

Exporting Analysis of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the Mukdahan Special Economic Zone

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the export investment of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Mukdahan Special Economic Zone. The Qualitative research was conducted by employing content analysis from related literature such as journal, research article and other academic documents. To gain in-depth insights, interviews with the SMEs exporters in Mukdahan special economic zone were also conducted. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the responses from the interviews.

The research results revealed that Mukdahan special economic zone had a high trading potential with People's Democratic Republic of Lao (the PDR). The SMEs in this area were domestic exporters who exported goods to neighbor countries, particularly the PDR. Concurrently, the SMEs in the PDR also order goods from the SMEs in Mukdahan province. This context motivated the SMEs in the Mukdahan special economic zone to adopt themselves to respond to the environmental trading changes in terms of developing the accession of each business operating stage. This practice may lead to successful business deals in terms of the continuous increase of export values in the future.

Keywords: Exporting, Mukdahan, SMEs, AEC,

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1. Introduction

Presently, international trading has dramatically changed in many aspects such as severe competitions, trading support policy from government, technology and environmental business dynamic. Since 2000, both the technological growth and political changes in many countries brought about the production distribution into many countries, especially in Africa and Asian region. This eventually led to the increase of global trading value. Inevitably, the changes in the global trading affected the exporting ability of Thai businesses in that they needed to compete at a global scale. With regards to the global trading, Thailand should recognize and pay attention on these business environmental changes in all dimensions to develop business innovation to catch up with technology changes for new products, including to increase value of supply chains (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2014).

There are many external and internal factors that have impact on Thai trading structure. These factors include circumstance and quality of labor, high trend of labor cost, high sensitivity of labor cost of labor industry, difficulty of market accession vis-à-vis competitors from other countries and the deficiency of the Generalized System of Preference (GSP). However, Thai trading statistics and the Thai-Laos border trades showed that if these concerns are addressed, Thailand can have high potential to expand exporting options, especially to the PDR business partners. Focusing on the exporting to the PDR, Thai exporters were border traders, who lacked of aggressive marketing skills, causing to lower competition ability than exporters in neighbor countries such as Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan (Department of Foreign Trade Office of Foreign Trade Region 5 (Nong Khai, 2014).

Changes from those factors challenge entrepreneurs of non-technology industry to increase their competition abilities and to provide more appropriated investments for each business situation. Both the movement of the dimension of the production bases and the expansion of production bases to neighbor countries were not sufficient tools to increase competition abilities. Therefore, the SMEs should consider other dimensions involving the industry and business areas. On the other hand, strengthening the knowledge and understanding of the SMEs about the ASEAN community must be a point of development for the human resources. This aspect of development must be present in all sectors such as the economics, production, processing industry and the SMEs. This development policy is indicated in the strategy of the establishment of regional economic and security linkages (Journal of Department of Industrial Promotion, 2012). The Mukdahan special economic zone plays a key role as the ASEAN trade gateway to Southern China. In relation to this, Thailand has developed infrastructure in special economic zone and industrial estate, along with the preparation of readiness and capacity of the SMEs. Additionally, the establishment of SMEs for international trading service is strengthened to be able to respond to the increase in international

trading. Another key factor to develop is logistic management which includes the goods distribution center. The reports on border trading and the number of factories from 2011 – 2014 in Mukdahan province are shown in figure 1 and 2 respectively.

