

**CROSS CULTURAL BARRIERS IN THE THAI WORKPLACE:
A CASE STUDY OF MYANMAR'S MIGRANT WORKERS IN
THAILAND**



**A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT
COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY
2017**

COPYRIGHT OF MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY

Thematic paper
entitled
**CROSS CULTURAL BARRIERS IN THE THAI WORKPLACE:
A CASE STUDY OF MYANMAR'S MIGRANT WORKERS IN
THAILAND**

was submitted to the College of Management, Mahidol University
for the degree of Master of Management

on
April 29, 2017



Mr. Wuttichai Jitwichian
Candidate

Asst. Prof. Astrid Kainzbauer,
Ph.D.
Advisor

Simon Zaby,
Ph.D.
Chairperson

Duangporn Arbhasil,
Ph.D.
Dean
College of Management
Mahidol University

Asst. Prof. Pornkasem Kantamara,
Ed.D.
Committee member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thematic advisor, Asst. Prof. Astrid Kainzbauer for invaluable assist and encouragement throughout the course of this thematic paper. Her guidance helped me in all the time of the research study. This research could not have been accomplished without all support that I received from her. I would like to appreciate her support indeed.

Besides my advisor, I also would like to thank the rest of my thematic paper committee; Asst. Prof. Pornkasem Kantamara and Dr. Simon Zaby for their insightful comments and encouragement for widen my research from their various perspectives.

I would like to thank you to all ten respondents and the company, who took time off and provided me precious information and willingness to help me fulfil my research. This research could not be conducted without them.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends who supported me spiritually throughout writing this thematic paper. My graduation would not be achieved without the best wishes from them.

Wuttichai Jitwichian

CROSS CULTURAL BARRIERS IN THE THAI WORKPLACE: A CASE STUDY OF MYANMAR'S MIGRANT WORKERS IN THAILAND

WUTTICHAJITWICHIAN 5849124

M.M. (ENTREPRENEURSHIP MANAGEMENT)

THEMATIC PAPER ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ASST. PROF. ASTRID KAINZBAUER, Ph.D., SIMON ZABY, Ph.D., ASST. PROF. PORNKASEM KANTAMARA, Ed.D.

ABSTRACT

Globalization enables people to work across the country which draws the neighboring countries workers' attention to finding a job in Thailand. It leads to increase in the cross-cultural working environment. So, understanding the culture difference has essentially become important for each business sector to embrace the culture change.

This research utilized the qualitative approach by using in-depth interview to explore the significant key barriers that obstruct the migrant workers to work effectively by selecting the Myanmar's migration as the case study. To explore the barriers of ineffective of work, it will help to analyze on what caused the dissatisfaction and ineffective productivity which will advise the company to solve the problems.

The study revealed that language and work-related stress barriers considered being the most powerful factors. The different language and different culture cause the communication failure, misinterpretation and misunderstanding contents and also increase the stress during working. As the result, it reduces the productivity and cause of ineffective working environment.

KEYWORDS: Cross culture Barriers / Myanmar's Migrant / Thai Workplace / International Workplace

28 pages

CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	2
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	3
2.1 History of Myanmar Migrants to Thailand	3
2.2 Myanmar Culture (Burmese Culture)	3
2.3 Thai and Myanmar Culture Comparison	4
2.4 Barrier of Effective Working For Immigrant Workers	7
2.4.1 Cross-Culture Conflict	7
2.4.2 Intercultural Communication	8
2.4.3 Language Barrier	9
2.4.4 Work-Related Stress	9
2.5 Conceptual Framework	10
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	12
3.1 Research Approach	12
3.2 Population and Sampling	12
3.3 Data Collection Methodology	13
3.4 Data Interpretation	14
CHAPTER IV RESEARCH FINDING	15
4.1 Interview Results	15
4.2 Factors implication	20

CONTENTS (cont.)

	Page
4.2.1 Cross-Culture Factor	20
4.2.2 Intercultural Communication Factor	21
4.2.3 Language Barriers Factor	21
4.2.4 Work-Related Stress	22
CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	23
5.1 Research Implication	23
5.2 Recommendation	23
5.3 Limitation of the study	24
5.4 Recommendation for future research	25
REFERENCES	26
BIOGRAPHY	28



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1 Hofstede Dimensional description	5
3.1 Respondents Information	13
3.2 Scope of key factors questions	14



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
2.1 Thai Cultural Dimension vs Myanmar Cultural Dimension	6
2.2 Conceptual Framework	11



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

There are many reasons that make people leave their hometown such as the financial reason which is one of the primary reasons for the migrants to leave their home. The significant thing for financial reason is the income gap between the developed countries and the under developing countries. As a result, they move to industrialized countries in order to have a better standard of living, better opportunity for work and stable income earning.

Thailand is the second-biggest country in Southeast Asia which has the attractiveness. The attractive of natural resources, landscape, logistic system and labor policy attract the foreign investment from all over the world. From GDP growth rate within the past 10 years, there are many business industries established in Thailand resulted in many job opportunities providing both migrants and natives. Additionally, Thai migrant worker policy draws the neighboring countries workers' attention to finding a job in Thailand. As a result of the policy, the number of migrants in Thailand has been increased significantly from year to year in variety sectors which are agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and services (Martin, 2007). The percentage of a migrant worker in Thailand are mainly divided into 3 countries which are about 75 percent of Myanmar's migrants, followed by 12 percent each from Cambodia and Lao (Martin, 2007).

The consequence of migration creates both positive and negative impacts which initially lead to the study of this paper. One of positive impact examples is to fulfill available jobs in the market that Thai workers are not willing to work such as construction job whereas one of the negative impact examples are about the smoothness of workflow in several conditions such as culture difference and communication difference.

