

THAI CULTURE AND ITS EFFECTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL ENGAGEMENT IN THAI PRIVATELY HELD COMPANIES



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand how Thai culture, in accordance with Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, affects job satisfaction and the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational engagement. Qualitative method is used with in-depth interviewing technique consisting of open-ended questions for the data collection method. Results suggest that the cultural dimensions of Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Femininity are positively related to job satisfaction, whereas the dimension of Power Distance is negatively related to job satisfaction. Findings also show that job satisfaction has no direct relationship with organizational engagement.

KEY WORDS: Thai Culture / Job Satisfaction / Organizational Engagement /
Hofstede's Theory

69 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Various previous studies have examined on the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational engagement. This paper aims to further study how the relationship between the two variables can be affected by the national culture; focusing on the national culture of Thailand. In Thailand, especially in Thai privately held companies, it can commonly be observed that recent graduates and newcomers tend to stay at a workplace for only a short term, ranging anywhere from a few months to one or two years. As they become more related and settled with their job activities, the degree of excitement, commitment, and willingness to perform drops. Additionally, experienced employees are on the look out to relocating and advancing their professional careers at other organizations. Due to low job satisfaction, which in turn leads to the low level of organizational engagement, employees in Thai privately held companies do not portray attitudes and or behavior of being emotionally engaged with the organization and its goals; not sharing the same values as the organization itself. Problems that Thai privately held companies are experiencing as a result including the decline in performance, “human capital, or the retention of knowledge in organizations, and social capital, the transfer of knowledge, in organizations” (Kwantes, 2009, p. 197) and the rise in absenteeism and turnover rate. Then comes in the influence of the national culture. Employees in Thai privately held companies in turn are experiencing problems and challenges with the working process, decision making ability, social acceptance, and communication within the workplace. To explain and understand how job satisfaction is influenced by how the Thai society is shaped; thus relating to the strength of organizational engagement in Thai privately

held companies in Thailand, Hofstede's cultural dimension theory and Herzberg two-factor theory are chosen and applied.

1.1 Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to analyze and understand the following questions:

1. How does Thai culture play a major influence in a workplace?
2. How does Thai culture relate to job satisfaction, which leads to organizational engagement?

1.2 Research Scope

This study addresses the effect of Thai culture on job satisfaction, which significantly impacts the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational engagement. Interviews of employees working in Thai privately held companies in Thailand will be carried out to analyze whether job satisfaction leads to higher organizational engagement. Interviews of 15 respondents from an anonymous company, Company A, are carried out for data collection to attain in-depth information for analysis regarding their work experiences. Company A, one of Thailand's biggest retailers, is chosen to represent Thai privately held companies. Both former and current employees from Company A's Head Office are selected for one-to-one interview to understand the previously stated purpose of the study.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To explain how the role of Thai culture impacts Thai society.

2. To observe how certain roles of Thai culture affect the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational engagement in Thai privately held companies in Thailand.
3. To study if those with higher job satisfaction are more engaged in Thai privately held companies in Thailand.

1.4 Expected Benefits

Once the role that Thai culture plays on the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational engagement is understood, both the employees and the companies will benefit. By having high job satisfaction and high organizational engagement, Thai privately held companies will see a decline in absenteeism and turnover rate and a rise in performance and efficiency of the employees. The companies will also gain the benefits of having skilled and experienced employees who are loyal, true, and committed to the organization. “Engagement has also been argued to influence the extent to which employees [...] will voice ideas, suggestions, and concerns” (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey & Saks, 2015, p. 8), which also “result in improved individual performance and increased organizational profit and return on investment” (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey & Saks, 2015, p. 10) of the company. Moreover, this group of employees will in turn aim to build the company toward a greater success. The employees will also have confidence in the organization that they helped build and trust that the organization will provide them with security and growth. With organizational trust, more “positive work outcomes such as organisational effectiveness (Laschinger et al., 2000), productivity (Musacco, 2000), interpersonal citizenship behaviour (Dolan et al., 2005; Lester and Brower, 2003; Settoon and Mossholder, 2002), proactive behaviour (Parker et al., 2006), and job satisfaction (Lee and Teo, 2005)” (Ugwu, Onyishi & Rodriguez-Sanchez, 2014, p. 381) will result.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Culture

Culture “is the system of ideas, values, beliefs, knowledge and customs which are transferred from one generation to another in society” (Runglertkengkrai & Engkaninan, 1987, p. 9), either “transmitted, learned, or shared” (Komin, 1990, p. 683). It is the “total pattern that makes a society distinct” (Komin, 1990, p. 683) and individuals having the same culture act, judge, and value according to what they are conditioned to. The national norms of Thailand focus on “the harmony of the group over the needs of the individual” (Andrews, 2001, p. 154), being “much more relationship-oriented than task oriented” (Runglertkengkrai & Engkaninan, 1987, p. 9). For Thais, social recognition is the ultimate goal for life’s success. With the addition of Thai people being respectful and obedient to authority and status-orientated, the factors of face-saving and “kreng-jai” (being overly considerate of others) also come into play. To maintain harmony, protect others’ egos and feelings, and not challenge authority, Thais tend to avoid criticisms and confrontations and are cautious of what is being said. Thais are raised and taught at a young age at home and in school to obey and respect authorities: parents, teachers, professors, supervisors, etc. To talk back and or correct those of higher power or seniority are seen as a major sign of disrespect and are most often considered as unacceptable. Thailand also has a high context culture, meaning that it requires the interpretations of body language and expressions. All of the aforementioned tie back to the aspect of being social-oriented than task-oriented and striving for a sense of belonging; favoring “smooth, kind, pleasant, conflict-free

interpersonal interactions” (Komin, 1990, p. 692) that gave Thailand “the stereotyped image of the ‘land of smile’” (Komin, 1990, p. 694) and fun-loving nation.

All the behavior, views, and beliefs of a culture are difficult to change; and if changed, they will not be completely changed. Therefore, the study is not to change the behavior of the group of employees in Thai privately held organizations. This study, however, will focus on the relevant dimensions of Hofstede’s theory: power distance, collectivism/individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity/femininity and how they influence organizational engagement in Thailand.

2.2 Hofstede’s Theory

According to Hofstede, national cultures play a vital role in shaping people’s values and attitudes in a workplace. “Thai culture expresses relatively high needs to ‘avoid uncertainty’, a high level of ‘social collectivism’, and ‘high power distance.’” (Andrews, 2001, p. 153) and ranks high on femininity.

2.2.1 Power Distance

The term can be understood as the power gap between a supervisor and his or her subordinates. It is the “degree of inequality of power between a person at a higher level and a person at a lower level” (Harvey, 1997, p. 133). A rigid hierarchical system will have greater power distance and the unequal distribution of power within the system. An individual with a higher status within the system will hold more power. Thailand has a class system and “a culture where the qualities of age and seniority - opposed to performance and knowledge - remained paramount” (Andrews, 2001, p. 164). With the dimensions of protecting face, respect, and obedience, and class difference and social ranks in Thailand, the degree of power distance in Thailand will be extremely difficult to change. This affects how employees show respect for

authority. Feeling a lack of autonomy, the freedom, and responsibility over ideas, decisions, etc. due to power distance and face-saving, along with always taking things as ordered or refusing to disagree and confront superiors, will have a negative impact on job satisfaction. With a strongly hierarchical system, “managers could easily use pressure and upward appeal” (Noypayak & Speece, 1998, p. 349) as well.

2.2.2 Collectivism

Thailand is a collectivistic society, where individuals are more relationship-oriented. Developing and nurturing relationships with co-workers are crucial, as well as blending in and feeling accepted within the workplace, and they greatly impact employees’ job satisfaction. Since Thailand has a collectivistic culture, working as a team where employees can feel their contributions to the organization’s success has a strong and positive relationship to job satisfaction. Previous study suggested that “organizations operating in more collectivistic cultures should use teams as a means of not only getting work done but of also increasing employees’ sense of job satisfaction” (Andreassi, Lawter, Brockerhoff & Rutigliano, 2014, 67). Also, unlike social-oriented employees, “the task-achievement oriented subordinates do not please the boss, for they are often seen as hardheaded, disobedient, disrespectful, unhelpful, and inconsiderate” (Komin, 1990, p. 699), all of which are also on the contrary to the Thai culture of being respectful, considerate, and non-confrontational. When combined with rigid hierarchy, the result is an unfavorable career path for this group of task-oriented employees within the organization.

2.2.3 Femininity

Unlike masculine cultures that are “oriented toward competition, achievement, assertiveness, and material success” (Noypayak & Speece, 1998, p. 348), feminine cultures emphasize on feminine gender characteristics such as nurturing, caring, and patience. “Oriented toward cooperation, relationships, modesty, and quality

of life [...] Thailand is strongly on the feminine side” (Noypayak & Speece, 1998, p. 348). Organizations operating in feministic cultures “place more importance on socioemotional career satisfiers, such as recognition [...] Feminine cultures place more emphasis on individual’s contribution to society and value other’s recognition of work well done. [...] more concerned with their relationships with managers in the organization, and would value recognition” (Andreassi, Lawter, Brockerhoff & Rutigliano, 2014, p. 60). To achieve job satisfaction, it is crucial for employees to receive recognition that involves social interactions for it reflects back to the importance of being socially accepted and acknowledged by others.