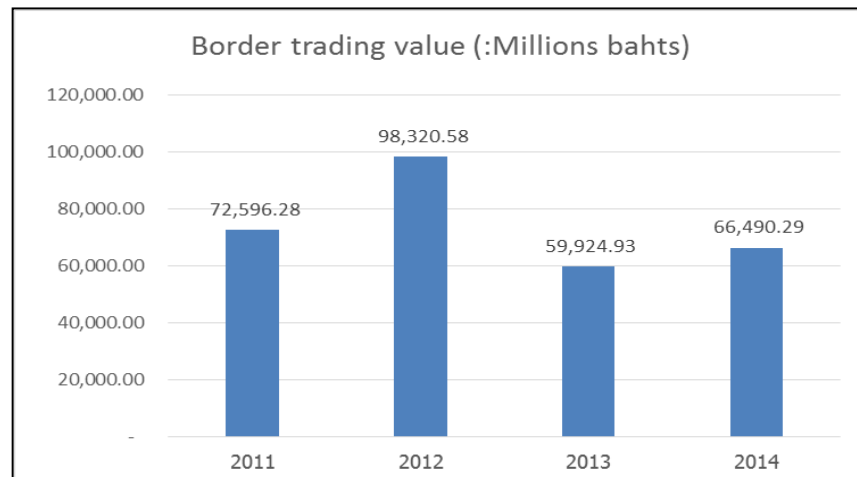


Figure 1: Border Trading in Mukdahan Province from 2011 – 2014

(Source: the Analysis of Mukdahan Special Economic Zone, 2015)

Figure 1 illustrates the increase in border trading of Mukdahan province from 72,596.28 million baht in 2011 to 98,320.58 million baht in 2012. However, it dramatically declined to 59,924.93 million baht in 2013. One possible reasons behind this significant drop could was the political problems that Thailand was facing at that time. By 2014, it however, regained its value by 10% at 66,490.29 million baht.

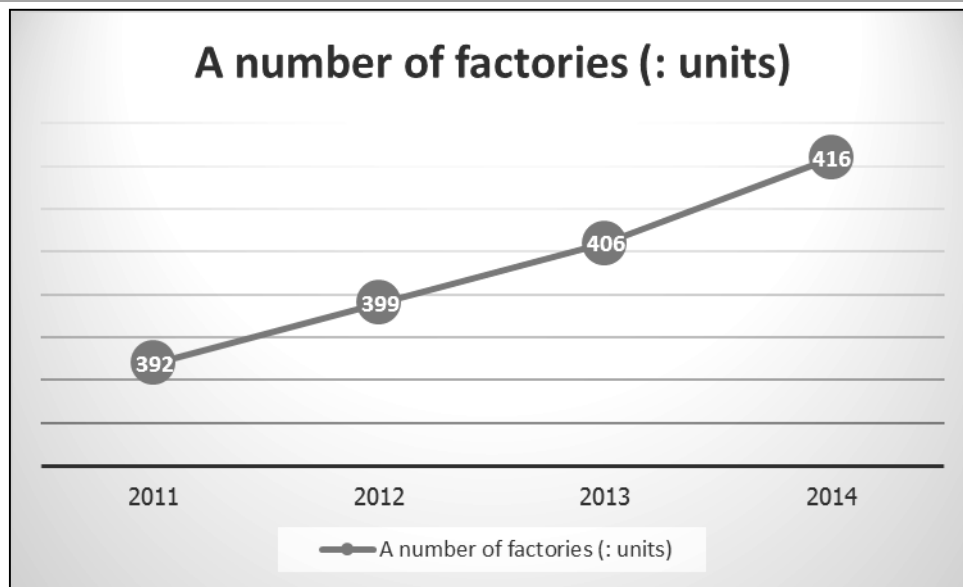


Figure 2: Number of Factories in Mukdahan Province from 2011 - 2014

(Source: the Analysis of Mukdahan Special Economic Zone, 2015)

Figure 2 shows the inevitable gradual increase of factories in Mukdahan province from 392 units in 2011 to an increase of over 400 units in 2014. This reflects that the business sector is gaining momentum in the special economic zone.

To respond to the trading demands of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), Thailand needs to hone the ability to compete of the Thai SMEs, especially those who are at the border zone. The entrepreneurs of small and medium enterprises are expected to gain the benefits when Thailand has joined the AEC completely. Participation in this economic community may possibly boost not only the economic sector of Thailand, but also the social and cultural sectors as well.

One of the major issues in preparing the SMEs is the performance roadmap for both aggressive and passive strategy. In addition, policies in the economic zone are not clearly set. The entrepreneurs have the freedom to invest in this area. Evidently, this situation pushed the Thai officers to study all dimensions of the economic zone and set policies for enhancing the business potential of the SMEs in Mukdahan special economic zone. With regards to this, the researcher aims to focus the study on the factors influencing the decision-making in investing in Mukdahan province.