Thus, understanding the culture difference has essentially become important for each business sector to embrace the diversification of culture. Additionally, the culture diversifies of the business sector also requires the communication skill in order to facilitate the effective communication in the international working environment.

In this paper, it aims to explore the significant key barriers that obstruct the migrant workers to work effectively by selecting the Myanmar's migration as the case study. Also, research aims to analyze the solutions for solving problems that occurred from those key factors by exploring the questions as what are the migrant barriers in their workplace and how to help them work more effectively.

1.2 Problem Statement

The problem statement of this research exploring is to find the main problems that affect immigrants to work ineffectively by selecting the case study of Myanmar's employees in the paper packaging industry. By exploring the barriers of ineffective of work, it will help to analyze on what caused the dissatisfaction and ineffective productivity which will advise the company find the best solutions to solve the problems. The questions that will use to exploring defined as below

1. What is the barriers Myanmar migrants experience in their Thai workplace?
2. How to help Myanmar's migrants work more effectively in a cross-cultural environment in Thailand?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 History of Myanmar migrants to Thailand

Cross-border between Thailand and Myanmar has occurred since the early stage of Thailand's development. The industrialization required more employees to take place for their production especially in border areas. At that time, Thailand did not set any policy to control any migrants from the neighborhoods. The rapidly changing number of migrants has been decreased after 1988 when the political unrest incident broke in Myanmar while it effected to the economic growth of the country. After the Thai economic boom, Thai's government got the pressure from Thai's entrepreneur to open the Thai labor market to those migrants. Currently, Myanmar migrants in Thailand registered their work profile in different criteria of immigration which separated into regular and irregular migrants (Chantavanich & Vungsiriphisal, 2012)

The significant number of migrant workers in Thailand increases year by year and one of the migrant countries is Myanmar in which the cross-culture between Thailand and Myanmar is the interesting topic to study. Therefore, the studying mainly focuses on cultural dimension by applying the Hofstede theory and the key factors that indicate the barrier of effective working for immigrant worker which will be described below

2.2 Myanmar Culture (Burmese Culture)

From all countries around the world, Myanmar is one of the countries that has their owned unique cultural and traditions which have a long historical story that has changed from time to time. There are nearly 55 million people living in Myanmar (Worldometers.info, 2017), a country is full of natural resources such as oil, gas and a huge area of fertile land. The country of Myanmar was formed in the 19th century as a

colony of British Empire. In 1948 after the British departed, the civil broke out to each group to state their demand. In 1962, the military took power to control economic, human rights and rules. The military rules were affected in large scale in Myanmar at that time. The military rules were suppressed by the campaign of executions, forced labor, and relocation (UKCO, 2005).

However, Myanmar historical, language, food and clothing are differentiation depend on each ethnic groups within their country while the traditions and beliefs are the same. Eighty-five percent of Myanmar is Buddhist. It is the heart of Myanmar culture which monks and nuns hold respected in society (Pripotjanart, 2015). Myanmar is strongly hierarchical. Younger people have to listen to elder people as they are sourced of wisdom. They supposed to respect, listen and do not offer opinions. Children are also expected to look after their parents when they grow up (UKCO, 2005). Additionally, the role of Myanmar woman and man are also totally differentiation. Myanmar's woman should be decent, cautious, dress neatly and talk in a polite way. They also should walk slowly when they walk pass the elder. In contrast, the man is a head of family and response to earn money to take care of family's well-being while woman responded for household duties (McGann, 2013).

In order to identify each of Myanmar people, they must refer to their father name and place of origin. For all ethnicities in Myanmar, it prefixes the name with their honor of their traditions. So, it is considered to call their name without such prefix which foreigners are exempt by the reason of ignorant (UKCO, 2005). The body language of Myanmar culture also is important to consider in the cross-culture environment. The head holds special honor for Myanmar people which should not be touch while the feet hold the lowest, and should not be pointed to anyone. Shaking hands for Myanmar people is unusual to do but when they need to do, the left hand supposed to be the right hand to do as a sign of special respect to that person. Myanmar people also do not punctual or strictly to time like Westerner do. To arrive on time, they mostly use their standard time that their society did (Pripotjanart, 2015)

2.3 Thai and Myanmar Culture comparison

The immigration of Myanmar people to Thailand began since Thailand adjusts the immigration policies in the late century 20th. They were booming and important for Thai manufacturing production. The culture also found to be the human thinking and behaviors that carried with people in everywhere they go or live (Pathumsri, Yodmalee, & Phaengsoi, 2014). According to Myanmar migrants, they are trying to adjust themselves according to Thai lifestyle and society when they are living in Thailand for their safety and survival (Niyomsilpa and Sunpuwan, 2012). From the cultural context between 2 countries, there still have some differentiation in their working environment so that Hofstede's cultural dimension theory used to describe the effects of a society's culture on the association values which demonstrate the concept of cross-culture management in term of value dimensions across in which cultures are varied (Hofstede, National cultures revisited. Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 1984). The concept mainly describes 5 dimensions (Hofstede, 1984) which are below

Table 2.1 Hofstede Dimensional description

Dimensions	Description
1. Power distance index (PDI)	The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally
2. Individualism and collectivism	The extent to which personal needs and goals are prioritized vs the needs and goals of the group or organization
3. Uncertainty avoidance index (UAI)	The extent to which a culture's lack of tolerance for ambiguity and for unknown or unstructured situations
4. Masculinity and femininity	The degree to which a society's members value success and challenge vs comfort and cooperation
5. Long-term orientation and short-term orientation	Long-term perspective, plan for future, perseverance values vs short-time past and present-oriented

Applying the theory to Thai culture dimensions and Myanmar (Burmese) culture dimensions show how people respond which each dimension will be demonstrated below

