CROSS CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MYANMAR AND THAILAND

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CROSS CULTURAL MANAGEMENT BETWEEN MYANMAR AND THAILAND

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M.M. (GENERAL MANAGEMENT)

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ABSTRACT

        The study aims to understand Cross Culture between Myanmar and Thailand. Qualitative research methodology was applied in the research. A total of 10 persons aged 23-31 to 60-65 participated in the interview. The participants included 5 Burmese who have been working in Thailand for more than a year and 5 Thais who have been working in Myanmar for more than a year.

        The results that reveal the cross-cultural differences between Myanmar and Thailand offer more collaborative and effective experiences for business managers looking into expanding their business in either country. The study also provides insights into the motivational factors surrounding the workplace.

KEY WORDS: Cross culture, Myanmar, Thailand, Cultural Differences

30 pages

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Understanding cultural differences has become imperative for businesses that embrace cultural diversity and consider overseas expansion. With Myanmar now opening for business, many Thai companies look into exploring business opportunities in the country. The cultural diversity of businesses necessitates that internal communication takes note of the intercultural element if it is to be truly effective. Managers today have to ensure that they understand and their management understood across cultural boundaries.

Most organizations, in their many parts, are characterized by several cultures at once. There is, however, not one "right" or "best" culture for an organization—only the appropriate culture for business environment. So far, the definition of cross culture has remained largely implicit. Nany J. Adler (April, 1983) states that cross-cultural management is the study of the behavior of people in organization located in cultures and nations around the world. Ravasi and Schultz (2006) observe that organizational culture is a set of shared mental assumptions that guide interpretation and action in organizations by defining appropriate behavior for various situations.

1.2 The Aim and Purpose

The central objective of this study is to examine the cross-cultural differences between Myanmar and Thailand. This study initially focuses only on Myanmar and Thailand. The purpose of the research is to review academic and practical knowledge and firms' experiences with the cultures of Thailand and Myanmar. Understanding cross culture, of itself, is vital for other cultures and entities

that eye business expansion in Thailand or Myanmar. It is necessary that they learn the factors of people's satisfaction and their performance in the workplace.

Since we live in a time when everyone at work recognizes crisis, conflict and global consciousness of the world we live in, our own personal way we create our work-life balance must be a significant part of the way we carry out our day-to-day activities and "changing" of the business. The way we deal with our life in work must now reflect this exciting and challenging world we live in.

In many workforces, the "culture" is set very early on by the charismatic activity and leadership of a founder. But as major tendencies become deeply institutionalized, corporate culture also becomes an institutional habit that newcomers acquire. In actual practice reinventing the organization top-down, therefore, is difficult to achieve, takes time and happens only under strong leadership.

Within the business sector, upholding the ethical conduct of employees is one of the most challenging tasks facing organizations. To improve social interaction and employee performance and contribute to organizational goals and objectives, it is necessary to be concerned with other performance criteria as well, such as effectiveness, flexibility, employee satisfaction, productivity and creativity.

1.3 Research Priority

The priority is to outline the cross-cultural differences between Thailand and Myanmar, which will allow more collaborative and effective experiences especially among investors who wish to expand business in either country. This research, one of only few embarking on the topic, includes qualitative research with both Thais and Burmese.

1.4 Problem Statement

This study was conducted to increase awareness about the cultural differences between Myanmar and Thailand and to augment the lack of academic qualitative research that could either support or refute the cultural differences between

the two countries. Although there have been studies about Myanmar and Thailand separately, a comparative one between the two remains scarce.

1.5 Benefits of the study

In the past 2 years, Myanmar has undergone fast economic transformation among the other Southeast Asian countries. The country's dramatic changes have opened opportunities that could have crucial impact on the rest of the Asia. There have been few studies regarding this topic, but most of them are unofficial, unpublished or come from unreliable sources. Aside from enabling readers to review the academic qualitative research between Myanmar and Thailand, another benefit of this study is the collection of valuable insights from managers or potential investors planning to expand their operations in either country.

1.6 Topic Selection

The goal of the study is to learn the cross-cultural differences of the working environments in Myanmar and Thailand. Since the business landscape in Myanmar has changed dramatically in the past 2 years, and many Thai companies have explored investment opportunities in Myanmar, learning the cultural differences between the two (AUNG, 2014) countries will give way to more collaborative and effective experiences.

1.7 Research Scope

In this research, qualitative methodology was used to collect all the data. 5 Burmese and 5 Thais working in Thailand were interviewed. These participants were interviewed to gain insight into the cultural differences between Thai and Myanmar working environments. A majority of interviewees belonged to age groups of 23-31 and 60-65 including those from the retirement age bracket.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The objective of this study is to examine the cultural differences between Thailand and Myanmar especially in terms of work environment. Thus, the study review will be based on the Thai and Myanmar cultures.

2.1 Culture and Cultural Models

In this research, three of Culture models, which serves as the framework for the culture difference, have been defined and applied such as the Hofstede's Culture dimensions theory, Conflict-handling management and Trompenaars' theory.

2.1.1 Hofstede's Culture Dimensions Theory

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory is a framework for cross-cultural communication developed by Geert Hofstede. It describes the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behaviour using a structure derived from factor analysis. The theory has been widely used in several fields as a paradigm for research, particularly in cross-cultural psychology, international management and cross-cultural communication.