1.1 Research Objectives

This study aims to respond to the following major objectives:

1. To study the entrepreneurs of small and medium enterprises' (SMEs) trading investment in exporting in the Mukdahan special economic zone;
2. To employ the Theory of Product Life Cycle in analyzing the appropriate business types of the trading investment in terms of exporting for the SMEs in the Mukdahan special economic zone.

1.2 Research Scope

The research will focus on the trading investment in terms of exporting for the SMEs in the Mukdahan special economic zone. Specifically, the research will cover the following aspects:

1. Content: exporting strategy of the SMEs in the Mukdahan special economic zone with 2 target business units in the Mukdahan special economic zone as samples,
2. Population: two entrepreneurs of small and medium enterprises: business unit A and B,
3. Study issues: this aspect is divided into 4 issues which are:
 - 3.1. General business circumstance such as location, business operation and types of business organization
 - 3.2. Industrial Life Cycle
 - 3.3. Current operating strategy
 - 3.4. Problems and obstacles of business operation
4. Time: the research covered a period of 4 months: September 2015 – December 2015.

2. Literature Review

Michael E. Porter launched a model of an industry life cycle in 1980 (Porter, 1980). The industry life cycle model explains four major stages of the industry development process.

1. Introduction stage: This stage indicates that the elements of industry are in the beginning period. Therefore, there are a few producers in the industry. The products are developed incompletely; so their sales grow slowly. The firms gain low operating profits or sometimes get loss, leading to high business failure.

2. Growth stage: This stage shows that consumers accepted firms' products. In addition, products expand significantly to industry market. Products sales increase rapidly. The sales increase attracts other competitors that they move to the industry. However, the competition among the firms in the same industry is not violent. The operating profit trends are higher than the prior stage.

3. Maturity stage: The sales of products in this stage move in declining rate because of two major reasons. This stage indicates that products are in saturated market and some competitors

imitate products to compete in the market. Thus, the trend of competition in the industry becomes the cause of the decline of the operating profit.

4. Decline stage: The product sales in this stage are reduced because of the coming of new products that could be a substitution to the product formerly introduced. At this stage the operating profits strongly decrease and the competition declines because some firms withdraw from the industry.

With regards to selecting the type of industry to wisely invest, understanding the current stage in the industry life cycle of that particular industry must be given a major consideration. Furthermore, the appropriate decision should depend on the interests of individual investors, which varies. For example, some investors are interested to do business in industry when it is in the introduction stage or growth stage because they expect the profit trend to go up in this stage. This pushes common stocks' market price increase because the investors expect high returns. However, investors should recognize that they might also face high business risks. In other cases, some investors prefer to invest in an industry in its maturity stage because industries in maturity stage are more likely to have lower risks and require lower funds for expansion. In this kind of investment setup, investors have a probability to gain higher dividend.

In terms of competition in the industry, each has different a competition situation which has an impact on the business operation in different ways. Porter (1980) points out five aspects that influence the competition in the industry or what he refers to as the "5 forces". The "5 forces" are discussed further below.

1. Rivalry among existing competitors: This looks at the number of competitors in the industry. The competition draws more attention and customer to the industry. However, competitors that aren't good enough will get left behind or worse loose profits or the business altogether. On the other hand, competitors who survive and are able to hold their ground in the field are more likely to get healthy profits afterwards.

2. Threat of new entrant: This concerns the entry of interested parties in the industry. The present stakeholders in the industry must examine how easy or how hard it is for a new competitor to enter the same industry. The tightness of regulations in the sector of the industry must also be given consideration because this regulates the number of competitors in the industry and screens them as well.

3. Threat of substitute products and services: Normally when a firm launches a product, its competitors are ready to provide similar goods or substitute goods. This eventually results to a number of products of almost the same claim. In some cases the substitute (although at times may not be as effective or durable) is cheaper and readily available. This situation challenges the firm

and its management on dealing with the substitute because in this case the operating profits are more likely to decline.