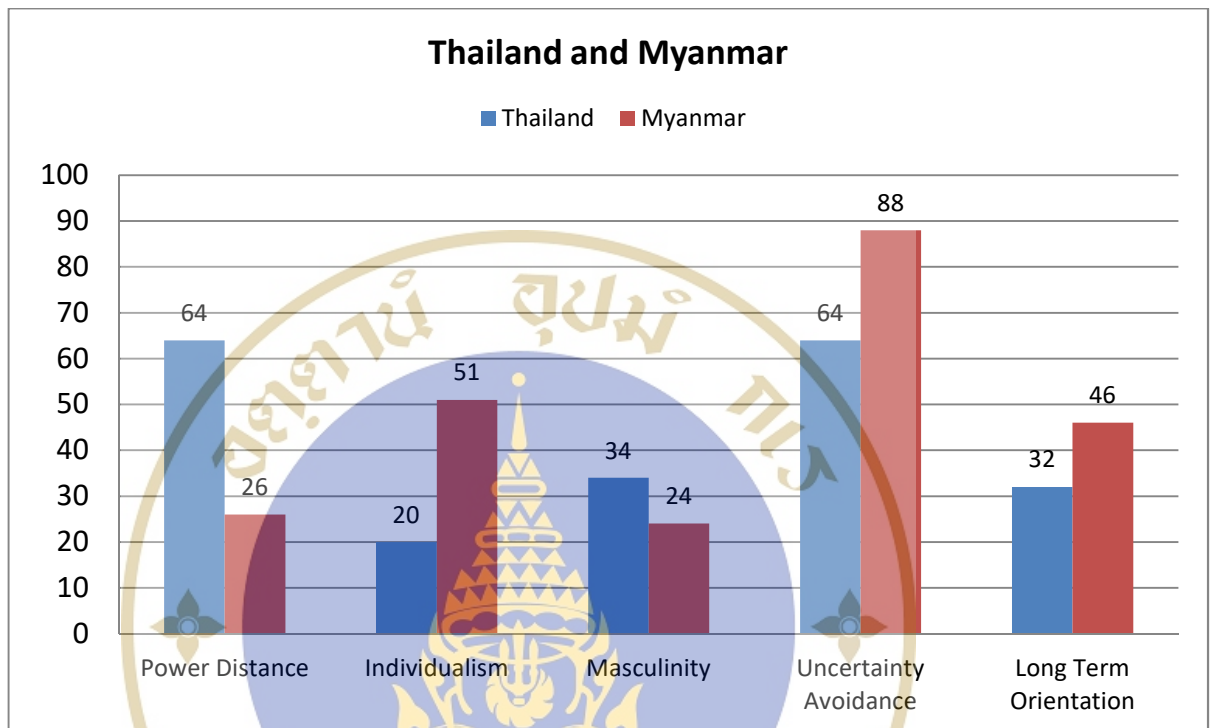


Figure 2.1 Thai Cultural Dimensions vs Myanmar Cultural Dimension
 Thai Data Source: (Hofstede, 2001) and Myanmar Data Source: (Charles, 2008)

Thailand is classified as a high-level PDI in which superiors and subordinates determine each other as the unequal PDI and the subordinates are expected to be told what to do. It is meant that Thai workers expect to follow the command from their boss without any rejection. Each rank has its privilege to show respect for their superiors which implied to paternalistic management. Meanwhile, Myanmar is likely to have lower PDI than Thailand.

Thailand is classified as a high collectivism, a low level of individualism. This is manifest in a close long-term commitment to the group of members in which it is extended from family or extended from relationships. Thai people from birth onwards are integrated as a cohesive in-group which everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. Additionally, Thai people are low contexture communication which means a “Yes” may not mean an acceptance or agreement. On

the other hand, Myanmar is classified as high individualism so that their perceptions suppose everyone to handle their tasks themselves.

Thailand and Myanmar are classified as a feminine society, a low level of masculinity. This lower level indicates a society with less assertiveness and competitiveness. However, the interpretation of masculinity in Thai society can be different from Western society such as being gentle and being empathy to everyone as well as show your respect to other people may interpret as non-competitive, soft and passive in non-Thai culture. However, most likely society in Thailand nowadays shown the equality of gender which even shown the stronger in the level of feminine society.

Thailand and Myanmar are classified as a high-level UAI in which it indicates a preference for avoiding the uncertainty. In order to minimize the level of uncertainty, rules, laws, policies and regulations are implemented to control everything to eliminate the risks. As a result of a high UAI, the society is not ready to accept the change and is very risk adverse in any activities if the qualities and the practices are uncertain.

Thailand and Myanmar are classified as short-term orientation in which it prefers to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. It is meant that people in the society have a strong concern with establishing the absolute truth. Likewise, they are normative in their thinking. They show a great respect for traditions and focus on achieving quick results.

2.4 Barrier of effective working for immigrant workers

The barriers of productivity in the international working environment will be divided into 4 main factors which are cross-culture conflict, intercultural communication, language barrier and work related stress. All factors will be described below

2.2.1 Cross-Culture Conflict

Culture is a manifested in two ways which are called “generic” and “local”. Generic culture refers to an attribute of all humankind whereas Local culture

refers to attribute in which create, share, transmit and inherit by many individuals in particular social groups (Avruch, 1998). By nature, the culture shows the people basic perceptions. It often reacts as common sense and operates emotionally as the individual awareness.

When each individual works together as a team with cross-culture, each one may not have the same expectation and desire as the others for personal reasons which the conflict occurred and it leads to inefficient teamwork. Therefore, understanding the conflict style and understanding the cross culture conflict are a must.

Conflict styles show the way of a person's communication orientation toward conflict. Each individual has their own conflict style and it is altered regarding a specific situation (Cupach & Canary, 1997). Hence, conflict style is a combination of traits such as culture background and personality along with the situation.