Table 2.1 Hofstede's Culture Dimensions Theory

Power Distance	The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.
Uncertainty Avoidance	The extent to which a culture's lack of tolerance for ambiguity and for unknown or unstructured situations.

Table 2.1 Hofstede's Culture Dimensions Theory (cont.)

Time Perspective (Long-Term vs. Short-term Orientation)	Long-term perspective, planning for future, perseverance values vs short-time past and present oriented.
Individualism vs. Collectivism	The extent to which personal needs and goals are prioritized vs the needs and goals of the group or organization.
Masculine vs. Feminine	The degree to which a society's members value success and challenge vs comfort and cooperation.
Indulgence vs. Restraint	Allowing gratification of basic drives related to enjoying life and having fun vs regulating it through strict social norms.

(Source : Hofstede 1984)
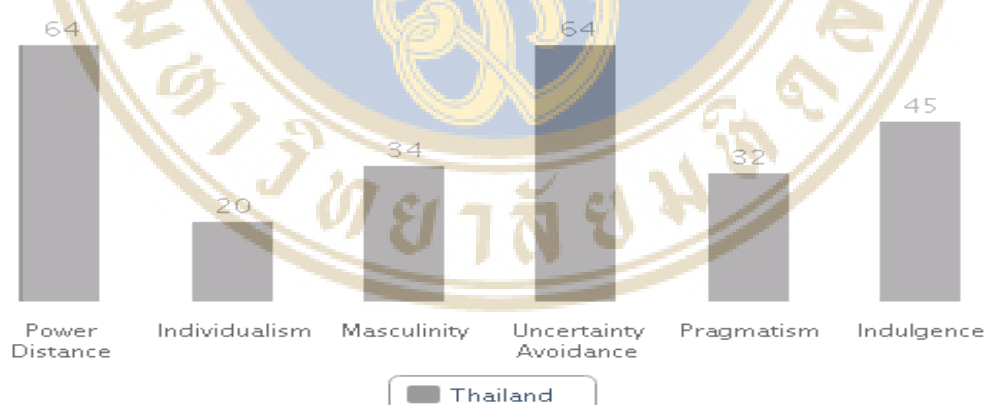
Figure 2.1 Thailand's Hofstede's Culture Dimensions
(Source: Hofstede Centre, http://geert-hofstede.com/thailand.html)

Thailand scores 64 on power distance, which is slightly lower than the average Asian countries (71). Thailand is the society in which people accept the inequalities. Hofstede states that employees show loyalty and respect for their

superiors in return for protection and guidance. Their attitudes towards managers are more formal, and the information flow is hierarchical and controlled.

Thailand ranks 20 in this chart, which means that Thailand is a very collectivistic society. Thailand is also classified as a "collectivism" society, a naturally non-confrontational type of people. Suhaila Samsuri, Zuraini Ismail and Rabiah Ahmad state that the concept of information privacy in western worldview is considered foreign and not applicable to the Thai social reality. The sense of collectivism in Thailand is about the commitment to family as family is the central institution of all Thai people (Hofstede). Personal relationship is the key to conducting business and it takes time to build such relations, thus patience is necessary as well as not openly discussing business on first occasions.

Seeing that Thailand scores 34 shows that Thailand is definitely a feminine-like country. This lower score indicates that Thai society is less assertive and competitive. This situation also reinforces more traditional male and female roles within the population.

Thailand scores 64 in uncertainty avoidance, but it indicates a preference for avoiding uncertainty. Uncertainty avoidance is another aspect of Thailand's culture. Tradition is very valued. Certain establishments also made a point to post in very big letters "the oldest establishment" or such, to stress continuity. The "past – orientation" can also speak for a short-term orientation.

With an intermediate score of 45, a preference on indulgence could not be determined for Thailand. Kumpol Buriyameathagul (2013) mentioned that Indulgence was not a strong characteristic of Thai society. It was concluded that the culture experienced in a virtual community was compatible with that experienced as a member of Thai society and based on the few differences. These were found practical recommendations made for bringing the culture of a virtual community into closer alignment with that of Thai society.

2.1.2 The Dimension of Conflict – Handling Management

"Conflict is inevitable, but combat is optional." said Max Lucade. Since no two individuals have exactly the same expectations and desires, conflict is a natural part of our interactions with others.
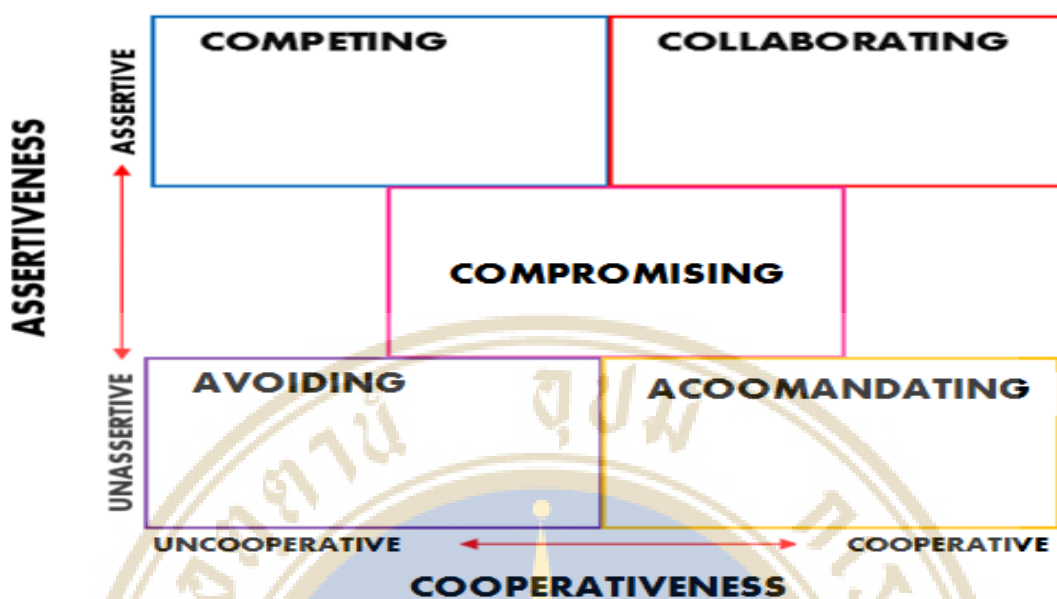
Figure 2.2 The dimension of confliuct-handling