4. Bargaining power of buyers: When there are plenty of buyers, their bargaining power becomes a force that drives the market. This means that they can negotiate to reduce the price of products or other benefits. Since rivalry is present, the competitor would like to keep the buyers as much as possible and offer them what they want or nearly close to their demands. This, eventually, leads to lower operating profits than the target because adjustments have to be made on the pricing or offers to be able to retain buyers.

5. Bargaining power of suppliers: When a firm has a little bargaining power to suppliers, it is hard for the firm to do business because there is a tendency for the supplier to increase the price of the product or service it provides. The higher cost of products, the lower operating profits.

These five forces are major factors influencing the industry competition as well as all firms within the industry. Thus, it is important to analyze the competition present in the industry to find out the strength of each industry and the long-term profitability of the firm. These five forces can help make sound decisions for investment in any industry or firm.

3. Data and Methodology

This is a qualitative research employing the study approach. Both the primary and secondary data are utilized. The secondary data are retrieved from related documents from sources such as the analysis of Mukdahan Special Economic Zone, provincial commerce and Thai government policy. The research sample was chosen by using specific selection for two SMEs in 2015. The primary data were collected from the samples by conducting an in-depth unstructured interview. Constructive Data analysis and Content analysis was employed in analyzing and interpreting the collected data.

4. Research Results

This section presents three major findings: (1) The economic policy of Mukdahan special economic zone; (2) The general business condition of the area; and (3) The two case studies.

1. Economic policy of Mukdahan special economic zone

According to plans, one of the government policies is to establish Thailand as the business hub in the ASEAN region under the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Corridor Project (GMS Economic Corridors Project). This project is in collaboration with the six countries called "Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS)"; namely Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Southern China (Yunnan Province). This group covers an area of 2.34 million square kilometers, with a total population of 257.5 million.

The Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Corridor aims to create a platform for the expansion of the manufacturing, agricultural, commercial, investment and service sectors among its member countries with the goals of providing employment, raising the standard of living, transferring and utilizing technology and education, accessing natural resources effectively and enhancing the capabilities and competitive ability of the world trade arena. This project has three main strategies: Connectivity, Competitiveness and Community. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) supports the funding of the project on the development of several basic infrastructure facilities, especially the transportation route. The project also covers electricity, telecommunications, environment and legal systems. The GMS cooperation has nine aspects namely: transportation, telecommunication, energy, trading, investment, agriculture, environment, tourism, and human resource development.

In cognizance of the GMS Economic Corridor, Thailand arranges a special economic zone to respond to the GMS project. Mukdahan province was chosen as the most suitable province to utilize the plan. Mukdahan province has two crossing border points. The first crossing border point is Mukdahan border checkpoint at the Second Thai-Lao Friendship bridge, which is opposite of the Kaising Phomvihan at Savannakhet Province, Lao PDR. The crossing border point opens daily from 6.00 am - 10.00 pm. The second crossing border is the checkpoint wharf (Jetty Pier Mukdahan Municipality), which is opposite of the Savannakhet Port of Lao PDR. The official daily opening is from 6.00 am - 10.00 pm.

Because of the two crossing border points, Mukdahan province is able to link to the cities of neighbor countries such as Lao PDR (through Savannakhet), Vietnam (through Danang in 525 kilometers and Hanoi in 945 kilometers), and People's Republic of China (through Chongqing in 1,100 kilometers and Nanning in 1,340 kilometers). This is accessible through road numbers 8, 12, 9, and 13. One of the main reasons why Mukdahan province was chosen to be the venue for the special economic zone is its location. Mukdahan is located at the East West Economic Corridor (EWEC), which is the eastern gateway of Thailand that links to the Lao PDR, central Vietnam and Southern China.

