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยวิธีการทางสถิติ ผลการวิจัยพบว่า 1) เยาวชนส่วนใหญ่นับถือศาสนาอิสลาม โดยมีสถานะเป็นนักเรียน/นักศึกษา โดยมีพฤติกรรมการแสวงหาสารสนเทศทางการเมืองในภาพรวมอยู่ในระดับมาก ซึ่งส่วนใหญ่แสวงหาสารสนเทศจากแหล่งอินเทอร์เน็ต รองลงมาคือ แหล่งองค์การทางการเมือง และแหล่งสารสนเทศบุคคล และ 2) การเปรียบเทียบศาสนาและแหล่งที่อยู่อาศัยกับการแสวงหาสารสนเทศทางการเมือง โดยผลจากการเปรียบเทียบพบว่า เยาวชนที่นับถือศาสนาอิสลามและศาสนาพุทธแสวงหาสารสนเทศทางการเมืองจากแหล่งสื่อมวลชน และแหล่งองค์การทางการเมืองโดยมีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ($p < .05$) และเยาวชนที่อาศัยอยู่ในแหล่งสังคมเมือง และสังคมชนบทแสวงหาสารสนเทศทางการเมืองจากแหล่งสารสนเทศไม่แตกต่างกันอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ($p < .05$) โดยผลจากงานวิจัยสามารถสะท้อนให้เห็นถึงความรู้ความเข้าใจในเรื่องแหล่งสารสนเทศทางการเมืองของเยาวชนและสามารถนำไปสู่แนวทางการพัฒนาสารสนเทศที่สามารถตอบสนองและเข้าถึงความต้องการเพื่อให้เยาวชนอยู่บนพื้นฐานของการมีพฤติกรรมสารสนเทศและมีความรู้ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับการเมืองของประเทศไทยได้

คำสำคัญ: การแสวงหาสารสนเทศ สารสนเทศทางการเมือง แหล่งสารสนเทศ เยาวชน สามจังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้

Introduction

Thailand southern border is in multicultural areas where Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces are situated. People in general hold Islamic

religion, whose specific identities are prominent. For instance, they use Malay (Yawi) in communication, and for traditional and cultural purposes, which correlate to the religious and political principles. The unrest situation has commenced in these areas and raised people's ways of living and occupation (Kaewsuwun, 2023: 85). Most of the people, mainly the youths aged 18 to 25 years (16.79%) of the three border provinces, open themselves to information resources (Kaewsuwun, 2023: 85). The election behaviors of the people in these three border provinces are still based on individuals rather than political parties' principle policies. However, these behaviors of youths gradually change nowadays, with more consideration on political parties' policies rather than on individuals (Matapitak, 2023: Online). Ekkarin Tuansiri (Tuansiri, 2023: Online as cited in Matapitak, 2023: Online) reported that in the 2023 Election, the South topped in the number of people's using their rights to vote, marking the first highest number in the country. Most voters were in their 18 to 22 years of age, totaling 170,074 people, of which 64,244 (37.77%) people were from Narathiwat, 61,992 (36.45%) from Pattani, and 43,838 (25.78%) from Yala. Most of these voters were influenced by the media that they opened up to, as the receivers and senders of information and political information builders themselves. These people are usually called "Natural Election Canvassers".

With the people's opening up to political information, media has become the channel with the role to present information to the youths in the form of information transfer through the means easily reached by the youths, such as chatting rooms, radio, newspaper, television and Internet (Witoon, 2019: Online). At the same time, when the youths want to obtain political information, they seek it through different resources, such as individual sources, institution information sources, mass media sources, The

Internet sources and political organization sources (Rumdon, 2019: 49-52). In so doing, they use analytical and synthesizing skills, media cognizance, and use information to back up their daily decision making. Such behaviors correspond to the behavioral concept of everyday life information seeking of Savolainen (2005: 143), who divided man's information behaviors into two categories, namely, (1) Passive information seeking, which is shown when an individual only receives information from various sources, and (2) Active information seeking, which is shown when an individual receives and becomes interested in the information or when the information is not sufficient for his or her decision, leading to information need and the behavior in information seeking from various sources. When receiving the right information, the information use behavior will support the seeker's political decision making (Rumdon, 2019: 49-52; Kewsuwun, 2023: 85; Jaitiang, 2024: 139). According to Wilson (2000: 51), objective information seeking results from a need of an individual. During the course of information seeking, the individual finds it necessary to interact with the relevant information system, which could be a human information system such as a library, newspapers, or a computerized information system, e.g., World Wide Web. In addition, the individual different needs will lead to different behaviors or actions, depending on the factors underlying the need for such information, for instance, basic needs, personal characteristic, background, motivation behind the information seeking, living place, social limitation, social surrounding, culture, belief, religion, etc. (Wilson, 2000: 51).