Furthermore, individuals who never experience conflict at the workplace are "living in a dream world, blind to their surroundings or are confined to solitary confinement".

Every individual is capable of using all five conflict-handling modes. None of us can be characterized as having a single style of dealing with conflict. But certain people use some modes better than others and, therefore, tend to rely on those modes more heavily than others—whether because of temperament or practice.

According to the conflict viewpoint, **collaborating** is identified that the culture are both assertive and cooperative. They attempt to work and share the achievement and success with the other party. This act satisfies both parties fully.

Avoiding, as in an individual avoids the issues. It was identified that the individual does not assertively pursue his own goals and is not willing to help the other party reach the others. People tending towards this style seek to evade the conflict entirely. This style is typified by delegating controversial decisions, accepting default decisions, and not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings. Boohar D. (2001) once said, "Conflict exists in all human relationships: it always has and probably always will".

Accommodating is indicated willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of the person's own needs. They might take the form of selfless generosity or

charity, obeying another person's order when you would prefer not to, or yielding to another's point of view. People, however, may not return favours, and overall this approach is unlikely to give the best outcomes.

Competing is the acting in a very assertive way to achieve their goals, without considering the other party's goals. It is more important for culture, "standing up for your rights," to defend a position, which they believe is correct, or simply trying to win. According to Rahim MA (2002), conflict and its constructive management are important for the optimal functioning of organizations; however, most conflict management recommendations still focus on conflict reduction, resolution or minimization because of the negative impact it can have on organizations and individuals.

Compromising culture is more of a people who do not prefer a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone. Everyone is in need of winning. Although Compromise is useful when the cost of conflict is higher than the cost of losing ground, equal strength opponents are at a standstill and when there is a deadline looming.

2.1.3 Trompenaars dimensions of culture

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) surveyed the values of more than 11,000 organization employees in 46 countries. Smith et al. (1996) used multidimensional scaling to identify two reliable country-level dimensions within the Trompennars databank.
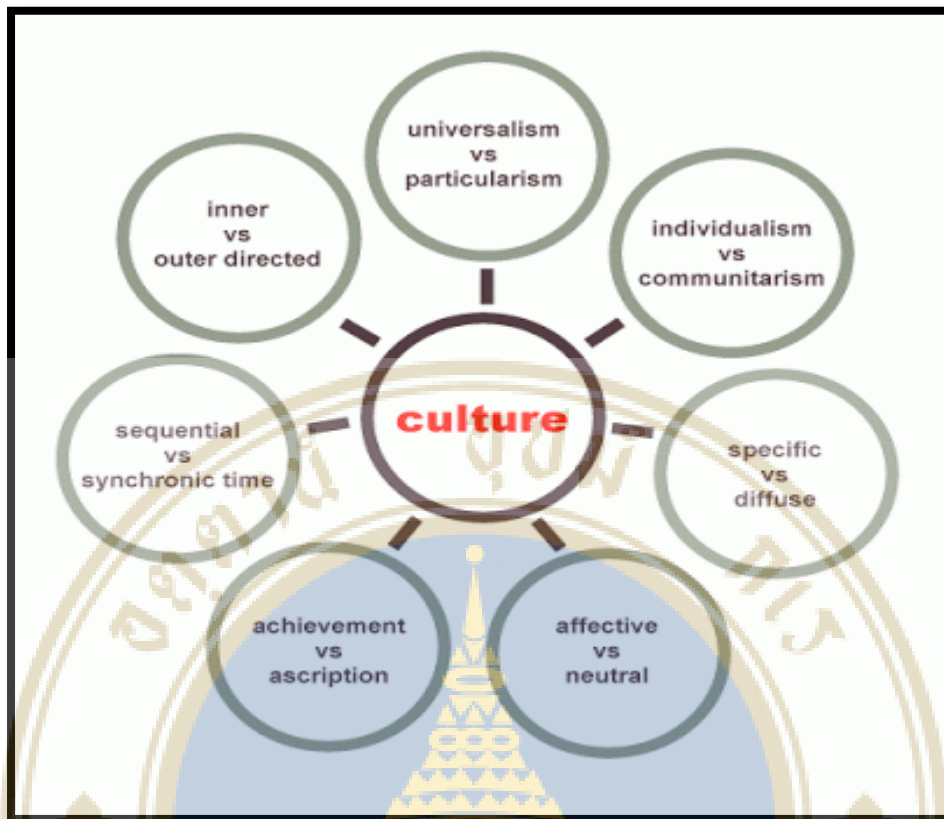
Figure 2.3 Trompenaars dimensions of culture

       Universalism vs Particularism – Universalism dimension concerns rules and regulations. Rules are set to be followed in all situations and are always true. Particularisms, however, have different standards for their family, friends and relatives and others and therefore, to see them more as guidelines but not universal truths.

