

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussions, (4) conclusions, and (5) recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This part reviews the objective of the study; and subjects, materials and procedures.

5.1.1 Objective of the Study

This study aimed to find out the most and the least significant occupational factors that contribute to the stress among the psychological officers in the three Thai southern border provinces.

5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures

The subjects consisted of all 144 non-commissioned and commissioned Psychological officers in the area. The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts: personal information, occupational stressor questionnaire and additional comment. The survey was conducted in April, 2009. With the approval of the Psychological Battalion commander, copies of the questionnaire were sent to the commander of Psychological Company who worked in the front area. Then he forwarded copies of the questionnaire to all of his subordinates who filled out the questionnaire by themselves. After that, 88 questionnaires were collected and sent back to the researcher. The turnaround was within 15 days. Lastly, percentage and average mean were calculated to analyze the received data. Tables were used for illustrating and comparing the respondents answers.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDING

5.2.1 General Information about the Subjects

According to the study, most of the subjects were 41-50 years old (48.9%). Almost all of them were non-commissioned officers (90.9%) and more than half of them had served in this battalion for more than 16 years (71.6%). Lastly, the

majority of them had a lower education than a bachelor's degree (64%) and were married (87.5%).

5.2.2 Level of stress caused by occupational stressors

5.2.2.1 This study found that within the 5 main occupational stressors, the most significant stressor of psychological officers in the deep South provinces was work conditions while the least one was organizational structure & climate. The other occupational stressors which fell between these stressors were organization roles, work relationships and career improvements respectively.

5.2.2.2 Although most of the situations in all 5 main stressors caused a moderate level of stress among the respondents, the following list were the top 7 situations which created a high level of stress:

- 1) Having ambiguous roles and duties
- 2) Being treated unfairly by the commander
- 3) Having unqualified ability for the assigned tasks
- 4) Having no freedom to express opinions related to work
- 5) Lacking cooperation from the local units/ organizations
- 6) Having no transparency in operational budget spending and provision of benefit, allowance and welfare
- 7) Inadequate and/or ineffective unit weapons, tools and equipments.

On the other hand, there were 4 situations which caused a low level of stress, namely having to finish heavy workload within a limited period of time; lacking coordination from colleagues; having no acceptance in work capability from colleagues; lacking pride in work.

5.2.2.3 The five most common situations that the respondents were faced with were:

- 1) Living so far away from home that causes homesick.
- 2) Inadequate and/or ineffective unit's weapons, tool and equipment
- 3) Conducting risky operation
- 4) Lacking balance between workload and salary

- 5) Having no transparency in operational budget spending and provision of benefit, allowance and welfare

5.3 DISCUSSIONS

This section concerns the noticeable points in the results of the study when compared with its related research.

5.3.1 Regarding the results of this study and the study of บัญญัติ ขงข่วน และ เสกสิทธิ์ ปราบภูษื้อ (2548), organizational structure and climate and organization structure were the two most significant occupational stressors for both psychological officers in the three southern border provinces and the police officers in Pattani province. It is noticeable that although living and operating their mission directly in a dangerous area, the two most significant occupational stressors of these soldiers and polices were mainly related to their internal organizational factors.

5.3.2 It was obvious that safety of lives and assets was one of the serious concerns of civilians, especially teachers in the southern border provinces. According to the study of นิตย์ ทองเพชรศรี, สุรพันธ์ ปราบภักวี, และสุริ ชาติระรัตน์ (2548), about 58.97% of the civilians who were the respondents lived under stress and 89.93% of them stated that their stress was caused by insurgency in their area and concern about their lives and assets. The study of วัฒนะ พรหมเพชร (2549) stated that one fourth of the teachers who were the respondents had a worse psychological condition than that of the average people and that 95.93% of them pointed out that they been affected by insurgency in their area (สำนักงานกองทุนสนับสนุนการสร้างเสริมสุขภาพ, 2551). However, in this study, conducting risky operations that might cause injury or death was not considered as a significant occupational stressor by the psychological officers in the same area (mean score = 3.09). As a matter of fact, it could cause lower level of stress than having to be highly responsible for lives and property of the civilians could (mean score = 3.33).

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above.

5.4.1 Like police officers in Pattani province who are also a part of the main effort for counter-insurgency operations, the two most significant occupational stressors of psychological officers in the three southern border provinces were organizational structure and climate; and organization structure, which mostly related to their own organizational factors.

5.4.2 While the safety of lives and assets due to the insurgency was a serious concern of people in the three southern border provinces, the psychological officers in the southern border provinces were more stressed by being highly responsible for lives and property of the civilians than by concern about conducting risky operations that could caused their own injury or death.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEACH

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made for further study.

5.5.1 Regardless of the safety concerns, it is recommended that the researcher go to the area and interview the subjects by himself or herself in order to gain more participation and avoid confusion that may occur when the subjects are asked to fill out the questionnaire by themselves.

5.5.2 To gain a more detailed and reliable result, qualitative research should be conducted along with this quantitative study in order to gain more details about the psychological & counter-insurgency operations and situations in the area; and, therefore, be able to be more specific in the questionnaire.