The review of research related to the political information seeking in the three border provinces in the South showed that there has been research on political information seeking behaviors of youths in these three provinces (Kaewsuwan, 2023: 85). This research principally and merely

attempted to study the youths' political information behaviors and their decision to participate in politics. To date, there have been no studies on political information seeking behaviors of the youths in the border areas in the South, or in the multicultural areas, or in any specific multi-society. When considering the research issues, comparison of information sources with religions and living places – all of which are fragile topics and hold the specific contexts different from other areas – has not been found. The fact that people in general are Islamic Thai means the specific difference from the majority of Thailand population in two aspects: the people being Islamic and the Islamic people are the nation's minority. When accounting the historical pathway of the Islamic people in the southern border provinces – most influenced by Malaysian – it was found that this could have resulted in political issues in the country and might have led to information admittance or seeking of information that in turn is used in political decision making. The people's different attitudes from the Government's policies might lead to political conflicts (Visalaporn, 2009: 115). This finding correlates to a study of the Faculty of Education, Prince of Songkla University (2010: 1), which mentioned that the majority of people in the southern three border provinces are Islamic. Political governing relies on religious leaders, who are comparable to leaders or icons of people's thought and action. These leaders may persuade youths to follow them and hence the youths may develop certain attitudes against governmental organizations both in the local and national levels (Kaewsuwun, 2023: 85). Additionally, when considering the population and the research sample group; it was found that most select their working group from media, community leaders, female Islamic group, governmental officers, and some youth groups as the sample in the research process. More-

over, when the researchers further studied and reviewed research related to the political information seeking and political communication of the youths, it was found that there were only specific studies on communication to build reconciliation and communication of Islamic people related to the unrest in the three southern provinces, information behaviors, information seeking and use for safety and security, and the situation and means to develop peace for Islamic youths. No specific studies have been found on the political information seeking issues of the youths in the three borders with emphasis on comparison of religions (Islam and Buddhism) and living places (urban and rural societies). These issues could differ in terms of area contexts and political information seeking from areas in other provinces. Thus, for better understanding of the viewpoints, a study should be carried out on the gap between utilization of knowledge and the expansion of education related to political information seeking from the information sources of youths in the South or in other areas with similar characteristics or with the multiplicity of behaviors, religions, cultures, and living places. The findings will lead to completion of knowledge and understanding of the political information seeking from information sources.

The aforementioned reasons and necessities, together with intention to raise understanding of the political information seeking of youths in the three southern border provinces – the area of multiplicity of behaviors, religions, cultures and living places – can, as discussed, lead to better understanding of their political information seeking. The researchers were thus interested in studying the political information seeking from information sources and comparing religions and living places with the political information seeking from the youths' information sources in the three southern border provinces. The results would yield useful knowledge

about their political information seeking behaviors. Additionally, the study results could be used in setting policies, plans, and strategies for disseminating political information that effectively responds to the needs of the youths in the three provinces. Leaders or official and political organizations, both at the local and national levels, e.g., the Office of Election Committee and the Municipal Office, can also appropriately use the results as the information that supports their presentation of political information via different information sources. Moreover, the research results could be used as information for the Information Service Institute or other relevant agencies to design and manage their political information services appropriately as well as designing political media that correspond to the behaviors of the youths in the three southern border provinces and other similar areas in the future.

Research Objectives

1. To study the level of the political information seeking of the youths in the three southern border provinces from information sources

2. To compare religions and living places with the political information seeking of the youths in the three southern border provinces from information sources

Scope of Research

1. Research Variables

1.1 Independent Variables: religions and living places of the questionnaire respondents

1.2 Dependent Variables: the political information seeking from information sources, including individual source, institutional source, mass media source, the Internet source, and political organization source.