When conflict occurring by cultural boundaries, it can be considered as "cross-culture conflict". The more complex and differentiate in the society the more conflict occurred. Thus, the complex society is likely to be made up by various subcultures which are not just only in the high level of a social group but it also occurs simultaneously in the many different levels (Avruch, 1998).

2.2.2 Intercultural Communication

Intercultural Communication is used to understand the relationship between culture and communication which implies to how we communicate both verbal and nonverbal languages influenced by culture. The core meaning of culture is classified as the norms, values, beliefs, activities, attitudes, and the way of communication that interact with a group of people in the specific situation (Devito, 1996).

Additionally, the uniqueness of one culture influences people feeling, thinking and behaving differently from the other cultures. The understanding of the context from people who have the same cultural background is much easier, faster and more correct than the people who have a different cultural background (Harms, 1993) which also reflects the contextual communication

By definition, the low contextual communication is the form of individualistic cultures whereas the high contextual communication is the form of collectivistic cultures (Gudykunst, 1994). Low contextual communication tends to be a direct, precise and clear explanation. High contextual communication tends to be indirect and ambiguous as well as focus on the personal relationship.

Therefore, understanding the characteristic of cultural diversification and cross culture may take much effort to develop the knowledge to be intelligence but the significant outcome may be worth regarding the performance improvement (Thomas & Inkson, 2009).

Overall, intercultural communication is one of the key factors that obstruct migrants to work effectively. By theoretical, it is used to explore the way of people from one culture interact and communicate with the other cultures regarding their different attitude and background as well as the language in both verbal and non-verbal communication which reflect the intercultural communication. As the result of understanding the intercultural communication, it can be used to resolve the conflict by adapting the communication according to their culture.

2.2.3 Language Barrier

By meaning of language, it is a tool to express feeling and share the information. Language is used to define the perception and the structures of thinking (Trenholm & Jensen, 1996). The use of language which is called communication is possibly one of the most obvious difficulties in cross-culture communication (Harris & Elashmawi, 1993). The skill which is speaking, listening, reading and writing do not just only help to analyze the intention of communication but also help to encode and decode the message. Moreover, it also helps people from different cultures to understand each other effectively.

The barrier occurs when the receiver is unable to decode the message which the message is conducted in the way that is not understandable such as dissimilar pronunciation (Gudykunst, 1994). Likewise, the migrant is unable to speak the local language effectively enough which may lead to misunderstanding meaning. As a result, language skill is the top problems in an intercultural organization which is concluded as one of the barrier factors that block migrants to work well.

2.2.4 Work-related stress

The meaning of psychosocial stress refers to the feeling of strain and pressure. Stress may be influenced by both the external factors and internal factors which regard to the situations occurred. (Jones, Bright, & Clow, 2001). Overall, the effect of stress can be positive and negative. The positive stress helps to improve the performance which leads to higher motivation and higher reaction in the environment whereas the negative stress causes the reduction of the performance which is from the negative emotional such as discomfort. (Selye, 1983).

The workload is classified as qualitative which refer to the amount of work to be done and quantitative which refer to the difficulty of the work. Thus, the workload is the amount of work an individual required to complete with the limited of time (Jex, 1998).

Overall, the work related stress occurred when the worker is unable to meet the demand of work within the available time. As a result, the work pressure problem rises that can lead to work stress. The work stress eventually causes the employees to feel exhausted and depressed.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The study of this paper focuses on the factors that affect immigrant workers to work effectively along with Thai people who will be applied to the literature reviews. The basic understanding of each culture against the variable factors which are how cross-culture conflict reflects the migrant workers including the intercultural communication and language barrier which can be identified as the conceptual framework below

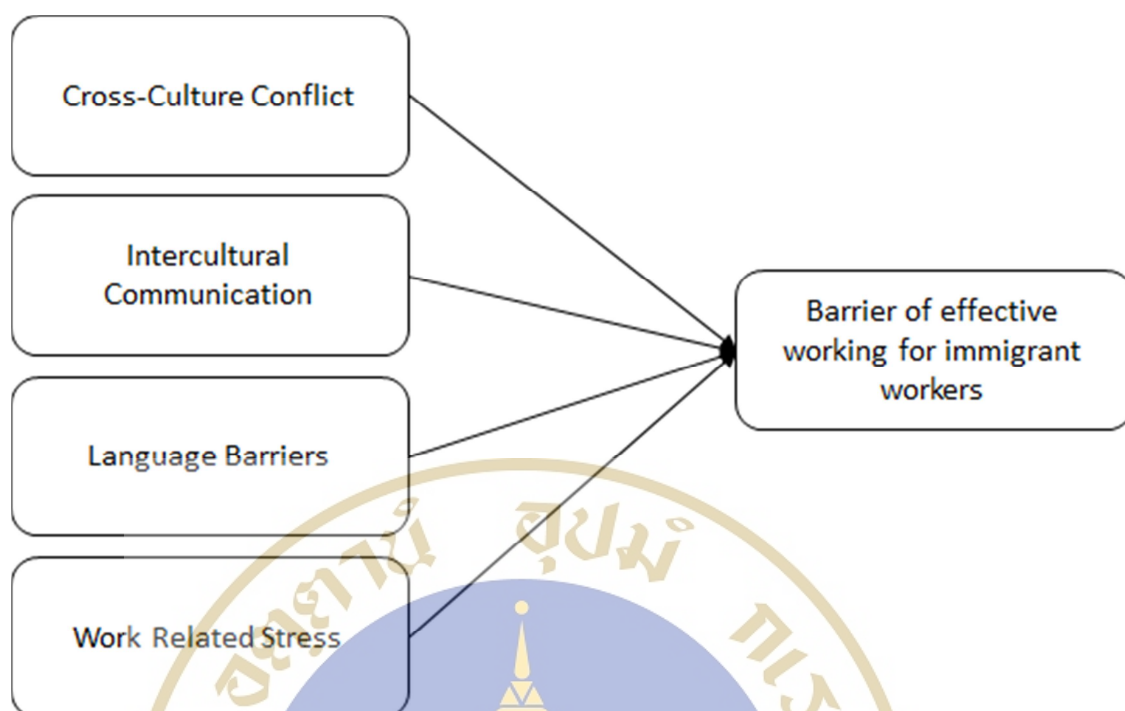


Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework

By applying the conceptual framework, the following research propositions have been formulated:

P1: Cross-culture conflict affects the immigrant workers to co-operate with their colleague ineffectively

P2: Intercultural communication affects the migrant workers regarding the mislead of the meaning which affect them to work ineffectively

P3: Language barrier affects the migrant workers to hardly encode and decode while communicating.

P4: Work related stress affects the migrant workers to reduce concentration during the working period

The result of interviews will be used to understanding the problems of ineffective working for immigrant workers and find the proper solution to improve the quality of work. Therefore, studying the literature reviews help to demonstrate the significant key factors that aim to the ineffective working when the team consists of several cultures or different languages to communicate which are culture conflict, intercultural communication, and language barriers.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research approach

The cross-cultural difference is one of the complex topics that lead to a variety of contexts which are cross-cultural conflict, intercultural communication, language barriers and work-related stress. As a result of complexity, the qualitative method will be conducted to handle the contradictory behaviors, reaction, complex emotion and relationship of each individual. It is meant that the method is able to identify the intangible factors. Therefore, this paper was conducted by using the qualitative research with one on one, in-depth interview in order to understand factors that affect Myanmar workers to work ineffectively while working in Thailand

The interview was conducted in bilingual both Thai language and English language which depends on the respondent's comfort. It helps to understand the contents more accurately and also avoid embarrassment. The interview was conducted without any incentive given and it was a voluntary process. The relevant information which occurs at least two interviews will be used as questions for the next interview.

3.2 Population and sampling

The selected samplings were chosen from the manufacturing sector. The sampling was divided into two groups which are immigrant from Myanmar and the local people from Thailand. The first group included six Myanmar workers – three male and three female whereas the second group consisted of four Thai people who are their seniors and their colleagues. Most migrant workers who participated in the interview are able to speak Thai language but the bilingual interpretation is also allowed if it is needed.

The table demonstrates the demographic information of the respondents in a total of 10. The details will be shown in term of the code, gender, nationality, age,

current position and number of years working in the company. All sampling information was presented below

Table 3.1 Respondents Information

No	Code	Gender	Nationality	Age	Position	Year in Company
1	TH1	Male	Thai	46	Senior	20
2	TH2	Male	Thai	40	Senior	12
3	TH3	Female	Thai	45	Senior	20
4	TH4	Female	Thai	54	Senior	10
5	MY1	Male	Myanmar	18	Junior	2
6	MY2	Male	Myanmar	40	Junior	2
7	MY3	Male	Myanmar	32	Junior	3
8	MY4	Female	Myanmar	23	Junior	1
9	MY5	Female	Myanmar	33	Junior	3
10	MY6	Female	Myanmar	37	Junior	2

3.3 Data collection methodology

Data were collected by using the one-to-one and in-depth individual interview in order to understand the interpretation of respondents. During the individual interview, it will be recorded by literally transcribed with the recorder. The questions were conducted with the variety of open-ended type. Questions for an interview focused on the factors that affect immigrant workers to work effectively along with Thai people. It was divided into three main factors which are Cross-culture questions, intercultural communication questions, and language barriers questions.

The questions for in-depth interview consisted of 3 parts. The first part was the general question which included gender, age, education, place of origin and period to stay in Thailand. The second part was about the questions that would be related to factor analysis while lastly to asking their attitude to help them work more effectively. The scope of questions that were asked in in-depth interview, constructed based on the conceptual framework below

Table 3.2 Scope of key factors questions

Key factors	Scope of questions
Cross-cultural conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relationship with native employees effect of cross-cultural dimension in the workplace
Intercultural communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effect of other people's behaviors that caused conflict in the workplace experienced misunderstanding in body language
Language barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> experienced communication in the workplace effect of mother language and native language
Work-related stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work attitude towards the workplace caused by work stressful during working perspective toward their works

3.4 Data interpretation

The collected data from one-to-one, in-depth interview was analyzed in order to explore the impact of key factors that caused ineffective working of migrants while help the company find the solution and assist the migrants to work effectively. However, the selection of interviewed migrant workers who stay such a longer period of time may influence the finding on interpretation but still, the culture is hardly changed.

In conclusion of this chapter, it is shown the interpretation of respondents who participated in the studying by being interviewed with the open-end questions. The questions mainly focused on the key factors that affect immigrant workers to work ineffectively and the resolution of its ineffective. The result of the studying will be described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDING

This chapter represents the result obtained from the one-on-one, in-depth interview in order to explore the factors that affect immigrant workers who are from Myanmar to work ineffectively along with Thai people. The analysis will be categorized into 4 parts which are money circumstance, difficult of living, social stress and difficulty of communication. As a result of analysis, it was used to explore to understand the behavior of Thai workers and Myanmar workers in their working environment based on the research propositions which will be described below

4.1 Interview results

This section demonstrates the finding result and summary of the findings. The 10 respondents were interviewed to express their opinions that categorized into 4 main notions which will be reflected with the main proposition factors. The factors were reflected as Cross-culture factor, Intercultural communication factor and Language barriers factor and Work-related stress factor which are described below

Money Circumstance

The financial situation from their homeland was the main reason of migrants to leave their homeland. Most respondents mentioned that cost of living in Myanmar was much higher than Thailand especially female who worked in the labor work. They disclosed that male and female did not get paid equally in the labor works, the businesses always pay male at the higher rate than female.