2.2.4 Uncertainty Avoidance

Thailand has low uncertainty avoidance, where people are uncomfortable with ambiguity. Uncertainty avoidance is defined as “the extent to which members of a society feel threatened by uncertainty or unknown situations (Hofstede, 1980)” (Greece, p. 233). To minimize uncertainty, rules and regulations are implemented. By relying “more on procedures and rules to exert control” (Andreassi, Lawter, Brockerhoff & Rutigliano, 2014, p. 59) this means the need of having a top-down system in place, which also “has been observed to be related to communication inflexibility in organization” (A p. 59) that also affects employees’ job satisfaction.

2.3 Job Satisfaction

The level of job satisfaction is influenced by Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. Job satisfaction is “viewed by different stakeholders as a core indicator of overall organizational functioning and performance” (Karanika-Murray, Duncan, Pontes & Griffiths, 2015, p. 1019) determined by factors such as “organizational image, organizational vision, superiors, co-workers, and conditions of work” (Eskildsen,

Kristensen & Antvor, 2010, p. 371). According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, job satisfaction is built on foundation; meaning that the basic needs, or the hygiene factors that "include company policy, supervision, relationship with supervisors, work conditions, relationship with peers, salary, personal life, relationship with subordinates, status, and job security" (Ruthankoon & Ogunlana, 2003, p. 334), must be met prior to advancing on to the motivational factors, which "operate only to increase job satisfaction" (Ruthankoon & Ogunlana, 2003, p. 334). Motivational factors that influence job satisfaction include "achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and possibility of growth" (Ruthankoon & Ogunlana, 2003, p. 334).

The strongly hierarchical system of Thai privately owned organizations puts strict limitations to employees' "responsibility or freedom to make decisions" (Ruthankoon & Ogunlana, 2003, p. 334). Autonomy is required to make employees know and feel that they have ownership for their tasks. Instead of being told, employees want "to be given clearly defined tasks with identified outcomes and measures, and the freedom to pursue those goals how they so choose" (Blattner & Walter, 2015, p. 124). Employees want to show their abilities and capabilities when they first enter; feeling that they are "useful, valuable and not taken for granted [...]; to feel that they can express themselves fully" (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey & Saks, 2015, p. 17). Through empowerment - the delegation and "passing of power from higher organisational levels to lower ones (Carson and King, 2005)" (Saratun & Rungruang, 2013, p. 90) - employees feel encouraged to make decisions on their own with the existing resources that the company provides. To create "a climate of trust and empowerment" (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey & Saks, 2015, p. 20) is even more difficult in Thai privately owned organizations where power distance is high.

Additionally, possibility of growth means "the chance that a person can be promoted, [...] learn new skills or advance" (Ruthankoon & Ogunlana, 2003, p. 334)

forward. Since Thai culture puts an emphasis on seniority and age rather than skills and talents, employees with potentials are left unrecognized regardless of their abilities. This becomes an obstacle for this group of employees' opportunity for self-development and achieve career success; thus preventing them from "working hard since their promotion is based on years of work instead of the level of achievement" (Swierczek & Onishi, 2003, p. 199).

Furthermore, "most significant impact on job satisfaction are accomplishment and recognition" (Andreassi, Lawter, Brockerhoff & Rutigliano, 2014, p. 67). Being a collectivistic culture, Thai employees especially want to feel valued by their supervisors for performing their job well, which will result in employees' job satisfaction.

Once the level of job satisfaction is increased, employees become more productive, more involved, less absent, more committed and more engaged. Since job satisfaction has a direct relationship with organizational engagement, the high level of employees' job satisfaction within a workplace also results in the high level of employees' organizational engagement.

2.4 Organizational Engagement

Job satisfaction is related to organizational engagement. Organizational engagement "is usually referred to as an emotional and intellectual commitment to an organisation" (Sirisunhirun & Dhirathiti, 2015, p. 73). With organizational engagement, research has also proven that it "is positively associated with increases in performance over time" (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey & Saks, 2015, p. 21) for the employees in turn positively impact the organization's success. It is a crucial factor that determines whether or not employees would like to stay onboard with the organization for many years to come, "the desire to remain with the organization (loyalty)" (Yousef, 2000, p. 6); to professionally grow their career with the organization. When employees

become citizens of the organization, they become fully engaged with the organization and its goals and values. This state is deeper than organizational commitment that involves the physical involvement of employees, and “past research has indicated that [...] there is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and both job satisfaction and performance” (Yousef, 2000, p 11). More than being committed, being engaged is reflects the attitudes and the degree of employees’ willingness to go above and beyond, putting in the extra effort for the company, for the employees “exhibit strong feelings of emotional attachment to the organisation” (Rungruang & Tangchitnob, 2010, p. 55). Therefore, this develops employees’ long-term loyalty to the organization; resulting in positive outcomes such as low absenteeism and turnover rate and high efficiency.

2.5 Summary Table

LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY TABLE					
	Data Source	Method	IV	DV	Finding
1. Komin, 1990, CULTURE AND WORK-RELATED VALUES IN THAI ORGANIZA- TIONS	1) 219 subjects 2) 2,469 sample size of Thais	1) Open-ended questions 2) Questionnaire	Culture, value systems, and motivational work-related values	Communica- tion, decision making, and leadership style	1) As a culture that values ego and face- saving and avoids confrontations, compromise is used to keep harmony even at the expense of organizational progress. 2) As a culture with rigid hierarchical systems and a strong value of relationships, Thai employees can be motivated to work devotedly for leaders they respect.
2. Yousef, 1999, Islamic work ethic A curator between	425 random samples	Questionnaire	National culture	Organizational commitment and job	The relationship between organizational commitment and job

organizational commitment and job satisfaction in a cross-cultural context				satisfaction	satisfaction is positive and significant. Those who are satisfied with their jobs have higher organizational commitment.
3. Yousef, 2000, Organizational commitment: a moderator of the relationships of leadership behavior with job satisfaction and performance in a non-western country	430 employees in 30 organizations	Questionnaire	National culture	Organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and leadership behavior	There are significant and positive relationships between organizational commitment and both job satisfaction and performance.
4. Kwantes, 2009, Culture, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in India and the United States	319 participants	Questionnaire	Job satisfaction and culture	Organizational commitment	Job satisfaction is related to affective commitment that is the emotional attachment.
5. Rungruang & Tangchitnob, 2010, WHAT MATTER AFFECTIVE ORGANISATION AL COMMITMENT - A CASE OF THAI STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISE EMPLOYEES	1,111 employees of a Thai state-owned enterprise	Self-administered questionnaire	Organizational support, distributive justice, procedural justice, role ambiguity, and role conflict	Affective commitment	1) Organizational support and distributive justice are associated with affective commitment. 2) Role ambiguity and role conflict are associated with lower levels of commitment. 3) Thai employees who perceived that the organization value their contributions experience stronger emotional connection with their organization. 4) Employees who are unsure of and are incompatible with their roles experience lower levels of emotional attachment to the organization.

6. Eskildsen, Kristensen & Antvor, 2010, The relationship between job satisfaction and national culture	Over 25,000 respondents from 22 nations	Questionnaire and survey	National culture	Job satisfaction	National culture does influence the result of job satisfaction.
7. Saratun & Rungruan, 2013, IDENTIFYING CONTEXTUAL FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AT A THAI STATE ENTERPRISE	2,000 employees	Questionnaire	Motivation, empowerment, role ambiguity, role conflict, POS, procedural justice, and distributive justice	Employees' satisfaction with performance management	Motivation and empowerment of employees, role clarity, perceived organizational support, procedural justice, and distributive justice positively are directly predictive of enhanced employees' performance management satisfaction in Thailand.
8. Andreassi, Lawter, Brockerhoff & Rutigliano, 2014, Cultural impact of human resource practices on job satisfaction	Over 70,000 employees from 4 large multinational organizations	Industry survey	Individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity, and power distance	Job satisfaction	There are relationships between job characteristics and job satisfaction, in consistent with Hofstede's cultural dimensions, with a sense of achievement being the most crucial driver.
9. Sirisunhirun & Dhirathiti, 2015, Job characteristics and a Happy Workplace: Increasing Organisational Engagement in Thai Higher Education Institutions	160 employees	Questionnaire	Job characteristics and workplace happiness	Organizational engagement	1) Job characteristics correlate with the level of organizational engagement. 2) Co-worker commitment and supervisory feedback were the main factors determining organizational engagement. 3) Workplace happiness is correlated to the level of organizational engagement.

2.6 Framework

As illustrated in the chart below, the independent variables that affect organizational engagement include power distance, femininity, collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance - dimensions from Hofstede's theory. With high power distance means more rigid hierarchical system, complicated work process, and low level of autonomy. Thai culture factors of face-saving and "kreng-jai" are also strengthened by greater power distance, which in turn, influence communication process within the workplace and negatively affect job satisfaction. Secondly, high level of femininity influences how employees in Thai privately held companies act and behave, for they are concerned about workplace harmony and being obedient and respectful. This leads to low level of job satisfaction for employees' opinions, feelings, wants, and needs are constrained. Thirdly, collectivism makes employees feel the need to be accepted and recognized by the society at work; leading to higher confrontational avoidance, lower desire to make decisions in fear of being disliked, and thus lower job satisfaction. Lastly, with low uncertainty avoidance, Thai employees are more comfortable when rules and regulations exist within the workplace; hence the reason for a hierarchical system. This impacts work process, organization structure, and employees' performance that are all associated with job satisfaction. With all factors influencing job satisfaction, organizational engagement is also highly affected, for job satisfaction has a direct relationship with organizational engagement.