The area of Mukdahan Special Economic Zone covers Muang Mukdahan district, Wong Yai district, and Don Tan district. More importantly, this area has a connecting point to Savannakhet Province. The Savan-Seno Special Economic Zone (SASEZ) of Lao PDR is directly connected to the area. This special economic zone trades major export products including diesel fuel and gasoline; automobiles; equipment and machinery parts for construction, as well as steel. The economic zone also engages in trading major imported products such as copper, wood products, fruits and vegetables, food flavorings, and wire and cables.

The types of business sectors that are allowed to establish and to operate in the SASEZ of Lao PDR in linkage with Mukdahan special economic zone of Thailand are the following:

1) Manufacturing and processing sectors: These business sectors include manufacturing for export, assembly business for finished goods, processing of imported raw materials for domestic market and exporting, agro-processing, handicraft production, and packaging.

2) Trading sector: These businesses are duty-free shops. These are free duty cross border trading that engage in selling domestic products such as wooden handicrafts, scented wood ornaments, jewelry. There are also product exhibition centers or shopping malls and retail shops. Areas for conference and seminar center for promoting wholesale and exporting are also available.

3) Service and logistic sector: This sector includes providing services such as storage system for products, refrigeration room, delivery service, unloading heavy goods stations, private carriers, hotel and apartment rental, housing, building and office rental, travelling agency. There is also a development center of leisure sports facilities, amusement park and other scenic places. Institutions and offices are also present such as commercial banks, financial institution and insurance company, primary and secondary school, vocational schools, skill development schools and university, hospitals, restaurants and post office.

4) Representative offices sector: This sector includes the representative offices and branches of both domestic and foreign companies for promoting exporting. There are also representative offices for tourism, consulting, aviation and transportation.

Thai businessmen who are interested to invest in the Lao PDR or the Mukdahan special economic zone in Thailand should study the border market between both countries and run their businesses in relation to the lifestyle of people in the Lao PDR.

2. General business condition

Part of the government's plan is to establish Thailand as the business hub in the ASEAN region. Thus, Mukdahan province is one of the Thai-Lao border provinces that the Thai government aims to utilize as an exporting route and a trading linkage with Indochina countries in the future. Mukdahan province has a high development potential to be a special economic zone. One of its advantage is its location which is opposite of Savannakhet district (the second largest district of the Lao PDR). This location is strategic in terms of dealing with businesses both in the Lao PDR and Thailand. Furthermore, making Thailand as the business hub of the ASEAN is one of major economic development plans named as "Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) Economic Corridors" which is the collaboration of six countries called "Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS)" namely Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Southern China (Yunnan Province).

The GMS Economic Corridors aims to develop the Greater Mekong Sub-region Economic Zone. For Mukdahan special economic zone, with the cooperation of the GMS Economic Corridors, there will be a border bridge construction over the Mekong River crossing Mukdahan province of

Thailand to Savannakhet district of the Lao PDR called “the Second Thai–Lao Friendship Bridge”. Additionally, the improvement of infrastructure is being done especially road route no.9 called (East-West Economic Corridor: EWEC) which links the trading route between Eastern and Western of the South East Asia, leading to Mukdahan province and goes to the border trading city of Laos PDR and Vietnam. Thailand also has a mega project called “the Eastern Sea board Development Program”. One task of the project is to develop four lane roads starting from the Port of Laem Chabang, Chonburi province to Mukdahan province through Sa Kaeo province. Through this Mukdahan province will be pronounced as the "International transport hub in the Mekong River Basin" and will also be considered as the "gateway to Indochina". This plan pushes Mukdahan province as the goods distribution center from the Northeast region to the East region of South East Asia. The EWEC is providing a good road construction and continuously developing roads and infrastructure particularly in Mae Sod, Tak province to Mukdahan province. Better roads mean better transportation of goods transportation and this benefits tourism as well. These roads also provide linkage from the North to the North-east of Thailand. The route gives way to the transportation between Mae sod and Mukdahan, which opened a border trading of 100 billion baht.

3. Case study

For this study, 2 cases have been utilized using in-depth interviews. The results are narrated below.

1) The SME A Case

- Exporting of the SME A

The SME A is a small business that sells bicycles and spare parts. The owner is the vice president of the Border and Foreign Chamber, Chamber of Commerce of Mukdahan province. This shop was established since 1995. It now has a business life of 20 years. Currently, it has 17 employees.