       Individualism vs Communitarism – Individualistic people will see themselves and their close family as the center of their world and they refer everything they do back to the happiness of those people. Communitaristic people see the community as final goal, which means their individual needs are secondary and can only be fulfilled in a well-working environment. Adrian Pyszka and Michał Piłat (2011: p.113-125) also stated that the culture is all focused on the specified task/project goals and the individuals do to achieve them. Power is derived from expertise rather than formal hierarchy.

       Specific vs Diffuse – These dimensions indicate the separation of work-life balance such as working and personal life and also on the degree to which responsibility is assigned. Adrian Pyszka and Michał Piłat (2011: p. 113-125) stated

that The Eiffel Tower is intended to symbolize the typical bureaucratic tall organization – narrow at the top and wide at the base where roles and tasks are clearly defined and coordinated by the top leaders. Authority is derived from a person's position or role in the organization, not the person as such.

Affective vs Neutral – These dimensions identified that the emotions of the people. Affective ones are very emotional and could not hide their feelings. In contrast, a neutral culture is all about controlling your emotions, no matter how strongly one may feel them.

Achievement vs Ascription – These dimensions are about how much an individual has to achieve to obtain a certain status or if no individual performance is necessary as they are born with status and privileges.

Sequential vs Synchronic Time – This aspect pertains to different dimensions of how people use their time. Sequential people see time as a timeline. In contrast, Synchronic time is always structured and organized with agendas because time is money for them. In addition, the cultural dimension used also by Hofstede of long-term or short-term orientation is also included.

Inner vs Outer Directed – These dimensions impact on how people believe they are controlled. Inner-directed people believe themselves. In contrast, outer-directed people rely more on the environment. Gould and Grein (2009: p. 238) stated that "culture consists of explicit and implicit patterns of historically derived and selected ideas and their embodiment in institutions, practices and artifacts; cultural patterns may, on one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action".

In practice, organizational cultures do not fit neatly in any of selected type; however, the groupings can be useful in helping to determine how individuals act when it goes to thinking, learning, change, motivation, conflict, etc. Trompenaars typology, although based on corporations, can be highly dependent on national cultures, hence each dimension is influenced by a group of factors derived from geographical outcome.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to understand the cross-cultural management between Myanmar and Thailand and the cultural differences. This interview methodology was used to collect data of cross-cultural differences and values regarding differences between Thai and Myanmar nationalities working with nationalities from the other country. Both Thais and Myanmar may have their own values and ways of viewing their organizational culture. The one-on-one, in-depth interview is the most suitable for result orientation in qualitative research method. The result aims to gain insight into the cross-cultural management in Thailand.

3.2 Research Setting

As the research aims to identify the cross-cultural differences, it is necessary to collect data from both Thai and Myanmar nationalities. Data was collected from 10 interviewees from different firms. The consideration of interviewing both Thai and Myanmar nationalities was to understand from their different points of views.

3.3 Target Interviewees and Qualifications

Target interviewees were 5 Burmese who have been working in Thailand for at least a year and 5 Thais who have been working with Burmese, with some of them have had experience going to Myanmar. The age range was 23-31 and 60-65 years.

3.4 Research Design

From the review of the Cross-Cultural Management between Myanmar and Thailand, there are 3 keys propositions guided for the research design development. They are 1) Communication 2) Hierarchy and 3) Power Distance.

3.5 Questions for Interview

The questions included 19 fixed-alternative questions for culture difference evaluation. The questions were separated into 4 subgroups:

3.5.1   Introduction

This part is used to gain general information of the interviewees and break the ice between interviewer and the interviewees.

- What is your native country?

- What do you do in Thailand? What is your current occupation?

- (Ask only Burmese) How long have you been in Thailand? How do you like Thai culture?

- (Ask only Thais) Have you ever been to Myanmar? If yes, how did you like Myanmar culture?

- How many Thai/Burmese friends do you have? What do you think about them?

3.5.2   Communication

This part is used to get insights into how communication works in Thai working environment.

- How would you generally describe Thai/Burmese lifestyle in three words? Please explain.

- What can you point out as the most important cultural difference between Thailand and Myanmar?

- Are there any characteristics from Thai and/or Burmese culture that you like/dislike?

- Have you ever had communication problems or conflicts between Thais and Myanmar? Please share the experience(s).

- How do you convince Thai or Burmese (depends on who you deal the most with) people to work for you (could relate to personality and culture type)?

3.5.3   Hierarchy

This part is used to understand the hierarchy and how it affects work.

- From your experience what are the differences between working with Thais and working with Burmese people?

- Is the diversity high at your workplace? If yes, is there any specific policy for diversity? (For International company only)

3.5.4   Power Distance

This part is more concerned about the power distance in Thai Culture and how the interviewees manage it.

- How many people are working under your management and how do you manage them?

- Is power distance an issue in your working environment? Please explain.

- Do you see any difference in how subordinates approach you?

- Do the Thais/Burmese work alone or are they more comfortable working with other people? (Please share experience(s))

- Is a female allowed to be a leader in your company? Why or why not?

- Do you think there is a chance that more women will be leaders in Thailand in the future?