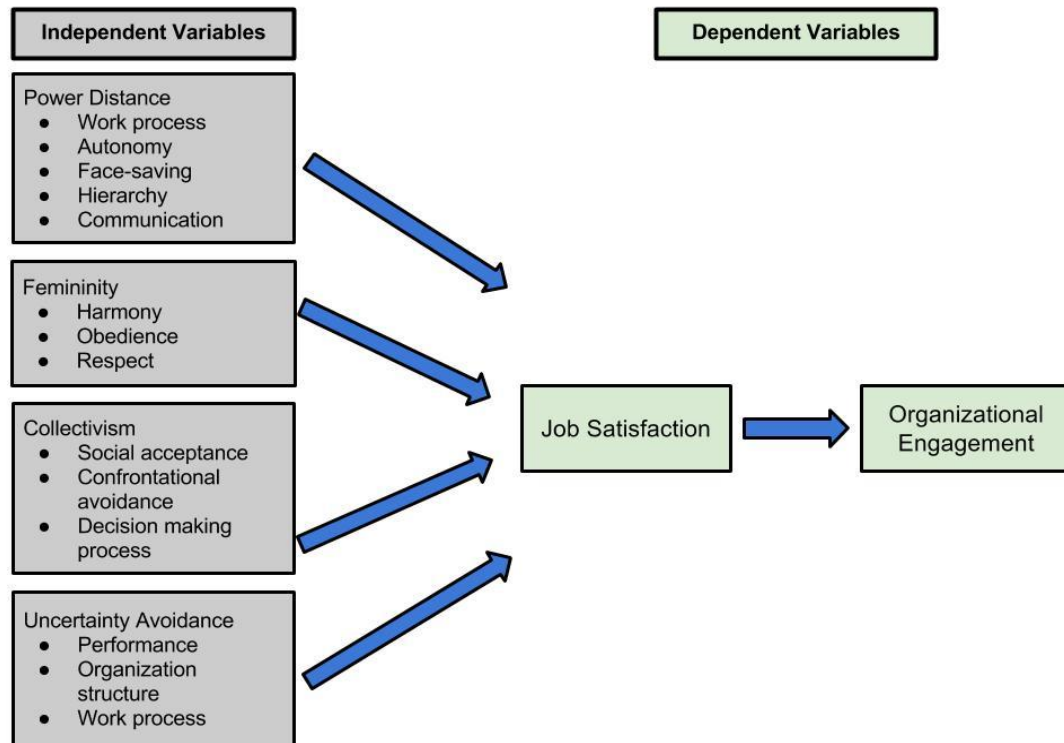


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model of Relationship between Thai Cultural Dimensions and Job Satisfaction and Organizational Engagement

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Company A is chosen to represent Thai privately held organizations in Thailand. Company A, established in 1996, is a business unit under a Thai family-owned conglomerate and is one of Thailand's biggest retailers with approximately 150 stores located across Thailand. The majority of employees employed are of Thai citizen and a very low number represents expatriate workers. Respondents from Company A chosen for the interview are segmented into three different groups: former employees, newcomers, and employees of one year or longer. Respondents are also only selected from Company A's Head Office. All are also of Thai nationality and were born and raised in Thailand. This ensures that all respondents are exposed to and influenced by the national culture. Interviews are carried out to attain information for analysis regarding their work experiences. The in-depth interviewing technique is adopted as the data collection approach because the method is best for surveying employees when it comes to sensitive topics as this, and the technique is best for understanding thoughts, feelings, attitudes, behavior, and motivations. Respondents are interviewed either via video call or face-to-face. Open-ended questions are used to study and analyze respondents' stories and experiences. This method is adapted from the previous studies of Noypayak & Speece(1998) and Swierczek & Onishi (2003).

3.1 Participants

Sample size: 15 respondents from Company A's Head Office

Table 3.1 List of Respondents for Interview

Former	Employee of 1 year or longer	Newcomers
C.B. Digital Content Specialist	S.C. GM Marketing	T.C. Event Manager
S.P. Brand Promotion Specialist	F.R. Management Trainee	P.O. Product Marketing Specialist
S.S. Senior Brand Activity and Marketing Event Specialist	T.T. CRM Analytic	R.K. Brand Promotion Specialist
R.C. Senior Brand and Event Specialist	N.M. Management Trainee	V.P. Digital Marketing Manager
W.B. Digital Content Manager	N.B. Digital Content Manager	T.W. Brand Promotion Specialist

3.2 Category of Interview Questions

Interview questions on culture and job satisfaction are adapted from the previous studies of Swierczek (1998), Joiner (2001), Eskildsen, Kristensen & Antvor (2010), Komin (1990), Noypayak & Speece (1998), and Saratun & Rungruan (2013). Interview questions on job satisfaction and organizational engagement are adapted from the previous studies of Yousef (2001), Sirisunhirun & Dhirathiti (2015), and Rungruang & Tangchitnob (2010).

Table 3.2 Category of Interview Questions

Power Distance	How do you communication with your boss? Can you openly talk about your concerns, ideas, feelings, and or emotions? As an equal or subordinate?
	What role does seniority play in your organization?
Femininity	How much do you value your contributions and recognition?

Table 3.2Category of Interview Questions (cont.)

	How is a job well done rewarded?
Collectivism	How do you feel about teamwork?
	When problems arise, how do you make / avoid confrontation?
	What is your attitude toward Thai culture?
	How do you see yourself in Thai society? Do you see yourself fit in well? Do you accept and follow the social norms?
Uncertainty Avoidance	How does your boss handle tasks and the team?
	How do you feel about ambiguity?
Job Satisfaction	How is the work environment?
	What are the chances to develop close friendships with your co-workers?
	How do co-workers get along with each other?
	How is your relationship with your boss?
	How can one get ahead on this job? What does it require? What do you think is the main factor that determines an employee's advancement within the organization?
	How satisfied are you with your job security, salary, work conditions, and relationships at work?
	How much responsibility and ownership do you have on your job?
	How can you fully express yourself at work communication wise? Are you allowed to suggest ideas or initiate new projects and show your abilities fully?
	What opportunities do you have for growth and development?
Organizational	From 1 - 6, 6 being you're extremely proud of your job and 1 being not proud at all, rate how much you take pride in your job.

Table 3.2 Category of Interview Questions (cont.)

Engagement	How would you evaluate your performance compared to your co-workers?
	How willing are you to do the job beyond what your position requires?
	How do you talk about your organization to others?
	Do you have any regrets or feel glad about joining this organization?
	How does your commitment to the company benefit both you and the company?
	What does this company mean to you?

3.3 Order of Interview Questions

- 3.2.1 How is the work environment?
- 3.2.2 What are the chances to develop close friendships with your co-workers?
- 3.2.3 How do co-workers get along with each other?
- 3.2.4 How do you feel about teamwork?
- 3.2.5 When problems arise, how do you make / avoid confrontation?
- 3.2.6 How does your boss handle tasks and the team?
- 3.2.7 How do you feel about ambiguity?
- 3.2.8 How do managers within your organization motivate and empower people?
- 3.2.9 How much do you value your contributions and recognition?
- 3.2.10 How is your relationship with your boss?
- 3.2.11 How do you communication with your boss? Can you openly talk about your concerns, ideas, feelings, and or emotions? As an equal or subordinate?

3.2.12 How can one get ahead on this job? What does it require? What do you think is the main factor that determines an employee's advancement within the organization?

3.2.13 What role does seniority play in your organization?

3.2.14 What is your attitude toward Thai culture?

3.2.15 How do you see yourself in Thai society? Do you see yourself fit in well? Do you accept and follow the social norms?

3.2.16 How satisfied are you with your job security, salary, work conditions, and relationships at work?

3.2.17 How much responsibility and ownership do you have on your job?

3.2.18 Can you fully express yourself at work communication wise? Are you allowed to suggest ideas or initiate new projects and show your abilities fully? Explain.

3.2.19 How is a job well done rewarded?

3.2.20 What opportunities do you have for growth and development?

3.2.21 From 1 - 6, 6 being you're extremely proud of your job and 1 being not proud at all, rate how much you take pride in your job.

3.2.22 How would you evaluate your performance compared to your co-workers?

3.2.23 How willing are you to do the job beyond what your position requires?

3.2.24 How do you talk about your organization to others?

3.2.25 Do you have any regrets or feel glad about joining this organization?

3.2.26 How does your commitment to the company benefit both you and the company?

3.2.27 What does this company mean to you?

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Findings

The collected data from 15 participants are analyzed to study the relationship of job satisfaction and organizational engagement; whether or not participants with higher job satisfaction have higher organizational engagement. The interviews are conducted via video or audio call or face-to-face. The first part of the interview questions is asked to help examine factors including collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, femininity, and power distance; and how each dimension influences job satisfaction. Questions that pertain to job satisfaction are then asked to help study the level of job satisfaction of the participants. Lastly, the final part of the interview aims to help examine the level of organizational engagement.

4.1.1 Culture in Workplace

Upon the examination of the participants' attitude toward the Thai culture, most participants agree on the big role seniority plays, both positively and negatively. Responses also reveal that two participants show frustrations about a lack of professionalism, how

“everything is slow and not in rules,”

which impact employee's performance.

“I don't think it's professional. [...] Need to change if company wants to go far.”

Eight participants see the sense of “kreng-jai” as a crucial factor -

“When you want to say to someone, to speak to someone, you can't stand up for that. [...] you know it's like the Thai culture of the

“kreng-jai” we cannot say it out. I think it's the main obstacle for the working process.”