2. Research Sites Three southern border provinces were selected as the research sites, comprising Pattani, Narathiwat, and Yala, as the analytical unit for the study. The research sites were classified into two categories: rural and urban societies, according to the Rural-Urban Continuum Model by Dewey (Abrahamson, 2014: 14-15), which is used as the criterion for classifying urban and rural societies based on population size, area density per population, area scope (outside urban or municipality areas), economic condition (living expense and income), occupation, and cultural changes.

Methodology

This survey research was based on the quantitative method and process. It was performed systematically based on the following theories:

1. Population and the Sample Group

1.1 The research population included youths at the age of 18 to 25 who were entitled to voting in the political election. The youths' ages were based on the criterion suggested by the United Nation International Children's Emergency Funds (UNICEF). The youths resided in the three southern border provinces: Pattani, Narathiwat and Yala.

1.2 The sample group size was determined based on the Infinite Population Size. This research admitted 5% discrepancy from the formula of Srisa-ard (2002: 34). In this case, the sampling of a population will be based on accidental sampling using the simple random sampling method to give every unit of the population an equal chance of being selected, making the sampling process independent of the researcher's preferences or intentions and increasing the representativeness of the population. The sampling was performed from the population using the Accidental Sampling method, and the sample in each province was divided as follows: 1) Pattani province: 55 people in the urban group and 55 people in the rural group; 2)

Narathiwat: 55 in the urban group and 55 in the rural group; and 3) Yala provinces: 55 in the urban group and 55 in the rural group; altogether totaling 330 people.

In order to reduce and prevent bias from accidental sampling, using simple random sampling method, the researcher has prepared a population frame that matches the characteristics to be studied correctly and completely. If the sample does not respond to the questionnaire, another person will be randomly selected to replace them.

2. Research Tool The set of questionnaire constructed by the researchers comprised 25 questions, divided into 2 sections as followed:

Section 1 General data – including 7 multiple-choice questions on gender, age range, education, religion, occupation, monthly income, and living place.

Section 2 Political information seeking from information sources – including 18 questions in the 5 Likert-scale selection format.

The quality of the questionnaire was validated through the following procedures:

1) The questionnaire was sent to qualified experts with experience, knowledge, abilities, and expertise in information behaviors, information science, or social science; or an expert who had been appointed as an event speaker, or a person graduated at a master's degree level or higher. Three experts with the said qualifications were selected by Purposive Sampling method and were invited to measure the quality and content validity of the questionnaire. Next, the item objective congruence (IOC) was calculated to see if the questions were congruent to the research objectives and the specific terms used. The calculation showed that IOCs of most questions were from 0.6-1 and above, which meant they passed the set

criteria. The researchers then amended the questions in accordance with the experts' instruction.

2) The questionnaire was tried out with 30 young people in Songkhla province, who represented both urban and rural societies. The clarity of the content and language used were checked for their accuracy with the research objectives. The questionnaire validity was analyzed based on Cronbach's Method, by finding alpha coefficient (α-coefficient). The results showed that the overall validity of Section 2 of the questionnaire was 0.85.

3. Data Collection Data was collected by sending out 330 copies of the questionnaire, and they were collected back by the researchers themselves. In the risk areas, the local community volunteers were asked as assistants to collect the data. Official letters were sent from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prince of Songkhla University to local/community leaders or the local governing department to authorize data collection. With the letter, research consent forms were attached for participants to sign. Data was collected from February 2022 until April 1, 2022, totaling 3 months. The number of questionnaire copies returned was 330 (100%), from whence analysis began.

4. Analysis of Data Ready-made programs were used to analyze statistical data. For Section 1 on general data, the frequency distribution and percentages were computerized while for Section 2 on the behaviors in seeking the political information from information sources, the means ($\bar{x}$), standard deviations (S.D.), and t-test were analyzed to compare the independent with the dependent variables.

5. Human Research Ethics This research was approved in terms of human research ethics by the Human Research Ethics Committee, Prince of Songkla University on January 21, 2022. The project number assigned is Project No. REC Number: psu.pn.2-099/64.

Results of Research

The research results are presented according to the research objectives as followed:

1. General Data – Most of the youths or research respondents were female (212 respondents, 64.20%), 147 of them (44.50%) were 20 to 21 years old. In general, 179 respondents (54.20%) held a bachelor's degree. Of the 330 respondents, 304 (92.10%) were Islamic. The majority, or 271 respondents were school or university students (82.10%). The monthly income of 285 respondents (86.40%) was less than 10,000 baht. The number of respondents living in the urban and rural areas were equal, i.e., 165 (50%).