"I used to work in Myanmar as the labor in which we got paid based on our gender; female got lower paid than male. My salary was low even though I worked so hard there. It is because I am a female" (MY6)

Therefore, female respondents could not get the higher salary rate than their expectation in order to support their living and their family's well-being.

The attractiveness of the minimum wage rate of Thailand accentuated the Myanmar immigrants to work in Thailand. But the applying process of migration hardly understood which led to the formulation of new business as the middleman. All Myanmar employees specified that they did not understand how to apply for the work permit and they revealed the same point that they had to pay the middleman to come to Thailand for working without notifying of the place to work at the high price and without notifying of the regulation process. Therefore, they had the cost before they had migrated to Thailand.

“I had to pay to the middleman at a high price to come to Thailand because the middleman guaranteed that I can work in Thailand and I can earn the minimum based wage as Thai workers” (MY3).

The majority of Myanmar employees had no chance to choose a job after they arrived in Thailand but they were enforced to work whatever it was available in order to earn the money for their living and for supporting their family. Some Myanmar employees changed their job several times and the common reason of the turnover was the stress of working environment did not match with the salary expectation. The stress of the working environment was the comparison of several aspects and the actual salary they received. The aspects included the job safety aspect, the number of working hour together with overtime aspect and the difficulty of work in process aspect.

Difficulty of living

Myanmar country is the Thailand neighboring country which had the legendary historical story together. Their cultures have influenced by Buddhism in which they believe in Dukkha, Rebirth, and Liberation. It is implied that Myanmar culture and Thai culture are similar in several aspects but some aspects may differ.

Some Myanmar respondents who just arrived for a few years pointed out the difficult time of living in Thailand with several reasons from critical severity as military history reason and illegal living to low severity as food condition reason.

“Due to the historical story, I feel awkward to work with Myanmar colleague because we used to have a war before but they have worked quite diligent compared with the other nationalities colleagues” (TH1). But there had the contradictory opinion as one Thai respondent said: *“I loved to work with Myanmar colleague because of their hard working even though they hardly communicated.”* (TH3).

The main problem of an immigrant to be pointed out is the inadequate information of official paperwork to live legally so that they have to live secretly which leads to the stress of living.

“If I had a chance to choose again, I would rather stay in my hometown because I felt uncomfortable to walk nearby my accommodation due to police sometimes just show up to verify my identification and they tried to enforce me like an outsider” (MY4)

However, some Myanmar respondents who have been living in Thailand for a long time get used to living in Thailand. They understand Thai culture and tradition. They also understand how the reaction of Thai people well which support them to settle in Thailand.

“I get used to living here already and I understood that we had a historical story but it was a long time ago and I am fine to work with Thai colleagues” (MY3).

Social Stress

Homesickness is a feeling of departure from hometown for a long time which combines the depressive feeling and isolated feeling that create the difficulty of being motivated. The feeling is affected by several factors but one of them are an environmental factor; cultural conflict; threats to physical and emotional safety in which Myanmar respondents revealed the difficult time when they arrived in Thailand because they could not contact family and friends. They emotionally felt negative of the change, the change of their life. However, once they started working, the feeling started reducing because they met native friends and the native society.

Society is a group of people involved in the social interaction by sharing some common relations continuously which create the connection between individuals

who share a specified culture in the particular places. The stress occurs when some are different from the others which lead to a conflict of interest in which respondents mentioned the company social group in which Thai employees prefer to collaborate with Thai colleagues as the Thai society whereas Myanmar employees prefer to hang out with Myanmar colleagues as the Myanmar society. Several Myanmar respondents disclosed the difficulties of making friends with Thai people because Thai colleague used only Thai language communication.

“It is so hard to live and work in Thailand if you do not understand Thai language because everyone cannot speak English language. They always speak Thai language.” (MY2)

Difficulty of communication

The communication was described to be one of the significant factors for all employees to access the information and to communicate with their colleague. A key component of the communication is the language in which both sender and receiver are using the same logic to encode and decode in order to extract the information. If one of them is not able to transmit the information properly, the misunderstanding may occur.

Myanmar respondents mentioned that they had a communication problem in their workplace since they arrived because they were not familiar with Thai language which leads to the misunderstanding from communication resulted to cooperating conflict and ineffective working process. Moreover, the ambiguous communication caused to ineffective of exchanging the working knowledge. However, they had urgently solved the problem by finding Myanmar person who is able to understand Thai language to clarify the contents.

“Even Thai colleague speaks the same language; we still do not understand the content clearly. If it is the migrant colleague, we do not need to talk about it. Surely, it is hard to make him fully understand what we try to communicate.” (TH2)

Additionally, respondents also identified one more issue from communication barriers which are the social creation problem. They mentioned that Myanmar employees had the struggle to get along with Thai colleague at their

workplace due to lack of understanding Thai language. As a result, some migrants separated themselves out from Thai workplace society.

Respondents mentioned that misunderstanding of communication leads to obstacle of work efficiency which creates a lot of problems; not just only physical damage as productivity but also mental damage as immigrant confident and teamwork rate which was described below

“When I and my friend arrived in Thailand for the first time, we did not understand Thai language well. We had a difficult time to stay and communicate with Thai colleagues. Even our Thai colleagues tried to explain things with their body language but we still did not clearly understand at all.” (MY3). They expressed their feeling emotionally that *“It was a pity when we wanted to confirm the information they thought it would be but they could not speak”* (MY3)

“For me, it was hard to work with Myanmar workers in the quality control department. They cannot communicate in Thai while I cannot communicate in Myanmar. So, it was hard for both of us to make our work done smoothly. If I have to wait for the one who can speak in Thai translate my information to them, it makes me waste time to do the other things in the department. Most of the time, the information that sends through the middle person also did not accurately resulted in the incorrect actions of them” (TH3)

Respondents totally agreed on the problem with the language they used. When their mother tongue is different, they cannot fully interpret the content of each other which leads to confusion. Moreover, Thai respondents always use their mother tongue for communication not just only while they are working but while they are chatting as well. Therefore, Myanmar respondents had to keep studying Thai language to interpret what their colleagues tried to say. As a result, the limitation of speaking in the same language is the key factor that obstructs them to work effectively.