Negative attitudes that associate with Thai culture thus include kreng-jai, the lack of professionalism, rules and regulations, and face-saving. On the other hand, for the Thai culture,

“they have a hierarchy. They have an age. They have like experience. [...] you should know manners, [...] and it's like we respect the older not like in the Europe or America.”

Positive attitudes toward the Thai culture thus include manners, respect, family-oriented, and how Thais are courteous. Though most participants show stronger feelings and emotions toward the cons, only three participants do not feel fit in the Thai culture while the rest adapts to fit in. Being able to adapt and fit in relates to the Collectivistic aspect of the importance of being a part of the community.

4.1.2 Relationship of Collectivism and Job Satisfaction

The dimension of Collectivism proves to have a positive relationship with job satisfaction. The Collectivistic culture of the Thai society results in the job satisfaction of the majority of the participants because of factors such as existence of teamwork, great relationship with coworkers, and abilities to adapt and fit within the workplace. Regarding teamwork, 14 out of 15 participants prefer to work as a team. They all share the same view that working as

“a team contributes more than each individual put together” and that *“to achieve success, teamwork is very important.”*

When asked why, one mentions

“maybe it's a culture, a Thai culture. We live in a society. We always do in a group.”

With teamwork, two participants also agree that it facilitates the working process and expedites the learning process of an individual through the sharing of ideas and experiences and communication within the team. However, one participant prefers

“working alone because more authority in making decisions and I learn more as well.”

Moreover, when problems arise in the team, the majority of the participants say they would choose to confront, four out of 15 participants would choose to avoid confrontations, and one participant says yes to confronting someone of the same level, but it would be impossible with people of higher position.

4.1.3 Relationship of Power Distance and Job Satisfaction

To continue focusing on power distance and seniority, the dimension of Power Distance shows to have a negative influence on job satisfaction. Two view seniority as a positive influence, seven see it as a negative influence, and three believe there are both pros and cons to it.

“You definitely find yourself thinking twice or more umm talking to people who are older than you, who are holding a more senior position than you.”

For the pros, having seniority allows coworkers to work together as brothers and sisters, so when someone makes a mistake, any wrongdoing is not taken too seriously and treated too harshly. It's also

*“great to have someone to guide you; that's how you learn,” and
“the senior people will take care of you sometimes.”*

On the other hand, participants see that *“seniority made it very difficult”* and also causes a sense of “kreng-jai” that hinders work and how one decides to confront a problem or not. With seniority, one cannot be too opinionated and express his or her ideas to the fullest,

“We didn't have a say,” for “if they were there before me, most people would listen to them more than rather take in new ideas.”

Also, “*how you talk, you can’t just be so straight up [...] because they think you’re being rude and aggressive when you’re not.*”

Besides the aforementioned, seniority also affects employee’s recognition and advancement according to the participants. One who is older but shows no performance outshines a younger coworker and nothing can be done about that.

“การตอบแทนต่าง ๆ มันไม่เท่ากันเพราะ seniority อันนี้แหละเขา
มองว่าเขาอยู่มานานกว่าเขาก็ควรจะได้มากกว่าซึ่งในมุมมองของเรา
...เราก็อยากทำงานให้มันดีมันก็รู้สึกไม่okay”

translates into how the outcome and recognition is not equal due to the seniority system. Participants feel discouraged to perform at work because a person who simply has been at the workplace for longer years will get higher level of recognition and benefits.

4.1.4 Relationship of Uncertainty Avoidance and Job Satisfaction

There exists a positive relationship between Uncertainty Avoidance and job satisfaction. In response to the set of questions that applies to uncertainty avoidance, 12 out of 15 participants feel nervous, confused, lost, and worried about ambiguity. One mentions about not wanting to take any risks and others say,

“*you can’t work and do your job,*” “*I need to see the goal to see something in the end. It affects your efficiency at work and job satisfaction because you’re confused.*”

However, according to 13 out of 15 participants, tasks are assigned by the supervisors with a direction and goals to be achieved. Therefore, the level of job satisfaction is not negatively affected in this case for tasks are assigned to avoid ambiguity within the organization.

4.1.5 Relationship of Femininity and Job Satisfaction

The dimension of Femininity of Thai culture that notes the importance of a person's contributions and recognitions has a positive impact on job satisfaction when recognitions are given. In regards to recognition, eight participants highly value their contributions and recognitions. They say that recognition is important because it offers feedbacks and judges how much is needed for self development and improvement. By not being recognized, thoughts range from

“it kills your motivation” to “if you do everything and no one sees you do it, it kind of suck”

Three participants do not value recognition, with two out of the three saying that the recognition belongs to the team and not himself or herself alone; and the rest do not care or sometimes value recognition.

Furthermore, a job well done is rewarded with nothing according to three participants, with private verbal compliments according to seven participants, or with more tasks, money, or a promotion according to three participants. The other two participants say that a job well done is rewarded publicly via written e-mail. With the e-mail that acknowledges an employee's success across the company, it created jealousy and attracted too much attention from other coworkers. Those who feel worried give comments such as

“But how about her other subordinates?!” and it *“will create a little conflict behind the back.”*

4.1.6 The Level of Job Satisfaction

In examining job satisfaction, 13 out of 15 participants are satisfied with their jobs and two are not. Regarding the responsibility that comes with the job, four participants have no responsibility and ownership, for

“most of the work would come, would not be our idea. It would come from our manager or higher up”

and how being just a specialist does not give one much responsibilities and having someone

“older than me, so I can’t do fully responsibility on the job.”

One mentions low ownership because *“they don’t trust your work.”* However, seven participants say they have lots of responsibilities and 100% ownership of their tasks.

Results show that the majority of participants consider the work environment a good, family environment to be in, with good friends, colleagues, and bosses.

“The work environment is quite ok. It’s normal for a big company.”

where *“people are humble and friendly and busy.”*

Three participants, on the other hand, say,

“The place could be better than this” and that *“people were very negative”*

and the loud environment quickly turns quiet when the boss arrives. One mentions how the environment varies depending on the team and the direct bosses.

Upon the examination of the relationship with coworkers, 14 out of 15 participants reveal that they either *“get along well enough to work with them”* or develop strong bonds outside the workplace with coworkers. Some examples include:

“I spend a lot of time with them especially when we finish the work and go to dinner and activities together,” “we go together everywhere,” and “we would always get together outside of work as well. Yea, I’d say it’s quite good.”

All but one participant feel that they have a good relationship with their managers and that concerns, ideas, and feelings that are work-related can be fully communicated to a certain extent.

“It’s a good working relationship, but I wouldn’t call it a close personal relationship,” where the *“relationship is more like boss and subordinate.”*

Two participants feel uncomfortable to talk about personal issues or make jokes due to the age difference and the sense of “kreng-jai” and how the positions

“have a long distance especially I’m a specialist and hers is like AVP.”

However, two out of the 14 participants, with good relationship with the boss, mention that their communication can be carried out on an equal level.

For one to get ahead on this job, responses include experience, performance, ability, confidence, talent, heart, passion, success, attitude, initiation, responsibility, seniority, length of work, willingness, dedication, trust, and connections as the main factors that determine an employee’s advancement. Willingness, dedication, and seniority are the most-mentioned factors, followed performance.

Upon the examination of how much can one fully express oneself at work in regards to the suggestions of new ideas or initiation of new projects, six participants say it cannot be done fully, other six participants say it can be done fully, and four participants agree on how one

“was able to freely express [one’s] ideas, but umm..not all those ideas were put into action,” how one *“can suggest ideas, but accept or not is another thing.”*

Furthermore, four out of 15 participants see none or not much growth and development for him or her because it does not only involve just work and

“I can’t see a long-term kind of thing in terms of promotion because I got [undisclosed name] who is older than me.”

However, the rest of the participants do see lots of potentials for growth and development.

4.1.7 Level of Organizational Engagement

Last but not least, the next set of questions is to examine organizational engagement. From a rating of 1 - 6, 1 being not proud at all and 6 being extremely proud, the average number of participants rate their pride in their jobs as 5 or 6. One

participant rates his pride in his job as 3, six as 4, five as 5, and three as 6. Also, when asked to evaluate their performance compared to their coworkers, five participants say that they perform better than some of their coworkers; five participants say that their performance is average or equal compared to others; one say that she performs lower in comparison to her coworkers; two participants say that they try harder and put more effort; and two participants say that they cannot compare their performance to their coworkers due to different job roles they are responsible for.

All participants are willing to do the extra effort beyond what the job requires. Two participants agree on how they are willing to put in the effort for

“if I really like it, I’ll go more and above.”

One is willing because it makes herself happier, and one is willing to go the extra mile for the success of herself saying, *“I’m committed to my result”* and to drive the efficiency of *“myself.”* Regarding the rest of the participants, they are willing because they want to facilitate the working process or have passion for what they do. However, organizational engagement does not exist because participants are not emotionally engaged in the company. Extra efforts are made to benefit the participants themselves and the participants do have the desire to remain the company in the long run.

Three participants talk negatively about the organization to others whereas eight participants talk positively. Four participants are neutral, stating both the pros and cons of the organization to others. Also, all participants except for the one that also talks negatively about the organization to others do not feel regret or are glad about joining the organization. Current employees still work here because they see their job as a promising career path, they have no other job offer, they believe they can fix the problem, they have a good team, and they desire to learn; while former employees’ reasons for leaving the organization are the lack of career path and new job offers. To the participants, the company is either a learning place, a place to acquire connections, a big step in life, life’s valuable experience, simply a workplace, or

“can’t separate company from my life and DNA.”