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis are presented. The data were collected from the respondents, both Myanmar and Thais, and then processed in response to the problems posed in Chapter 1 of this thematic paper. The two fundamental goals drove the collection of the data and subsequent data analysis. The goals are to understand the culture differences Myanmar and Thailand. Hofstede's culture dimensions, Conflict-handling management and Trompenaar's theory were applied to accomplish the objective. The findings presented in this chapter demonstrate the potential for merging theory and practice.

4.2 Demographic profiles of respondents

A total of 10 participants, 5 Thais and 5 Burmese, were interviewed. A face-to-face, one-on-one interview was conducted. These participants were selected because 1) for Myanmar nationalities, they have been in Thailand for more than a year and have worked with Thai nationalities and 2) for Thai nationalities, they have worked with Myanmar nationalities and/or have been to Myanmar. Since these participants work with both Burmese and Thais, it was interesting to see how the cultural differences between those two neighbouring countries influence the interviewees. Names, occupations, age and nationalities are as follows:

Table 4.1 Participant's Biography

Interviewee	Name	Occupation	Age	Nationality
1	Ms Natthida Vech	Self Employed Music Teacher	24	Thai

Table 4.1 Participant's Biography (cont.)

2	Mr. Jirawat Junkwat	Assistant Marketing Manager	23	Thai
3	Ms Wongwalee Pasadhu	Head of Thai Department and a Teacher	60	Thai
4	Ms Kronkeaw Panja	Working for NGO	31	Thai
5	Mr. Aomsim Sakkasaem	Business Owner	25	Thai
6	Ms Mya Kay Thwe Tun	ESL Teacher	N/A	Myanmar
7	Ms Nyein Nyein Aung	Freelance Translator Volunteer Teacher Retired	N/A	Myanmar
8	Ms Phyu Phyu Aung	Maths and ICT Teacher	65	Myanmar
9	Ms Cho Myat Thwin	Engineer	25	Myanmar
10	Mr. Yan Naung Soe	Doctor	25	Myanmar

The responders who were interviewed were 5 Thais and 5 Burmese, from both genders and who are working in Thailand and/or have been working with both nationalities. The age range was from early 23-31 to 60-65 years old. The average income was about THB 40,000 per month.

The results of interviews were explored to understand the behaviour of Thais and Myanmar in their working environment such as collectivism/individualism, power distance and communication problems.

4.3 Lifestyles

According to the interviews, Myanmar lifestyle came up with these words: hardworking, strong, respectful, kind and friendly. As K. Panja (Thai, Age 31) mentioned; *"People are definitely part of culture because people are very kind and they are really generous. And they way the Burmese support you with collaborative approach, and they try to give help as much as they can even though sometimes you don't really expect the help, but you will definitely get it from them."*

When the researcher asked to describe about Myanmar lifestyle in three words, K. Panja (Thai, Age 31) also mentioned Myanmar lifestyle in a word that was *"live simply"* as in the way Burmese live. Living simply was the way the Burmese live their lives. It was stated that the Burmese are very good at coping with difficulties.

According to the interviewees, Thai lifestyles were friendly, kind, helpful, social addicts, independent, patient and people obey the rules. Thai people are friendly helpful, as part of their culture of being collectivism, they are easier to approach and helpful to one another. M. Tun (Burmese, ESL teacher) stated Thai lifestyle in three words; *"Well, I think Thai people are friendly, helpful and kind. For example, if I foreigner or a person asks for help, they do not hesitate to help him even though they cannot speak English well."*

4.4 Communication

Most of the communication comes from the language problem according to Burmese. *"In Myanmar, most of the people speak English so it is easy to communicate"* said J. Junkwat (Thai, Age 23). As Burmese are kind, friendly and get along easily, it is easier to approach them. *"They are really open-minded"* said N. Vech (Age 24). One of the communication problems that Burmese face from interviewees' point of view was that they did not communicate vocally or speak out when they had problems, instead the Burmese kept it to themselves, leading to high **Uncertainty Avoidance**.

The Burmese do not tend to have their lives complicated by raising the problems they have. Of particular interest in this study is the macro dimension of uncertainty avoidance measured at an individual level. Cultures high on uncertainty avoidance are risk adverse. Individuals in these cultures prefer stability in their lives

and careers. They want their environment to be predictable. To foster compliance among their members, cultures high in uncertainty avoidance structure behaviour.

Most of the problems communicating with Thai people also come from language problem. As C. Thwin (Burmese, Age 25) shared that her Thai colleagues forced her to speak English.

"*I used to work for this Australian company. We had the Thai boss who grew up in Australia and speaks perfect English. The reason he hired me was not because of my qualification but to encourage his staff to speak English. By putting me who does not speak a word of thai in the office with all those Thais, my boss' expectation was for Thai staff to speak English to me. What the Thai staff did was that they taught me Thais when the boss is not around and force me to speak Thai with them so we can be a team.*"

In this quote, it is clear that Thai colleagues are communitarians (Trompenaar's), as "they like to communicate with the non-Thai speaking foreigners". The interview with C. Thwin (Burmese, Age 25) proved that Thais are communitarians as the Thais like to be in a team rather than individual. Thais were more concerned with the "we", rather than "I".

Thais are also more comfortable speaking their language and they value their language. As part of being friendly, they are most likely to get along with others without having any language problems. For instance in this case, teaching foreigners the language was encouraged for easier communication.