2. Levels of Political Information Seeking from Information Sources of Youths in the Three Southern Border Provinces

1) The political information seeking from information sources of youths in the three southern border provinces – In general, most youths' degree of the political information seeking was at a high level ($\bar{X}$=3.64). When categorized into types of the highest information source, the second and the third sources, it was found that most youths sought political information from The Internet mostly ($\bar{X}$=4.41), followed by political organization source ($\bar{X}$=3.80), and individual source ($\bar{X}$=3.52). The political information seeking classified by religions and living places is as follows:

1.1) Political information seeking classified by religions–Buddhist youths sought political information from the Internet, showing the highest average in seeking and accessing the information from political information websites ($\bar{X}$=4.65). Meanwhile, most Islamic youths similarly sought and had access to political information from The Internet and political news Website at the highest level ($\bar{X}$=4.56).

1.2) Political information seeking classified by the living place–It was found that most youths in the urban society also similarly sought political information from The Internet. Their seeking and access to Websites presenting political information was at the highest level ($\bar{X}$=4.60). Likewise, most youths in the rural areas sought political information from The Internet, demonstrating that their seeking and accessing to Websites presenting political information was at the highest level ($\bar{X}$= 4.6-).

3. Comparison of Religions and Living Places with the Political Information Seeking from Information Sources of Youths in the Three Southern Border Provinces

Table 1: Comparison of religions with political information seeking of youths in the three southern border provinces

Information Sources	Islam		Buddhism		t	Sig.
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.		
1. Individual source	3.16	.987	3.71	.922	-2.608	.750
2. Institutional source	2.51	1.601	3.00	1.561	-1.464	.436
3. Mass media source	2.93	1.378	3.90	.933	-3.442	.004*
4. Internet source	4.37	.770	4.52	.757	-.929	.995
5. Political organization source	3.53	1.296	4.15	.646	-2.345	.001*

* < lower than .05 statistical significant at .05

In Table 1, the comparison result of religion with the political information seeking of youths from information sources in the three southern border provinces demonstrates that Islamic and Buddhist youths

seek political information from mass the media source and political organization source mostly; the difference being significant at .05.

Table 2: Comparison of living places with political information seeking of youths in the three southern border provinces

Information Sources	Urban		Rural		t	Sig.
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.		
1. Individual source	3.24	1.035	3.17	.948	.598	.185
2. Institutional source	2.45	1.669	2.65	1.528	-1.159	.021
3. Mass media source	3.10	1.409	2.91	1.331	1.220	.395
4. Internet source	4.48	.706	4.29	.818	2.294	.052
5. Political organization source	3.69	1.175	3.47	1.350	1.577	.080

* < lower than .05 statistical significant at .05

In Table 2, the comparison of political information seeking between youths living in urban and rural areas in the three southern border provinces shows no significant difference. Both groups sought information from similar sources, with the difference not being statistically significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

1. Degrees of Political Information Seeking from Information Sources

As for the degrees of the political information seeking from the information sources, classified by religions and living places, the majority of Islamic/Buddhist youths and the youths living in urban/rural society similarly

sought and had access to political information from political news websites on The Internet. Their sources and accessibility are due to the fact that The Internet is the information source that compiles relatively multiple forms of data, truths, and information. There are various platforms that the youths can select and access. Besides, The Internet sources are also connected to usage on the platforms of online social networks such as Podcast, Clubhouse, Twitter, Facebook, Line, etc. Moreover, The Internet is the source of news and information accessible by most youths via digital technological tools that are portable and convenient to use for communication or in daily life, such as mobile phone, iPad, notebook or tablet. The seeking of and access to political information through the Internet source is therefore easy and convenient among youths having the said tools. The present age political information, additionally, has been transformed from published media to varieties of forms that better suit users' behaviors and qualified speakers equipped with digital technology including multi-media, electronics books, or infographics. Users obtain information through message sending or chatting with people whose interest is alike via specialized closed group or Podcast. Youths can thus easily, conveniently, and quickly access political information via The Internet networks. Their accessibility correlates to the studies by Wutthi (2009: 84); Cheman & et al. (2016: 102); Chongchorhor & Kabmala (2017: 10); Rumdon (2019: 147-148); Kewsuwun (2023: 92), which showed that the political information seeking is done from near information sources with the quality of strength in rapidness, easy access in a number of forms including images, messages, and soundtrack. The information obtained can also be simply shared with others with no need to travel for information from other sources. Besides, the results agree with the research work by Thatsanathinnakorn & Pecharasorn (2016: 68-69) and Cheman & et al.