Table 4.1 below summarizes what participants think how their dedication to the company benefits them and the company in return. Some participants name more than one benefit. Each • represents the number of time each benefit is mentioned. Knowledge and how to deal with grownups and culture are mentioned the most by participants for how the company benefits them. For the benefits of the company, participants mention nothing, value and long-term goals, and project implementation most often.

Table 4.1 Benefits to Self and Company Due to Employee's Commitment

Self		Company	
Pride	•	Sales	•
How to deal with grownups & culture	• • •	Nothing	• •
Knowledge	• • •	Value & long-term goals	• •
Money	• •	A part that drives the company	•
None	• •	Project implementation	• •
Acknowledgement	• •	Customer Satisfaction	•
Experience	•	Reputation & image	•
Feedback	•	Staying up to trend	•

4.1.8 Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Engagement

Lastly, 13 out of 15 participants are satisfied with their jobs. However, only eight out of 15 participants rate 5 or 6 for the level of pride in job. Among the group of eight participants, two participants are no longer working for the organization, one participant does not see Company A as her organization, and one participant is at the organization to acquire experience and self development while only two

participants see the gap and the opportunity for the company to grow and desire to push the company toward greater success, and one sees the company as “*one big step*” where a substantial amount of knowledge can be learned. This shows that having job satisfaction does not lead to organizational engagement.

4.2 Discussion

From the aforementioned findings, it is obvious that Thai culture plays an important role in Thai society. It can be seen that each of Hofstede’s cultural dimension either positively or negatively affects job satisfaction within the workplace. Also, results show that high job satisfaction does not lead to high organizational engagement within Company A that has been chosen to represent Thai privately held companies.

4.2.1 Relationship of Collectivism and Job Satisfaction

There exists a positive relationship between Collectivism and job satisfaction. For Collectivism, results are consistent with previous studies that state that “Thai subordinates are more team oriented” (Swierczek & Onishi, 2003, p. 207), and that “social relations are of utmost importance” (Komin, 1990, p. 696) to Thais. Even when faced with ambiguity, though most are nervous about taking risk and are uncomfortable with uncertainty, they still remain positive toward the situation for “[they] still have a team.” This shows how having a good supporting system and relationship with the team, along with teamwork, are positively related to job satisfaction. Additionally, because Thai culture is a collectivistic culture, though the majority of the participants disagrees with or has negative feelings toward Thai culture, they still accept and try to adapt to the social norms in order to be accepted within the workplace.

Also, because Thai culture is a Collectivistic culture, Komin (1990) and Noypayak & Speece (1998) mention how “Thai people have a strong avoidance to conflict” in order to maintain harmony and good relationship with others. However, surprisingly, findings argue with previous studies and show that the majority of the participants choose to make confrontation rather than avoiding confrontation to resolve an issue. The majority of the participants prefer to face and discuss problems within the team, which greatly contradicts previous studies of Thai culture of maintaining harmony, face-saving, and being social-oriented.

4.2.2 Relationship of Uncertainty Avoidance and Job Satisfaction

Results also are consistent with Uncertainty Avoidance of previous studies that state how “Thai subordinates expect more opportunities and direction” (Swierczek & Onishi, 2003, p 204). Though participants prefer to have clear goals and directions regarding their tasks, the existence of ambiguity does not negatively influence participant’s job satisfaction because of the strong support system from the team within the workplace. Participants feel that belonging to a team with great teamwork triumphs the negative aspects of job uncertainty. Thus, Uncertainty Avoidance is positively related to job satisfaction because of the influence of the high Collectivistic culture of the Thai society.

4.2.3 Relationship of Power Distance and Job Satisfaction

Findings for the dimension of Power Distance show that seniority system associated with Thai culture plays the most influential role in and has a negative impact on job satisfaction. The growth factor within the organization is negatively affected by seniority. Results agree with previous studies that say “seniority system discourages employees, especially the younger generation, from working hard since their promotion is based on years of work instead of the level of achievement” (Swierczek & Onishi, 2003, p. 199) and how “the qualities of age and seniority -

opposed to performance and knowledge - remain paramount” (Andrews, 2001, p. 164)

in the Thai culture. Participants share the same attitudes of how

“เด็กไฟแรงโดนบัง” or “qualified younger generations of newcomers are discriminated and overlooked,”

how seniority leads to “kreng-jai,” and amongst various other growth obstacles due to seniority. Though as a whole, participants are satisfied with their jobs, there is a negative impact on job satisfaction when solely the factor of seniority is focused,

“Okay happy, but just not happy when I compare with other especially with those of higher seniority” and how *“they will have more opportunity and all that.”*

However, the seniority system also has a positive influence. A finding also proves to be consistent with Komin, 1990, that states that Thai culture with strong hierarchical systems can result in Thai employees being motivated to work devotedly for manager whom they respect as one participant mentions how she would decide to leave Company A should there be a change in her team and boss.

Moreover, results show that there is very little power distance between managers and subordinates within the organization communication wise. All but one participant can freely communicate and share ideas and concerns with supervisors. The findings thus argue with a study that says “normally, Thais will not express their own feelings if they contradict the boss, especially in a large organization like SCG. If the boss does not want to hear about it, they keep quiet even though they may not feel satisfied” (Noypayak & Speece, 1998, p. 355). However, even though there is little Power Distance within the workplace, seniority still leads to “kreng-jai” and

“sometime you have to keep your mouth shut”

which makes communication within the workplace more difficult. Within the organization,

“it’s like everything, every process, everywhere you go. The way I talk to each team [...] the way each team cooperates with others.”

4.2.4 Relationship of Femininity and Job Satisfaction

Furthermore, regarding the dimension of Femininity, results agree that “Thai consider prestige and social recognition as goals for success in life” (Komin, 1990, p. 697) and that “they prefer recognition from their superiors” (Swierczek & Onishi, 2003, p. 208). With the majority of participants highly value their contributions and recognitions, recognitions from managers and the company mean support and care. It can therefore be said that Femininity is positively related to job satisfaction.

4.2.5 Relationship of Job Satisfaction and Organizational Engagement

Regarding job satisfaction, 13 out of 15 participants say they are satisfied with their jobs due to the positive effects of the dimensions of Femininity, Collectivism, and Uncertainty Avoidance. The negative variables such as the seniority system from the dimension of Power Distance that impacts growth potential within the organization are also mentioned, but job satisfaction is still resulted. This is consistent with Ruthankonn & Ogunlana (2003) study that mentions how relationship with supervisors and coworkers and work conditions are crucial to achieve job satisfaction; however, results are also inconsistent with the study in how advancement, possibility of growth, and salary are crucial to achieve job satisfaction.

However, the possibility of growth and career advancement comes into play when it relates to organizational engagement. Participants who do not see much potential in career advancement do not feel attached to or choose to leave the company, even with high job satisfaction. This makes growth an important factor that affects employee’s decisions to stay with the organization the most. Therefore, the overall high job satisfaction does not have a direct influence over organizational engagement. With growth and development as the main influence, organization engagement is difficult to achieve in Thai culture as well because growth is highly affected by seniority system. Moreover, results disagree with Rungruang &

Tangchitnob (2010) study, for most participants are willing to do more than their job required, but they do not show strong emotional attachment to the organization. The willingness to perform is self-oriented or self-success-oriented. Extra efforts are made not for the benefit or the success of the organization, but for the participants themselves. Therefore, having high willingness to do more than the job role requires does not mean high organizational engagement. Thus, this is inconsistent with Yousef (1999) and proves that organizational engagement is not achieved even when high job satisfaction exists amongst the participants.

Also, knowledge and experience gained from being engaged in an organization are most admitted and valued by the participants,

“if you want to challenge yourself and try to get opportunity and face challenge you can find it here in this company.”

Quite surprisingly, none of the participants see the importance of low absenteeism and turnover rate when it comes to the benefits of organizational engagement.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study aims to understand how Thai culture influences job satisfaction within Thai privately held companies, and whether or not high job satisfaction results in high organizational engagement within Thai privately held companies. To explain how Thai culture affects job satisfaction, Hofstede's cultural dimension theory is applied. In-depth interviewing method is used and data is collected from 15 participants from Company A that was chosen to represent Thai privately held companies in Thailand.

Findings show that the dimensions of Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Femininity have positive impacts on job satisfaction, while the dimension of Power Distance consisting of factors such as the seniority system has a negative impact on job satisfaction. As a collectivistic culture, Thais highly value the importance of social relationship. Having good relationships with coworkers and teamwork within the workplace proves to have a positive impact on job satisfaction. However, though Thai culture is a collectivistic culture that favors to maintain harmony and avoid conflict; surprisingly, confrontation is preferred by participants in order to resolve an issue. Moreover, Thai subordinates are uncomfortable with ambiguity and prefer directions regarding their tasks. However, the existence of uncertainty does not negatively impact job satisfaction because participants feel that having a supportive team with great teamwork overthrows the negative aspects of job uncertainty. Thus, the dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance is positively related to job satisfaction through the influence of Collectivism. Also, regarding Femininity, recognitions are important in the Thai society. Being recognized for their contributions from superiors translates into support from the organization. Therefore, this dimension is positively related to job satisfaction.

Unlike the aforementioned cultural dimensions, the dimension of Power Distance is negatively related to job satisfaction. Though participants feel that there is very little distance between subordinates and managers, there is still a sense of “kreng-jai” within the workplace due to seniority. The seniority system also discourages employees to perform at their optimal, for advancement is based on years of work or age rather than skills and achievements. However, even with the negative influence of Power Distance, 13 out of 15 participants agree to have high job satisfaction because of the work conditions and social relationship.