4.5 Hofstede's Culture Dimensions Theory

Hofstede's Culture Dimensions
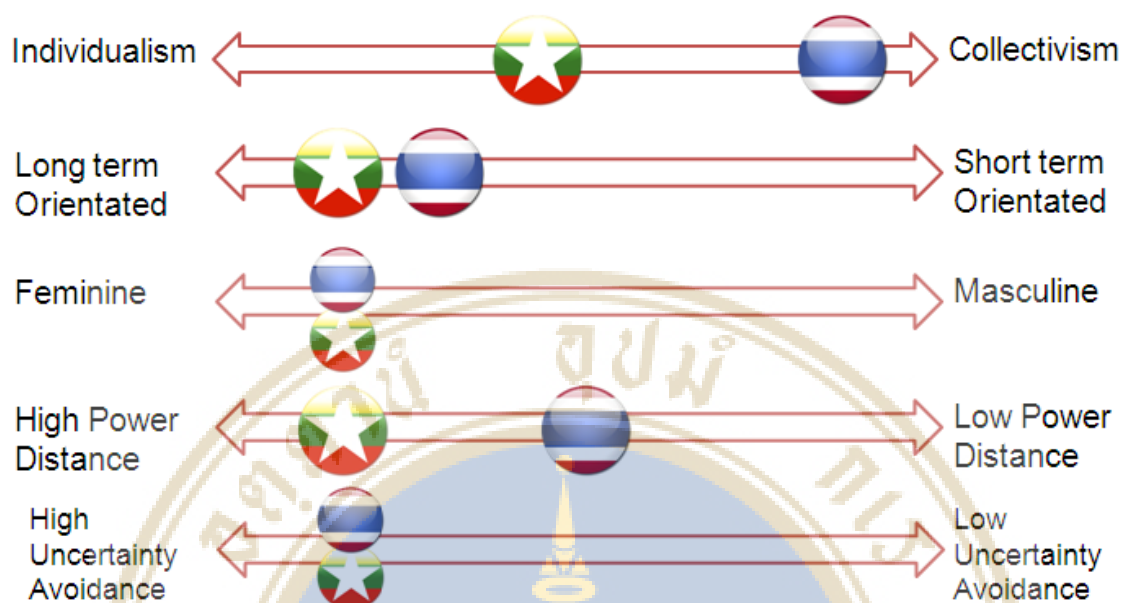
Figure 4.1 Hofstede's Culture Dimensions

4.5.1 Power Distance

According to Hofstede's Culture Dimensions viewpoint, **Power distance** is moderate influence in both Myanmar and Thailand although Myanmar is likely to have higher power distance than Thailand. Based on the data, in Myanmar, seniority is important. People need to respect their seniors. Respecting and obeying the seniors was an important norm in the country. As A. Sakkasaem (Thai, Age 25) stated that;

"*For example, I have one Burmese employee who has been working for a long time and whenever the newcomers come, he is like the boss. Some people have problems with him so they usually leave. So the seniority is an issue with them. I don't really know what is going on between them because I know there is one person that is the head of Burmese people.*"

Four of the Burmese interviewees stated that Thai culture has less power distance. Seniority is still important. One of the Burmese interviewees N. Aung (Myanmar, Retired), however, mentioned that Thailand has high power distance and to quote:

"*I was a personal assistant in management level so I had to manage a lot of people. It was over a hundred people. But here I have to just assist the executive so I don't have*

any issues. But the way the Burmese and Thais approach are different. Thais approach in very respective way however anybody can come and talk to the boss in any matters. In contrast, Burmese usually have one spoke person between them and the person is usually in charge of talking to the boss and making the decisions for them, something like that."

It is made clear in this statement that Thai had less power distance than the Myanmar nationals. The power distance, however, can still be seen in Thai culture as seniority is considered important.

4.5.2 Long-term orientation

Long-term orientation was highly influenced in both Thai and Myanmar although Myanmar seems to have less. Based on the interview, Myanmar are more organized, structured and time-managed although some of the interviewees disagreed: "*I think that it takes longer time to work with Burmese people because they seem to compromise more. That is one of the things that frustrates me sometimes because we can't really make decision until everyone agrees at the same thing. It happens a lot. Burmese really care about people feeling which is different from Thais. Thais don't seem to care what other people think. So coming to the decision, Burmese takes longer. Thais are a little faster I think. Just my opinion.*"

This statement made clear that Burmese are more long-term orientated and also family-orientated. It was stated by that Myanmar people took longer time to make decisions because they waited for the time when everyone would agree to the point. Thais would do otherwise.

4.5.3 Feminine/Masculine

Myanmar cared more about what everyone though according to W. Pasadhu (Thai, Age 60). K. Panja (Thai, Age 31) opined that the positive influence had something to do with **Feminine** culture as most of the interviewees described Myanmar culture to be caring, kind and sympathetic (reference to Lifestyles 4.3). Both Myanmar and Thailand were found to be Feminine countries based on the data.

Femininity is seen to be the trait, which stresses caring and nurturing behaviours, sexuality equality, environmental awareness and more fluid gender roles.

Both masculine and feminine approaches have strengths and limitations. When an organization is dominated by either masculine or feminine approach, there is a risk that the downsides of that approach will emerge. With a balance of masculine and feminine approaches, the organization gets more of the strengths and less of the downsides of each. There is likely to be a balance with both men and women at the top.