(2016: 102) who found that youths follow political information and news from easily accessible information sources that present interesting pictures and sound. The information they receive is also up-to-date, can further be self-searched, and contains more varieties, corresponding to the research results that youths can gain access to political information easily, conveniently, and rapidly at any place and time. The Internet source is therefore a political information source with an effect on the degree of the political information seeking of youths in the three southern border provinces.

Political information seeking of youths in general is done from The Internet, due to convenience and multiplicity of information amount. Nevertheless, information use from the Internet source involves a number of risks; and thus users, especially the youths, should be aware of. The research work by Flanagin & Metzger (2008: 5-6) points out the major risks from the Internet information use, i.e., errors of information disclose, which are due to lack of accuracy and reliability, in turn arising from non-strict investigation. Moreover, many sources could possibly present distorted information or present it with bias. Consequently, youth users are exposed to erratic information that could lead to mistakes in their decision or understanding of different issues. Additionally, there is a risk in safety and privacy from unintentional disclose of personal information, or from being followed by unreliable websites. This may lead to risk in information piracy, hacking, or breaching of personal information (Pew Research Center, 2019: 9-10). Likewise, Kim & et al. (2017: 311) stated that youths risk psychological effects from continuous use of the Internet for information seeking with no control, which can lead to addiction (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017: 104-105). Moreover, there is the risk in loaded accumulation of information

that leads to stress or worries and the risk in being persuaded to inappropriate information such as illegal or violent contents. The latter may affect their behaviors and mind, especially if they lack self-planning and self-control (Livingstone & et al. (2011: 311). The research result reflects that the behavior in political information seeking from The Internet does not only arise from convenience and ease of accessibility, but also causes inherent risks. The issues to be aware, cautious of and appropriately managed, particularly among youths (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017: 102), are the information quality, emotional impact, feeling, conscience and consideration.

The research results also demonstrated that the degree of youths' political information seeking from the political organization source classified by religions and living places ranked the second place. This was probably because the political organization source is a specialized source that compiles and stores political information of political parties or alliance parties that can offer information with specific depth. In addition, the fact that youths seek political information from the political organization source reflects that the youths are cautious, hold an impartial attitude, or suspect other information sources from organizations with clarified standpoint. The finding agrees with the past study that illustrated youths' selection of safe information sources they confide (Cheman & et al. 2016: 102).

2. Comparison of Religions and Living Places with the Political Information Seeking from Information Sources

2.1 The comparison of religions with the political information seeking of youths from information sources, focusing on mass media and the political organization source, revealed that the Islamic and Buddhist youths' means of information seeking is not the same. The difference occurred from

the areas of border provinces that are multicultural or multisocial, with varieties of religions, traditions, life styles, languages and beliefs. The said issues are fragile; their contexts being specific and different from other areas. Additionally, most of the population are Islamic and are the minority of the country. When their background and history of the Muslims are taken into account, it can be seen that most youths have been influenced by the Malaysian, the fact that could lead to the nation's political problems, their opening to or seeking information that supports their decision making, selection of information, and use of information for political benefits. The Muslims, moreover, hold attitudes that differ from governmental policies, probably causing political conflicts (Visalaporn, 2009: 115). The finding also agrees with a study by the Faculty of Education, Prince of Songkla University (2010: 1), which said that most of the population in the three southern border provinces is Islamic. Generally, governing depends on religious leaders who are also opinion and action leaders. The leaders persuade youths to follow, and hence influence the youths' conduct and information seeking behaviors that are otherwise dominated by their attitudes and accepting of information (Kewsuwun, 2023: 93-94). In addition, a study by Latae (2019: 89-90) mentioned that the religious leaders take the role of a teacher or a religious school principal. These leaders are the leaders of the state of mind, which influences Muslim people's conduct to be scoped within the religious principle. Hence, it can be said that the youths' religion affects their political information seeking from information sources, leading to difference in information seeking means of the Islamic and Buddhist youths.