Furthermore, job satisfaction that exists amongst participants from Company A does not develop into organizational engagement due to the lack of growth and career advancement, which is affected by the seniority system. Participants with high job satisfaction choose to leave the organization because of their career paths. Also, all participants are willing to do more than their role requires, but none shows strong emotional attachment to the organization. It can thus be concluded that high job satisfaction does not have a direct relationship with high organizational engagement.

Organizational engagement is important and beneficial, if achieved, to both the employees and the organization. Being engaged, employees acquire priceless experience and knowledge and pride in their jobs. In return, the organization benefits from project implementations from experienced employees as the employees are the factor that drives the company. Moreover, by retaining skilled employees, the company's reputation is heightened and brand image strengthened; resulting in being able to deliver to customers' great satisfaction and company's long-term achievement.

From the study, it can be said that the role of Thai culture has no effect on the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational engagement in Thai privately held companies in Thailand, for job satisfaction also does not lead to organizational engagement. However, the Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Femininity dimensions of Thai culture are positively related to job satisfaction

whereas Power Distance consisting of rigid hierarchical system is negatively related to organizational engagement.

5.1 Recommendations

In order to achieve organizational engagement within the workplace, the seniority system of Thai culture should play less significant role. In order for an employee to be promoted, the employee should be judged on his or her performance and abilities rather than age or the length of period within the organization. The advancement of each employee should be backed up by KPI performance. Managers should evaluate each employee's KPI performance on a yearly basis and use fair judgment; giving credits to subordinates who show great accomplishments and have potential for growth. As the seniority system becomes less significant, this will lead to a positive change that affects employee's decision to stay and grow with the organization. In addition to yearly KPI, encouraging new roles and responsibilities to promote growth and advancement will help retain employees as well.

Additionally, to maintain the level of job satisfaction, managers should continue to delegate responsibilities to subordinates, publicly give rewards and recognitions, and promote teamwork throughout the workplace. Having a strong support system and a sense of teamwork within a workplace are the most crucial factors of sustaining employee's job satisfaction in a Collectivistic and Feminine culture like the Thai culture.

Furthermore, each employee should create a clear career path plan and keep track of his or her progress. In order to reach their career goals, it is important for employees to see the steps that are required to be taken within a certain timeframe. When shared with the organization, this will help the organization retain employees by being able to understand their wants and needs and to be able to best provide opportunities that match each employee.

5.2 Future Research

One of the most surprising discoveries from this study is how Thai employees prefer confrontation even when Thai is a Collectivistic culture that favors harmony. Future studies should focus on how the new generation is starting to detach from Thai social values. Is the detachment influenced by Western culture? Possible influencing factors include the increasing number of international schools in Thailand and of people going abroad to receive higher education, and the effects of Western media. Does it play a role in minimizing the seniority system? How does it positively or negatively affect job satisfaction and organizational engagement within Thai privately held companies in Thailand?

5.3 Limitation

This study has a limitation in the size of the sample because the qualitative method is used. Findings from the limited number of participants from Company A may not be used to generalize the larger population. Also, in applying the qualitative method with in-depth interviewing technique, findings are based on what participants say at face value and may contain biases. Participants' responses during the interviews are dependent on their current mood and their abilities to recall certain scenarios at the workplace. Therefore, based on participants' abilities to remember experiences from the past, memories can fade and become less accurate. If they could only recall events that occurred more recently than the ones in the past, or if they could only remember the negative experiences, then this greatly affects the findings of this research and may sometimes result in the exaggeration of answers. Moreover, because this research topic is sensitive, participants may give answers that do not reveal their honest feelings and opinions. Because Thai culture is highly Collectivistic, participants may respond in such a way that makes them fit in with and be accepted by the people at the workplace.

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1. W.B. Audio Transcription

-Okay so how long did you work for the company and what's your position?

I worked at Tops for about 5 years. I had a few different positions. Started in Brand Promotion, did some copywriting, and ended up as a Digital Content Manager.

-And umm how was the work environment?

Work environment was a bit varied I have to say. It depended on what team...

-Can you say that again? I didn't quite get that.

Uhh the work environment varied a bit. Uh mostly depended on the teams you're working in and your direct bosses.

-Like what are the chances of you developing friendships with your coworkers? How did you guys get along?

Uhh I would have to say quite good. At Tops uhh your mutual coworkers were very friendly. Umm you work in teams of course and you be quite close to the team you're working with. We'd always, we would always get together outside of work as well. Yea, I'd say it's quite good.

-Since you get along with all your coworkers and all, do you prefer to work in a team or as a team rather than going solo?

Yea I prefer to work as a team.

-Uhh why so?

Why so? I think a team contributes more than each individual put together. Uhh more synergy maybe I think umm many heads do a bit better than one.

-Uhh when problems arise within the team or with someone in the team, do you make confrontations or do you try to avoid them?

I wouldn't say confrontations. Uhh I won't say confrontations but....uhh mediations.

-Ok how would you do so? Like in which way would you approach them?

If it was verbal uhh get everyone who is discussing this matter all together and just talk it out. If it was email it would be a bit harder umm you have to try to mediate through email I guess by listening to all the points all the problems.

-So when you worked here, how did your boss handle the team and how did he or she delegate task?

My boss is ok I'll talk about my last my my most recent boss there then. So we work in a hierarchy so we had direct bosses and then managers. Uhh bosses basically give us responsibility to manage your team and delegated the work that given to us by them. It was delegational responsibilities and umm leaderships and everything.

-And you mentioned about your boss giving you ownership, how much responsibility and ownership do you have in your job?

I would say almost total of responsibility of my work and shared budget responsibility.

-Ahh ok and umm when let's see. When your boss doesn't really kind of like plan the whole umm direction. When your boss doesn't really give you direction of the project of the goal of a certain task, how do you feel about the ambiguity and uncertainty of not knowing what you're working towards to?

Uhh to be honest, happens sometimes. Nobody likes ambiguity but what you do is try to find your direction and maybe consult them if that's the case. If they have the answers, you try to ask *Am I going the right way? Am I doing the right thing?* Sort of like that.

-And how does managers within your your kind of former company motivate and empower people?

Empowerment and motivation, I would say positive encouragement umm... rewards, uhh, sometimes monetary, sometimes no. Umm food. I think just general positive feedback.

-And how much do you value your contributions and recognition by your manager?

From my manager...umm I value a lot because sometimes, doesn't happen all the time, but when it happens you know you make good use of it.

-And your relationship with your boss, how would you describe that?

Uhh it's a good working relationship, but I wouldn't call it a close personal relationship.

-How do you communication with he or she? Like as an equal or a subordinate?

Subordinate

-Can you freely share your ideas, feelings, and concerns or what not?

Yea I can freely share my ideas, but what happens ultimately is that the decision is made by my boss.

-Regarding advancement, how can one get ahead within the organization? What do you think it requires?

I think it's worth going that extra mile doing what nobody else is doing, or nobody else wants to, or is doing. Just showing you know you're able to do it more than what you're doing currently.

-But what is the main factor that determines an employee's advancement for employees?

Umm I'd say trust.

-Ok.

Trust is completely the key word. If your boss trusts you with what to do, thinks you can do it, yea you you're on your way.

-What role does seniority play in your organization?

Uhh I'd have to say a lot. Seniority because Tops is uhh I wouldn't say a family company, but it's a company that works in a hierarchical basis. Currently they play a big big role, you want upper management that wants to go with your ideas, your decisions, etc.

-Speaking of seniority and all the previous factors you've mentioned, what is your attitude toward Thai culture?

What's my attitude towards...it's very,very hierarchical. Yea seniority plays a big role even if someone in your team and umm they are same age as you umm you have a certain approach...

-I'm losing you.

Can you hear me?

-Uhh not really.

No? I'm in the same spot.

-Ok better.

I did nothing. I'm just going to keep speaking until you..

-Ok it's good now.

Ok umm seniority plays a big role in a Thai workplace culture. You definitely find yourself thinking twice or more umm talking to people who are older than you, who are holding a more senior position than you. Yep.

-Ok how do you see yourself in Thai culture?

How do I see myself, I see myself fitting quite well actually.

-Do you accept and follow the social norms?

Yea, yea. I like to say i have.

-Were you satisfied with your umm former job? Like how satisfied were you with your job security, salary, working conditions, and all?

Uhh what's the first one?

-Well basically were you satisfied with your job? Like with all factors accounted for?

For all I'd have to say yes I was satisfied. It gave me a uhh good pointers going forward. Umm doing a lot of things even though sometimes there was too many things to do. Rewards and salary I'd have to say it was probably have been a bit...

-I'm losing you.

I probably did more than what I was paid.

-Ok, umm. You've mentioned that. Umm were you able to fully express yourself umm at the workplace communication wise? For example, initiating new ideas and showing your abilities fully?

Uhh to a limited extent umm I was able to freely express my ideas, but umm...not all those ideas were put into action not sometimes because maybe it was a different role than I was in, or it wasn't part of my responsibility.

-Ok umm how is a job well done rewarded?

Job well done was rewarded with positive feedback, good encouragement and Probably more job to do.

-And were you satisfied with how...how...the recognition, the form of the recognition was in?

Yea yea I was pretty satisfied.

-Umm what opportunities do you have for growth?

Umm to a certain level I'd have to say there was a good room to grow but it kind of topples out towards ...it kind of levels off...so I'd have to say you could only go so much.