4.5.4 Collectivism/Individualism

An area that has received attention from the author is the influence of cultural differences in **collectivism/individualism** on autobiographical memory. This introduction presents the definitions for collectivism and individualism and some of the studies that illustrate the particularities of collectivistic societies and individuals, as well as those of individualistic societies and individuals. Burmese are more individualistic. '*I just only go back home after work. I don't have any social activities to do after work*" said M. Tun (Myanmar, ESL teacher). '*Only sometimes we need the teamwork, just sometimes. I like to work alone mostly.*' explained M. Tun (Myanmar, ESL teacher). This shows that Burmese are more concerned with the "I" rather than "we". Thais are very collectivist as they value teamwork so they can share ideas, according to N. Vech (Thai, Age 24) and W. Pasadhu (Thai, Age 60). Thais are more concerned about the "we" rather than "I".

4.6 Conflict Handling Management

Figure 4.2 Conflict Handling Management

In the correlation between Culture and Conflicts, it was confirmed that both Thailand and Myanmar have similar way of handling conflicts. Both were asked the same questions *"Have you ever had any communication problems or conflicts between Thais and Myanmar? And how do you convince them to work for you?"* The answers were the same: it was by giving them respect and space, being friendly and motivating them by talking to them.

According to the conflict viewpoint, **collaborating** has high influence on Myanmar and Thailand. It was identified that they are both assertive and cooperative. This act satisfies both parties fully. "*Burmese people care about other people*" clearly approved the point that Burmese are more collaborating as it can also be seen in Thai culture.

Avoiding has a little impact on Myanmar culture, as in an individual avoids the issues. Avoiding is defined as an individual not assertively pursuing his own goals

and is not willing to help the other party reach the others. As both their lifestyles are caring and friendly, "avoiding" only has little impact on both cultures.

Accommodating has very high impact on Myanmar, it is indicated willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of the person's own needs. A. Sakkasaem (Thai, Age 25) stated that "*Burmese protect each other. There is always a leader in their group. Whenever there is a problem, the leader would step out and help the fo*llowers. They are very protective to each other really. "

Thailand has more influence over Competing. They act in a very assertive way to achieve their goals, without considering the other party's goals. It is more important for Thai, "*standing up for your rights*" to defend a position, which they believe is correct or simply trying to win. K. Panja (Thai, Age 31) mentioned that Thais do not care about what other people think. In this case, it shows that Thais can be more competitive than Burmese, who in which case, are not very competitive since they are more family-oriented.

Myanmar has higher Compromising impact than Thais. K. Panja (Thai, Age 31) stated that "*Burmese seem to compromise more. That is one of the things that frustrates me sometimes because we can't really make decision until everyone agrees at the same thing.*" Thais are more of a people who do not prefer a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone.

4.7 Trompenaars dimensions of culture

Trompenaars' theory is widely used to explain the behavior of people of each nationality for a better understanding in the organization or community.

Individualism vs Communitarism– Thai culture is more socialized than Myanmar as stated by most of the interviewees based on their experience. "*They like to go out after work, even very young generation like 15 years old, they would go out with friends and come back home late. It will never be possible in Myanmar because we are more family-orientated so after work or school, just go home and be with your family*" explained P. Aung (Myanmar, Age 65).; This is also part of Thai culture being collectivism; they tend to go out with friends or colleagues.

Neutral vs Emotional – M. Tun (Myanmar, ESL teacher) defined that her Thai colleagues are neutral type. She also observed that, "*whenever we have meeting, everyone tries to share ideas in different perspectives but my Thai colleagues preferred to be a good listener and accepter, Thais avoid to share ideas. Some Burmese speak their mind too because of the position power in the organization force them to speak up.*"

Sequential Time vs Synchronous Time – Thais are more of Synchronous Time due to the power distance in the organization according to N. Vech (Thai, Age 24). P. Aung (Myanmar, Age 65) statement proved that most of Thais are more of Synchronous Time. "*For Thais, plans can be set up but it can be very flexible. Example of events at school, schedule was all set but if the most important person hadn't showed up, the event can't be started. And the show on the stage can be ended any time. No need to follow the itinerary.*"

4.8 Gender Roles and Responsibilities

Workers' general notions about the effectiveness of male and female managers can be as important as their actual leadership abilities or business results, according to a session on gender and leadership at a recent Wharton Executive Education program, "Women in Leadership: Legacies, Opportunities and Challenges." A prospective about women leadership question was asked in the interview. It was analyzed in both cultures that younger generation finds women leadership possible and there will be more women leaders in the future "*Yes of course it is possible for a woman to be a leader*" was stated by all of the younger generation interviewees from age 23-31. The older generation, on the other hand, prefer men leaders. It was stated by the older generation, P. Aung (Myanmar, Age 65), N. Aung (Myanmar, Retired) and W. Pasadhu (Thai, 60) that men make better decisions and better leaders in their beliefs. The younger generation, however, thinks otherwise.

4.9 The Result

The result of the data indicated that Myanmar culture is high power distance, highly feminine, moderately individualistic, high uncertainty avoidance and moderately long-term in its orientation. The results showed that Myanmar had similarities in terms of values orientation with its neighbouring country, Thailand. A typical values portrait of Thailand was moderate power distance, highly feminine, highly collectivism, high uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientated.

CHAPTER V
RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

The overriding purpose of this study was to understand the culture differences between Myanmar and Thailand. To accomplish the goal, it was necessary to reach some prerequisite goals. Determining what cross culture means and how it affects the working environment assumed a high degree of importance during the literature review. Related to that effort, it became necessary to reach an understanding about the working environment in different cultures. Even though the differences between two cultures were similar, there were still differences in some aspects of the cultures. This chapter reports the conclusions and recommendations resulting from this study.