“I have to study Thai language because Thai people always speak Thai so If I am able to speak Thai language, it will be easier for me to talk with my colleagues.” (MY3)

4.2 Factors Implication

The purpose of this research is to understand the factors that affect Myanmar immigrants to work ineffectively along with Thai worker while they are working in Thailand so that the owner of the company may use the finding to develop the program to support the immigrant to work more effectively. To accomplish the goal, it is necessary to understand the Myanmar culture and Thai culture as the based information so that the cross-culture and lifestyle will be analyzed in term of the conflict along with the communication and languages which will be summarized below

4.2.1 Cross-culture factor

Cross-culture factor was defined as the study of culture different between one and the other in which this case is the comparison between Myanmar culture and Thai culture. The result of finding will be described below

The majority of Myanmar people and Thai people are quite similar in term of their culture which is fundamental from Buddhist but some are different such as their lifestyle including food.

From finding, Myanmar respondents united with their society as well as Thai respondents. It is implied the separation of the national group. The reasons behind the separation are the understanding of each culture and the awareness of the conversation due to the long historical story may be cracked and the difficulty of their communication. As a result, the conflict occurred which is determined as ineffective productivity.

Additionally, The key significant different between Myanmar culture and Thai culture is Myanmar culture is likely to be individualism whereas Thai culture is likely to be collectivism which leads to the different lifestyle and different working style. The lifestyle of Myanmar people was described as “simplicity” whereas the lifestyle of Thai people was described as “sociality”.

In conclusion, the cross culture is one of the factors that influenced immigrant to work ineffectively. It indicates the way of their reactions not just during working in the company but also during their living in Thailand as well. However,

when they have lived in Thailand such a long time influenced their reactions but the culture is hardly changed.

4.2.2 Intercultural communication factor

Intercultural communication factor was defined as the relationship between culture and communication both verbal and non-verbal language including direct and indirect contextual communication in which the result of finding will be described below

From finding, Myanmar respondents use the direct contextual communication whereas Thai respondents use the indirect contextual communication. Therefore, it could be difficult for Myanmar respondents to co-operate with Thai colleagues due to a different perception. However, their body languages are quite similar because their culture based as well as religion are from Buddhism and geography located in the same zone.

In conclusion, the finding indicated no significant factor in term of intercultural communication because Thailand and Myanmar are closed to each other in several aspects which lead to the similarity of body languages even though the contextual communication is different.

4.2.3 Language barriers factor

Language barriers factor was defined as the obstacle in language during communication. Additionally, the barrier occurs when the receiver is unable to decrypt the message understandably enough to understand. As a result of finding, it will be described below

From finding, Myanmar respondents use Burmese language as the native language whereas Thai respondents use Thai language as the native language. During working Thai respondents always use Thai language for communicating with their colleagues not just only for dealing the job but also for chatting as well. Meanwhile, Myanmar employees who did not understand Thai language cannot interpret in the conversation. As a result, they are unable to communicate with each other due to the different logic of decoding the content and they might slow down the process of working which is determined as ineffective productivity.

In conclusion, the language barrier is one of the factors that influenced immigrant to work ineffectively. The problem of interpretation on the content occurs when the message is different logically decoded by the receiver. It is meant that receiver is not able to understand what sender just said.

4.2.4 Work-related stress

Work-related stress factor was defined as the stress occurred in many situations depend on several factors which related to physical problems as the difficulty of finishing goods and mentality problem as homesick feeling and culture shock problem in which the result of finding will be described below

From finding, Myanmar respondents had a problem since they arrived in Thailand. They had to pay to the middleman before they came to Thailand which meant that they had the initial cost of departure without knowing what the future will be. After they started working, the next problem that they had is the difficulty of the finishing goods, the language they communicated and the settlement in the company not just only the place they worked but also society they met. As a result, the panic situations that create the stress occurred which is determined as ineffective productivity

In conclusion, the work-related stress is one of the factors that influenced immigrant to work ineffectively. The stress occurs when the immigrant feeling is not in a good condition which consists of several aspects such as time pressure against the difficulty of finishing good and the argument between their friends or their colleagues.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Research Implication

Comparing between Myanmar culture and Thai culture by using the Hofstede theory, it indicated the similarity in several dimensions but some seemed to be different. Myanmar respondents mentioned the hierarchy of relationships that they had to respect to all relative family, parents, and teachers. Additionally, in the workplace, Myanmar respondents expressed themselves that they were expected to be told without suspicious. It indicates the high power of distance which contradicts between the theory and the finding. However, the finding also demonstrated that Myanmar culture has a strong of uncertainty avoidance dimension and has a strong of individualism which aligned with the theory. However, the reaction is not usually from the culture itself but it also reacts differently based on the personality type in the various situations.

Overall, the different culture in different languages may lead to communication failure, misinterpretation and misunderstanding contents. As the result, it reduces the productivity and cause of ineffective working environment. Therefore, it is important to understand the culture norms of co-workers in order to avoid the intercultural conflicts not just in term of communication but it is in term of collaborating as well. Additionally, the frequent interaction between colleagues could enhance the better understanding of the communication which leads to improving the effective working environment.