-Ok so from a rating of 1-6, 6 being you're extremely proud of your job and 1 being not proud at all, how much would you, umm how much do you take pride in your job?
6

-Ok umm how would you evaluate your performance compared to your co-workers?
Performance of my coworkers or?

-No, how would you evaluate your own performance compared to your coworkers.
Umm...bit cool or better than some or worse maybe par or worse than a few.

-How willing are you to do beyond what your job position requires?

Quite willing. I think that did that from day 1 until the very last day I did more than everybody else expects.

-Why did you do that?

Umm I felt it was good opportunity to grow umm get more experience and perhaps uhh...

-Can you hear me? Hello? Hello?

I can hear you fine.

-Ok I can hear you now. Alright so umm how do you talk about your organization to others?

Umm I would recommend it to others as a great place to learn and to work in a big, big organization. It's really quite rewarding in terms of experience.

-Ok do you have any regrets or do you feel glad about joining the organization?

I'm not the kind of person who has regrets. Uhh I would have to say no. I think I was there long enough to see myself grow and learn and do quite a lot.

-What were your reasons for leaving the organization?

My reason is actually the reason of career advancement. I had the opportunity and I took it.

-What did the company mean to you?

The company means a lot to me. It was umm my very first professional job umm among others it was a place where I made lifelong friends. Cool. So yea. Met a lot of good people.

-And lastly, how do you feel that your commitment to the company benefited you and benefited the company as well?

My commitment to the company was for myself was rewarded by salary I think that's enough myself, but as for the company, it wasn't really a position where you have somebody else doing the same thing as you, so I add quite a value.

2. R.C. Audio Transcription

-What was your position and how many years did you work for the company?

My position at Tops was Senior Brand and Event Specialist. I worked there for two years.

-How is the work environment there?

The work environment is quite ok. It's normal for a big company.

-What are the chances to develop close relationships with your co-workers?

There's not many chances, but if you work in a team environment there's only umm chances to develop close friendship with your teammates, but not with other departments.

-How do you get along with co-workers?

We get along fine.

-Uhh do you prefer teamwork? Why or why not?

Uhh yes I do prefer teamwork because there's more people thinking and solving the problem and more fun.

-And when working in a team, when problem arises, how do you make a confrontation or do you avoid confrontations?

If everybody is on the same level and same thinking we would make it confrontational so we can talk things out and develop a more solve problem better than just avoiding confrontation.

-What if they're not of the same level? Like if you want to confront your manager, would that be possible?

In this environment usually it would not be possible because usually the manager just thinking *I'm the manager. Why would I have to listen to you?*

-And how did your boss handle tasks and the team?

Umm personally I think umh my boss handle the task and the team quite well. She separated the work quite umm evenly among the team members and who's good at what and who's not.

-Were there any uncertainties? Like did you feel uncertain or lost during any project and how did that feel?

Yea sometimes you'll feel lost if there's not quite umm instructions umm or maybe sometimes there's umm what do you call it ... more of an order more than a directions. Sometimes it makes us confused of which type or which things our manager our above her wants.

-How do managers within your organization motivate and empower people? Or in your former organization?

Usually it would be giving better task or a harder task for you to be more motivated to doing the work.

-And how much do you value your contributions to the company and how much do you value recognitions from your boss?

I think I value recognition really highly, but then for แปลว่าไร

-Contributions...like your work for the company, like how much do you value your contribution to the company?

I don't value quite high because I think everybody could do this job and also there's not that many uhh direct feedback or to show if my work is really good or really bad.

-So how was your relationship with your boss? Like how were you able to communicate with her freely or no? As an equal or as a subordinate.?

For my boss I think I could communicate with her easily also as equally as well.

-For one to get ahead at your former organization, what does it require like what is the main factor do you think?

I think mostly would be time with the company.

-What role does seniority play in your organization?

For this organization I think it plays highly.

-Do you think it obstruct your progress in work?

Yes

-How?

Umm by the sometimes if they were there before me, most people would listen to them more than rather take in new ideas new person. They will have more opportunity and all that.

-What is your attitude toward Thai culture?

Umm I'm ok with the Thai culture.

-Do you see yourself fitting in Thai society? Do you follow the social norms?

Yes I think I could fit well within the Thai society and I do accept the social norms of the Thai culture.

-How satisfied were you with your job, your previous job, with the security, salary, work conditions, and all of that?

I'm quite ok with all of that but the salary is a bit too low.

-But all of that, all in all, were you satisfied with the previous job or no?

Yes.

-How much responsibility and ownership do you have on your job?

Uhh

I can't hear you. I can't hear you.

Hello.

-Ok.

Most of the work would come, would not be our idea. It would come from our manager or higher up.

-Can you fully express yourself at work like communication wise regarding initiating new ideas and projects?

No. Limited to just the work in front of you, but not more than that.

-How was a job well done rewarded?

Umm คือ

-Like how were people rewarded after like a good after getting a good result

Mostly they would say good job, thank you, and all that.

-And what opportunities did you have for growth?

I just been there for two years so I don't think there's much growth potential and development.

-Ok so from a rating of 1 - 6, 6 being extremely proud and 1 being very proud at all, rate how much you took pride in your previous job.

Uhh 4.

-Ok how would you evaluate your performance compared to your co-workers?

Umm I think we're the same. Normal.

-Umm How willing were you to do beyond what your job position required? Like without being like told.

Umm so ตอบใจอะ

-Like how willing were you to go above and beyond what your job required. Like if your job requires you to do this much, but you went over just because you want to make the company more successful and the work process more efficient or what not so you did it anyway.

Actually it depends on the job that I get. If I really like it, I'll go more and above. But if I don't, I don't really do.

Uhh

Just finish the task.

-How would you talk about your organization to others?

Umm usual if some ask me I would just say it's a big organization and nobody really recognize you or your work doesn't really translate to a whole lot of performance compared to the whole outcome.

-Do you have any regrets or do you feel glad about joining the former organization?

Yes I do feel glad about joining. It's like a stepping-stone for learning and there's a lot of great people in there as well.

-And what were your reasons for leaving the company?

Just got another job.

-What did the company mean to you?

It's like another school, so another learning place.

-So lastly, how did you feel your commitment to the company benefited you and benefited the company in return as well?

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-Like how did your commitment, your dedication to the company benefited you?

Umm it gave me a lot of pointers on how to deal with grownups, how to deal with older people and also umm teach me a lot about the Thai culture as well.

-And how did the company benefit from your commitment as well?

As I said before, the company...

-I can't hear you.

As I said before the company is like พูดใจอะเหมือนก็จิงไม่ได้ benefit อะไรมากกว่าเดิม

-Didn't benefit much

Yea.

-Ok. Thank you.

3. R.K.Audio Transcription

-Ok so what's your position in how many year have you been working here?

My position is Brand Promotion Specialist and I have been here for three months approximately.

-And how's the work environment here?

I think it's good especially my team because I think they are feel like family or close friends or something, it's not just like coworkers.

-And how do you and your coworkers get along?

What do you mean by that exactly?

-Like regarding work or friendship wise, is it easy to get along with people here? How do you get along with them? How is your relationship with them?

Actually it is quite hard to belong in the group with them because they like very close before I come here, but the thing is they are like open their mind more than I expected and I spend a lot of time with them especially when we finish the work and go to dinner and activities together.

-And do you think that being a part of the team is important to you?

Yea sure it is because we cannot alone. For work to make it a good work it's like you should uhhh...how do you call that...you have to have a good relationship together because we have to help each other you cannot work it alone because work is like ... we have to work together.

-So why do you prefer teamwork?

If you have to ask why, maybe it's a culture, a Thai culture, we live in society. We always do in a group. We always do all things in a group. We cannot do something individual, something like that.

-Like why do you think so. Like why is that? Why do you work in a group? Like why is it better to work in a group?

It's like we have some sentences called like work together is better than working individual. For example, you can look on some organizes like they have group for example like if we have some project you have to think alone you have to create your something it's quite it's limit. There you have your friends, your coworkers, it's better for sure.

-So how does it feel when you work in a team?

How did I feel? Umm maybe sometimes I feel nervous but if we have a close relationship it feels better and like it quite easy to work together.

-And when there's a problem within the team or with like someone in your team, do you confront them?

What do you mean it's like?

-Do you confront them if you're like if you like see a problem with someone, do you go say something to them or you just keep it to yourself?

Yea sure! It's like we work together, we have to speak something, we have to tell them something. We delighted, you have to improve it, but sometimes it's quite a bit hard if your friends or coworkers have a higher position than you because for Thai culture we have a senior it's like it's some kind of culture called hierarchy or something like that you cannot show your opinion too much because like have limited.

-Ok but umm speaking of like seniority, what role does seniority play in your organization? Do you feel that...like why do you feel that seniority plays, like, a big role?

You mean like why senior have a big role in organization?

-Like you said that...like you know it's hard to confront people because of like, their level or their position or what not, how does that play a role in the workplace? How do I?

-No, how does that play a role in the workplace? How do people with different levels... Ah ok I got that. Basically for the people that call senior, they have experience in the workplace for sure. And sometimes they know many things that's called experience. It's more than newbies or beginners and something like that and they have confident on their mind and they maybe, *maybe*, some people think they are stronger than others and do not open their mind to listen to something that better.

-And how does that kind of like obstruct your progress? Do you see that as a problem? Yes it is sometimes. Yes it is because for example, if you have some problem and if you have authorize to manage something..

Ok hold on.

-Ok so how does seniority affect your kind of like your progress in work?