The owner started his business from selling bicycles and spare parts of bicycle. Thereafter, he had an opportunity to provide service to customers who came from Savannakhet district of the Lao PDR. Since then, they have kept business contact continuously. At the later part, he got a chance to bring motorcycles and car spare parts to sell in the Laos PDR. At the beginning, the trading was very simple and small, but his shop gained trust of the customers and the shop became more well-known among the Laos entrepreneurs. This situation motivated the owner to travel to the Laos PDR to create business connections. As he did, he gained more business partners from Laos PDR.

With regards to trading with the Laos PDR, the owner shared his opinion that studying customers' behavior or habit is every important. For example, word of mouth is incredibly

powerful in the Laos LDR market; so viral marketing is an appropriate marketing tool to be employed in this area. In addition, promotion strategy such as promotion campaign, discount and free gifts are every efficient way of attracting customers because the Laotian clients are every keen on looking at promotions and free giveaways.

- Industry life cycle

The operating process based on industry life cycle is explained as following:

In introduction phase, the owner's hometown is Khon Kaen province where he started his business as an entrepreneur by selling parts motorcycle and cars. Thereafter, as his business expanded, he became a dealer of a well-known brand of motorcycle. His customers are from Khon kaen province and boundary, including the Laos PDR. It is important to note that his good relationship with the Laotian customers enabled him to create new goods for distribution to the Laos PDR.

In growth phase, he turned his business from local to an exporter with regards to the parts of car and motorcycle sent to the Laos PDR. He employed domestic transport operators in Mukdahan province to transfer goods from his warehouses to the border area. Normally, the customers came to import those goods. They also manage the taxes and tariffs by themselves. This customers' importing process took place for 10 years.

In maturity phase, he has expanded his business by directly purchasing goods from manufacturers from the People's Republic of China and export the products to the Laos PDR. This process reduced the manufacturing cost yet it increased the profits. This strategy was proven to be more cost-effective.

The owner pointed out that business success and business strategy should come from the business owner's habit. In his case, he always finds new business line or new channels to gain more new customers. He also noted that it is important to know the customers' demands, particularly the customers from the Laos LDR. These could be researched through informal interview or observation.

Because of good location, the SME A has a convenient transportation routes to the Laos PDR through the Second Thai–Lao Friendship Bridge. This SME has only exported goods in a basic international trade; so this business has low business risk and employs low investment.

2) Case the SME B

- The SME B Exports

Originally, the SME B was established as a sole-proprietorship shop in 1993 in the business line as a distribution and exporter of electrical appliances, electrical equipment, spare parts

and accessories. At the beginning stage, this business had a limited fund; so the business started by negotiating with the electric appliances companies for cost reduction. At that time, the shop was unknown due to having many competitors. However, the owner did not give up and worked hard. After years of hardwork, he was able to expand his shop and later on it grew to be a well-known shop in Mukdahan and boundary. In 2006, the owner registered his small shop as limited partnership to increase funds for more business expansion. Another opportunity that arose for his business was brought about by the owner's frequent visits to his home town in Vietnam by travelling through Lao PDR for a long time. He was familiar with the behavior of the Lao people and knew that they are suitable for business negotiations. As a result, he expanded the market of electrical appliances in the Laos PDR. His business has grown gradually in this neighbor country and its sales have increased both in direct sales and sales through agents at the Laos PDR.

- Industry life cycle

Similar to SME A, the operating process based on industry life cycle is explained below:

In introduction phase, the major strength of this business is the managerial expertise of the owner. Having more than one firm, he has somehow learned to navigate his way through the business. One of the major exported products in Mukdahan are electrical appliances, followed by beverage. These products are exported to the Laos PDR, Vietnam and The south of China. The SME B started as an agent of electrical appliances.

In growth phase, the owner had to change his business strategy by turning his small shop to juristic business organization as limited partnership business because of the growth of the market of electrical appliances in the neighbor countries. The new business organization enabled his business to export electrical appliances to the Laos PDR and Vietnam conveniently.