5.2 Recommendation

After finding the result of interview, there are several recommendations to improve the cross culture working environment which will be described in term of company and in term of employees below

For the company, Thailand is one of the developing countries that attract many neighborhood countries to immigrant here for working which implied of the multi-culture working environment. As a result, the company should encourage everyone to be open-minded in order to accept the various opinions due to the multi-cultural difference. Additionally, the company should list out the main items that foreigner workers should know while they are working in the company and translate the list into their language along with Thai pronunciation so that they will familiar with the word while they are working with their Thai colleagues. Lastly, the company should encourage senior management to treat everyone equally, no discrimination between Thai workers and foreign workers. The company should also develop the team building by encouraging everyone to participate in the event such as sports day so that the relationship between Thai employees and Myanmar employees will start developing.

For Thai employees, Thai culture is classified as high context and collectivism which implies of personal relationship, harmony, and cooperation. Therefore, they tend to avoid showing the disagreement and put yourself in any controversy. So, Thai people are likely to compromise and avoid the confrontation in order to maintain the relationship. On the other hands, they prefer to hide their true feeling. As a result, Thai employees should communicate and express their ideas without the meaning behind. It is meant that the proper content should be delivered with undoubtedly. Additionally, Thai employees should treat everyone equally no matter who they are and what their nationality is. Thai employees should open their mind to be adapted to the multi-culture workplace environment.

For Myanmar employees, they should also study the Thai language so that they are able to communicate with their colleagues and interpret what need to be done easier. They also should open their mind to understand Thai culture so that they are able to understand what their colleagues think while they are working together.

5.3 Limitation of the study

The study was designed to gather the information by interviewing Myanmar workers who are currently working in Thailand. However, some limitations of this study will be addressed below

Firstly, the finding report demonstrated from a qualitative studying with a limited number of respondents and the selection of interviewed migrant workers with a long staying in Bangkok and their Thai language skill may influence the result of finding in term of social interpretation.

Then, the immigrant information is from only one company so result of sample size is small which may not reflect the majority of Myanmar workers in Thailand

Lastly, the factors that were focused in this finding may not cover all factors that reduce the effective of working in cross culture environment. Additionally, the factors may not identify the personal behavior of the respondents accurately because the personal behavior changed when the time passed by. It is meant that the culture environment somehow influences the personal behavior while they are living in Thailand.

5.4 Recommendation for future research

The recommendations for further research are demonstrated as the possible way to improve this study in the field of cross-culture management which may focus on increasing number of sample size in the other company in order to improve the research more accurately and also allow a deeper understanding of the focused factors. Additionally, the new interesting factors may occur during the interview. Another recommendation is to choose different immigrant Asian country so that we can be able to analysis the difference between each country. Additionally, the research may focus the reflection of this paper by studying of how to improve the effective of the international working environment.

REFERENCES

- Avruch, K. (1998). *Culture and Conflict Resolution*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Chantavanich, S., & Vungsiriphisal, P. (2012). *Myanmar Migrants to Thailand: Economic Analysis and Implication to Myanmar Development*. Bangkok: IDE-JETRO.
- Charles, A. (2008, 03 30). *An Exploratory Study of Myanmar Culture Using Hofstede's Value Dimensions*. Retrieved from SSRN: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1114625
- Cupach, W., & Canary, D. (1997). *Competence in interpersonal conflict*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Devito, J. (1996). *Building interpersonal communication skills*. New York: Harper Collins College.
- Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (1996). *Getting to Yes: Negotiation an agreement without giving in*. Sydney: Century Business.
- Gudykunst, W. (1994). *Bridging differences: Effective intergroup communication*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Hamilton, C., & Parker, C. (1997). *Communication for results: A guide for business & the professions (5th ed.)*. Belmont: CA: Wadsworth.
- Harms, L. (1993). *Intercultural communication*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Harris, P., & Elashnmawi, F. (1993). *Multiculture management: New skills for global success*. Houston: Gulf.
- Hofstede, G. (1984). National cultures revisited. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 22-28.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations. Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model. *International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology*.

- Jex, S. (1998). *Stress and job performance: Theory, research, and implications for managerial practice*. Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage.
- Jones, F., Bright, J., & Clow, A. (2001). *Stress: Myth, Theory and Research*. Prentice Hall.
- Martin, P. (2007). The economic contribution of migrant workers. *International Labour Organization* 2007, 13.
- McGann, N. (2013, 02 20). *The Opening of Burmese Borders: Impacts on Migration*. Retrieved from Migration policy institute:
<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/opening-burmese-borders-impacts-migration>
- Pathumsri, K., Yodmalee, B., & Phaengsoi, K. (2014). *Burmese Migrant Workers: Dimensions of Cultural Adaptation and an Assimilation Model for Economic and Social Development in the Central Coastal Region of Thailand*. Maha Sarakham: Canadian Center of Science and Education.
- Pripotjanart, T. (2015). *Inequality and way of life of Burmese migrants in Thailand: A case study in Chiang Mai*. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University.
- Rarick, C. (2006). An Exploratory Study of Myanmar Culture Using Hofstede's Value. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
- Sabates Wheeler, H. W. (2003, December). How Does Poverty Affect Migration Choice? *Institute of Development Studies, Sussex*, 5.
- Selye, H. (1983). *The Stress Concept: Past, Present and Future*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Thomas, D., & Inkson, K. (2009). *Cultural intelligence: Living and working globally*. San Francisco: CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Trenholm, S., & Jensen, A. (1996). *Interpersonal communication*. Belmont: Wadsworth.
- UKCO. (2005). *Burmese Cultural Profile: A Tool for Settlement Workers*. Bangkok: COA Thailand.
- Worldometers.info. (2017, 04 15). *myanmar-population*. Retrieved from [worldometers](http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/myanmar-population): <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/myanmar-population>