Ah yea sure it is because when we for example, if we have a problem, if we have authorize to manage something, if we can judge we can do something immediately, it definitely better than asking someone asking senior for approve it. It's like take a long time and some problem need it immediately, it's urgent problem, something like that. You cannot waiting for so long and for sure seniors have work like uhh go to meeting or something and they away from the table.

-And well that kind of relates to umm let's see the responsibility and ownership you have on your job. Like how would you say how much responsibility and ownership do you have with a task saying that you have to like ask them permission and kind of like approval every time. So how ownership do you think you have?

For now I working for three months and I always asking for authorize. What I can do, what I can judge, what I can approve my own without asking for permission or something. But the answer is complicated especially like if I have to order some product and how much budget do I have, they cannot say that because they use experience to do something to approve something like that it's quite a bit hard to do something like that.

-Uhh let's see. How does your boss delegate or handle task and the team?

Ok.

-Like how is a task given to you and how do you feel about uncertainty when you don't know what's expected and what's ahead of you and with taking risk?

Actually for now my real boss is not here. It's quite a bit hard to do. Like how do I know responsibility. But yea I have a job description. I know what to do, but for now my best is like uhh it's like she have a...she are the head of marketing. She has a lot of work to do. It's mean she cannot provide or tell something exactly they are. It is

something like that. But I have to know my own what to do. But the thing is because my team is good, yea really good, and I can ask everything what I can do.

-But umm...how do you feel about not having a direct boss right now? Not having a direction like uncertain. Like how does that make you feel?

I think it's a good opportunity because it's like I have to learn. I have opportunity to do many things, many many things. It's like a new thing for me. Actually, I have my experience for one year from last place, last work, and it's not like that, not like this, it's not like this. Its really good I think I do not nervous, I do not feel bad at or wen I don't have real boss or something because we still have team.

-But like your direction is not clear with what's expected of you.

Yea exactly

-So like that risk, that uncertainty, that ambiguity, how does that make you feel? Are you like lost, are you nervous, do you want direction, direct timeline, process, and goals to be given to you?

I think this one that you told me is just the option because the responsibility in the workplace you should know your own. You should know that what you have to do. I don't feel nervous or something because I know what to do and I still have my team to support me.

-Ok ummm lets see. How does your...or how do you see managers here or your boss here motivate or empower people?

Yea sure they are.

-But how?

How? Ok. In my point of view, when I have meeting with my boss with like she is like try to motivate try to keep the advice to...like...she did not told me you have to do this to

do that, you have to do that, but she says you have to think about it. What is the result if you do something like that.

-And umm how... when you get like recognitions and stuff. How do you value those recognitions and how do you value your contribution to the team or to the task?
What do you mean recognition?

-How do you value your contribution to work? Or like how do you see the importance in being recognized?

Ah ok that's a good question because I don't know, I don't think about that anymore because like what I have to do, I do. But like how to recognized..I don't know.

-No like, how to be recognized. What do you feel about the importance of being recognized by others, or like having your boss giving you recognition. Is that important to you?

Umm maybe yes. Maybe not because like umm I don't know how to say that. It's like ummmmmmm I don't know. I don't know.

-Like it's not important to be recognized for your contributions?

For me, yes, I don't care.

-You don't care? Whatever is fine?

Yea mhm.

-Umm so with your boss. What's your relationship with your boss? Can you talk to he or she about anything, your concerns, feelings, emotions?

Sometime yes. Sometimes it's not. Especially our position is quite have a long distance especially I'm a specialist and hers is like AVP or like it's quite a bit long distance but

it's fine because in my team still have a manger and I can talk to her directly and she feel good to.

-Like why do you think it's harder to talk to someone who is above your manager. For example, the GM. Why is it harder to communicate?

Umm maybe it's like they don't have time. They have to do many many things or sometime they have to take like priority. They cannot give advice for all people, something like that.

-From your point of view, how can one get ahead in this job? How does one advance on does it require talents, performance, what does it require here for someone to advance?

For here, I think in here we didn't work with the job, we work with the people. You no need for special or something in the...how do you say that...it's like for like theory or something like that.

But the thing you need is still you need to communicate with people. How to asking people for help or like have participate with you.

-So the main factor that determines someone's advancement in the organization is to be people-oriented. Is that what you mean?

What do you mean?

-Like people-oriented, knowing how to work with people, get along with people. Right? Does it have to do with relationship with others, connections, or like does seniority play a role in advancement, worklife, experience...

The important thing to work with the people is like you should know the culture of this workplace first. Then you have to know how to do yourself to belong in the workplace. For example, in here they have senior for sure. They have a hierarchy. They have an

age. They have like experience. They have something to judge the people and then you should know manners, just like polite or something. We are Western, no, East culture and it's like we respect the older, not like in the East in the Europe or America.

-So what's your attitude with that, with the Thai culture? Of course there are pros and cons with the Thai culture, but like what your attitude towards it?

My attitude. Ok alright alright. Actually actually everything, everything, have pros n cons, everything. We don't have something is like have the good thing but don't have the bad thing. For Thai culture it's good for sometime but it's not good for sometime as well.

-Can you like...

Explain that ?

-Yea.

Yea sure. For example, for the senior culture, for the senior or something like that, if you do in the right way, the senior people will take care of you sometimes. They will give advice, give like many thing. Everything will be better than you like. But sometimes it's not good especially like if we didn't know the culture it's like what should we do how can we belong to the society or something like that. You will be even even you are specialist people you cannot show your creation or imagine or something because you did not respect the culture.

-And umm do you see yourself, how do you see yourself in the Thai society? Like do you fit in? Do you blend in with the crowd? Do you follow the social norms? Or do you go the opposite way of the crowd.

Ok alright. Eh, I don't know. Actually normally people human it's like they are society for sure. It's like I don't know.

-For you, do you see yourself fit in the society?

I don't know to be honest. I don't know.

-Do you follow like everyone else? Like what others do, do you follow them to fit in?
Not really but...not definitely but maybe, I don't know to be honest because I be with my people I be with my friends. It's like belonging to society or not I don't care. I don't mind.

-How satisfied are you with your job? Like security, salary, working condition, relationship?
Security?

-Like how satisfied are you with your job security and working condition?
In here?

-Yea, working condition, salary, and all that stuff.
Maybe. Yea. I'm good with that. I'm satisfied maybe. Because I don't know. Especially maybe maybe of the team, it feels like I come for work. I come here for do something. I'm good with that.

-Here within the workplace, can you fully express yourself communication wise? Like can you suggest ideas and initiate new projects?
Basically, it should be that, but in here I think it's not you cannot do that. It depends on your boss actually. It depends on your boss for me yes I can do because my boss can receive any advice but sometime you have to keep your mouth shut sometimes.

-Why is that?

Because I think it's not suitable to say something. It relates to Thai culture actually.

-What opportunity for growth do you have here?

Yea we have that. I have that. Because I come here in the right position in the right time in the right place. That's why it's yes. Maybe I can grow, maybe.

-So from a rating of 1-6, 6 being extremely proud of your job and 1 being not proud at all, rate how much you take pride in your job.

Yea it's good question but

-Like rate from a number 1-6.

Maybe, maybe, I don't know, maybe 3 or 4 because it's like I'm proud with I pride I'm proud with all thing that I do.

-And how would you evaluate your performance compared with your coworkers?

I don't want to compare that for sure.

-Why?

How?! It's like you're asking me why? How?! Like why should I...

-How would you evaluate yourself?

Evaluate myself?

-Yea.

I don't know but I do my best.

-Ok. How willing are you to go beyond your job position? Like what your job requires...willing to go above and beyond without having someone to tell you.

Ok maybe I have to do that sometimes but sometimes I have to know myself what I can do. What my authorize, what my job, what I can do

-But how willing are you to do something beyond your job role?

Willing? I don't know but I want to do anything.

-To improve the company, I'm willing to do this or that without being asked because I really want the company to succeed.

Yea sure I want to do that as well but sometimes it's not your job. You can think you have creation, you have imagine, you have ideas, but like Thai culture senior, or like hierarchy, you have to tell your boss, first. But it's fine.

-Like when you go talk to someone about your company here, how do you talk about your company to others?

What do you mean?

-Like for example, oh I work here, I think it's a really good company, you should join, they take care of me really well. Or like I work here, I don't really like this company.

Ok alright.

-Like how do you talk to people about here?

Actually I not often talk my job with my friends and family because I think I work here I do everything here and it's done here. When I get off of the office ...

-Well I mean I'm not talking about talking about work to others. I mean would you recommend this place to your friends?

Yea no I'm not saying anything. Even he ask me. Yea it's good.

-Do you have any regrets or are you glad in choosing this organization?

Yea I feel glad for sure because I have money.

-Because you have money.

Yea sure!

-Ok so what does this company mean to you?

Company? I think...I think...umm I mean...I should ask like how do I mean in the company as well because it's like...

-But being here, what does it mean to you? Like what does working here mean to you?

What does this company mean to you?

I don't think about that. Yea it's here. I can make the money here, I have my friends, I have the society, I have my connection. It's good, but doesn't mean anything.

-How do feel that your contribution here benefits the company?

Yea sure.

-Like how? And how does that benefit you as well? Your commitment to the company, how does it benefit you and how does it benefit the company?

What do I do is...umm...I concern about more like to make the company to be better especially my job position is about the promotion I try, I attempt to make all things better. I don't know if it's good or not, but I do my best. And for me, gain from the company for sure. I get appearance, I got connection, I got my friends, and I have you, yea sure!

-Thank you!

You're welcome.