In maturity phase, the owner expects more business opportunity in this province because Mukdahan is in special economic zone, thus, he bought a hotel nearby Mae Klong River to respond to the growth of tourism and businesses for both countries: Thailand and the Laos PDR. The same is done by the Laos PDR government policy to be able to promote the Savan-Seno Special Economic Zone (SASEZ).

The development of border areas and the establishment of Mukdahan Special Economic Zone also supports the cross-border for both historical and natural tourism. The distance of East-West Economic Corridor route: Thailand - Laos - Vietnam (between cities: Mukdahan - Savannakhet - Danang - Lao Bao - Hue - Danang) is about 525 kilometers. Mostly, the route is 2 lane roads without traffic jams. However, the route within the Laos PDR, around 250 kilometers distance, is damaged in some parts and under repair for some period. On the other hand, the route

within Vietnam is beautiful scenery suitable for tourism. It also has major tourist cities such as Hue, where one of world heritage city is found, and Danang, where there are attractions of the sea view tourism. Furthermore, this route can also link to other Vietnam's well-known tourist destinations such as Hoi An, where the other world heritage city can be found. The route in this area, however, are mostly hard to traverse because the road was constructed by the mountain and the path is mostly meandering.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

After reviewing the related literature and conducting the interviews with two small and medium enterprises (SMEs), researchers found that both government and private sectors have implemented their policies and management strategies to prepare Thailand for the changes and to support the international trade and investment sectors. All of these aspects reflected the aggressive policy to drive and to develop a systematic international trading, and to enhance the strength of the international trade sector. One of Thai government's policy is to upgrade the domestic trade of the private sector, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to international trade, especially the border areas, and to moves on to the other neighbor countries under the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Corridor Project (GMS Economic Corridors Project).

Based on the life cycle theory of Micheal E. Poter (1980) along with the two interviews of Thai SMEs, the researchers are able to summarize two major findings of Thai SMEs in the Mukdahan Special Economic Zone and these are:

1. The first phase of Mukdahan Special Economic Zone: Thai government's policy is to motivate the trade and investment sectors.

In this phase, the Thai government policy is to encourage businessmen to increase trading and investing in Mukdahan Special Economic Zone. A key implementation is to support particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), who are not exporters. The policy is meant to encourage the entrepreneurs to prepare themselves to move to the export sector. Through the economic zone they can export goods, which are foreign or domestic products, to neighbor countries. In addition, the SMEs in Mukdahan Special Economic Zone who are international traders to neighbor countries especially the Laos PDR, must prepare themselves for the big business opportunity in all dimensions. Thus, in this phase, both government and the SMEs in Mukdahan Special Economic Zone must fully perform to achieve the government policies and the desirable performance of small and medium enterprises. If all works well, this may lead to a sustainable international trade and investment for Thailand.

2. Export stage: entrepreneurs

Based on one of Thai government's policies, the international trading is encouraged in Special Economic Zone to achieve the increase in export value. Export, the basic international trade, is introduced to the SMEs in Mukdahan Special Economic Zone. The SMEs in this province adapt themselves by learning more in terms of the process involved in planning, and implementing before making a decision to move to export sector.

From both interview cases, the researchers found out that businesses were in the growth phase in different periods. This could be caused by the entrepreneurial potential and external factors supporting international trade. One important fact to note is that international trading must gain business alliances to ensure that the trading among businesses will flow continuously. In addition, the expertise of the managers in customer behavior and in local trading is a key success factor for the SMEs to achieve their goals.

6. Suggestions

For this study, the research mainly focused on the study of exporting of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Mukdahan Special Economic Zone by using qualitative research using only content analysis. Thus, further researches may employ quantitative analysis and in-depth examination in the effectiveness of business performance of the SMEs in the other special economic zones in Thailand to gain more insightful view of the special economic zones. In addition, this research may be of value in terms of the exchange of information among economic zones of Thailand. This may eventually lead to the increase in the ability to compete in international trading of Thailand in the future.

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