2.2 From the comparative study of political information seeking of youths from the information sources, it was found that the urban and rural

youths alike sought political information from five sources. Their seeking could be due to the present evolution in digital technology and information networks that enable the youths to have access to political information with the use of their digital technology tools. They were found to be able to share their information and news through various communication platforms with a higher degree of ease, convenience, rapidity, and accuracy (Cheman & et al., 2016: 100). Besides, in the present age, The Internet source is a source that collects and stores data. Information coming in multiplicity of forms can be easily accessed via various platforms for users to select and reached by using their mobile phone, iPad, notebook or tablet. Such convenience eases their search and access to political information (Kewsuwun, 2023: 85). If talking about information sources, including institutions, individuals, mass media, and political organizations, the political information at present within those information sources were found to have changed their forms from published media or tangible documents to multiple forms of digital information. These forms are also interactive, such as multimedia, electronics books, or Podcast. There are tools for communicating or chatting with individuals or groups of individuals, e.g., Teleconference, Zoom meeting, Google meeting, etc. In addition, there emerges the artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT/GEMINI to interact with others in order to find answers to problems, communicate, or give instruction. Consequently, the youths are able to gain access to political information by several means and from various information sources at the same time with ease, convenience, and rapidity. The gap between information and knowledge access of the youths in the three southern border provinces is thus lessened. Therefore, it can be said that the youths' living places do not influence their political information seeking from the

information sources; hence enabling both the urban and rural youths to seek political information from the same information sources.

Conclusion

The majority of the youths in the three southern border provinces are Islamic whose social status is being school or university students. The political information seeking from the information sources of most youths is from The Internet source, political organization source, and individual source. When classified by religions and living places, it was found that the Islamic and Buddhist youths alike seek and obtain access to information from political information websites. When classified by living places, both the urban and rural youths alike seek political information from political information websites, too.

The comparison of religions and living places with the political information seeking from the information sources of the youths showed that the majority of Islamic and Buddhist youths differently seek political information from mass media sources and political information sources. The difference is statistical significant; it shows that religions dissimilarly affect the youths' information sources that they use. The principle sources they choose are the mass media and political organization sources. At the same time, when considering the living places, it was found that the youths living in urban and rural societies seek political information from similar information sources; the similarity being statistically significant. Thus, it shows that living place does not influence the youths in information seeking as they similarly use the five information sources.

The knowledge obtained from this research benefits studies on the behaviors of political information seeking. The benefit can be extended to the political information behaviors of youths in various contexts. Moreover,

the knowledge can be used to set public relation strategies, promotion policies, and strategies for deploying dissemination of political information that efficiently responds to the behaviors of youths in the three southern border provinces, both at the local organization level, and the provincial and national level. Finally, the knowledge can be used as the basic information in provision of information services to the information service institutions in the locality to design the political information service that is appropriate and correlates to the behaviors of the youths in the three southern border provinces. Therefore, for the safety of information seeking of the youths in the three southern border provinces, the accuracy, quality and distortionlessness of information; the following recommendations can be concluded: 1) Parents see the importance of safety precaution in the digital world and time administration for The Internet use of their children. 2) Teachers take the role in providing knowledge and teaching their students to evaluate the reliability of information. 3) Religious leaders participate in impartial dissemination of political information. 4) The Office of Election Committee or policy makers develop bi-lingual campaign (Thai and Malay (Yawee) for Islamic people accessibility. All of these will lead to the highest efficiency in the safety of the Internet use by youths.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations for Further Utilization of Research Results

The majority of youths in the three southern border provinces mostly seek political information from the political website category of The Internet sources. Thus, relevant agencies or organizations with the monitoring role and duty should cautiously and efficiently check and screen information before dissemination. The sensitive issues in religion and the

present conditions should be taken into account. Besides, the political information publicized need to be provable, having clear references according to the principle of decent media. The area context of the three southern border countries, moreover, prominently features Islamic youths. Therefore, publicized information should be in two languages, i.e., Malay/ Yawi and Thai so that the political information can reach and be communicated to youth groups, with varieties, coverage, and ease of sharing or transferring to others.

2. Recommendation for Future Research

2.1 Studies should be extended on the issue of factors affecting information acceptance and decision to participate in political activities of youths, in order to obtain useful knowledge and continuation of education on information behaviors of the youths in the three southern border provinces.

2.2 Comparative studies should be conducted with other regions and multi-cultures in Thailand or in Southeast Asia in order to indicate wider trends in political information seeking.

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