5.2 Conclusion

The main objective of this thematic paper was to present the findings that would enable an understanding of the culture of Myanmar and how it is compared to that of Thailand.

In this study, different models have been defined and applied, which served as the framework for the cultural differences. Within this framework, three fundamental models were applied such as Hofstede's culture dimensions theory and Conflict handling management and Trompenaars dimension of cultures. The differences of culture dimensions and conflict handling management were identified in this study. In addition, the lifestyles of both cultures were identified.

By analyzing with qualitative research method, this study indicated the difference between Myanmar and Thailand to some extent in terms of Culture dimensions and Conflicts management.

Since the 1950s, area or culture studies have been a part of many pre-collegiate curriculums, and in many states culture studies have been mandated. Yet despite almost 40 years of culture studies and programs, curricula featuring holidays and food festivals, which contribute little to intercultural understanding, still seem to be the extent of the offerings in many schools.

The results have agreed to the point that culture is a complex concept, with many different definitions. But, simply put, "culture" refers to a group or community with whom an individual shares common experiences that shape the way an individual understands the world. For example, one can acquire a new culture by moving to a new region, by a change in economic status, or by becoming disabled. When thinking of culture this broadly, the thought that all belong to many cultures at once materializes.

5.3 Limitation of the study

The findings of this study provide insights into the importance of the objective. There are, however, some limitations that could be addressed. The first limitation is that this study is focused only in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand and the interviewees work based in Thailand. The second limitation to this part is that since this research is not Myanmar-based, it had limited information gathering. Therefore, the results of both cultures are similar.

5.4 Recommendation for Future Research

The following recommendations are offered as possible ways to improve this study in related research in the field of cross-cultural management.

1) The first is to develop the friendships and understand the different points of view. Fears usually include being judged, miscommunication and patronizing or hurting others unintentionally. Hopes are usually the possibility of dialogue and learning something new.

2) The second is that the interview should be based regionally. There were limited information and differences in perceptive. It is important to clarify culture value differences regionally. The perceptive of oneself changes once an individual experiences the new culture.

3) The third part is to state a concern, position or a value from another culture without distorting it, in a way that would satisfy a member of that culture. It is to examine the common and diverse traits of other cultures. An open discussion of differences and similarities in other cultures leads to understanding the values and motives of others and is the first step toward the skill of working with others who have different points of view.
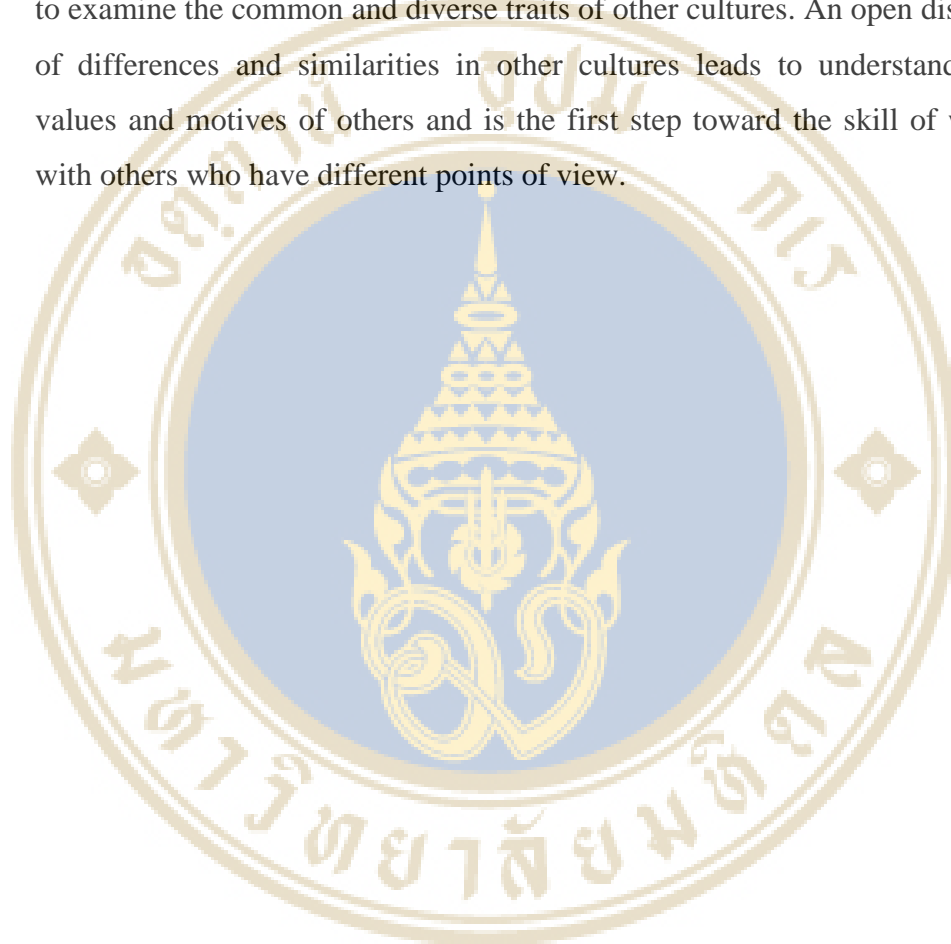
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