

**CROSS CULTURAL CHALLENGES AND COMPETENCIES FOR
THE RED LINE PROJECT**



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**CROSS CULTURAL CHALLENGES AND COMPETENCIES FOR
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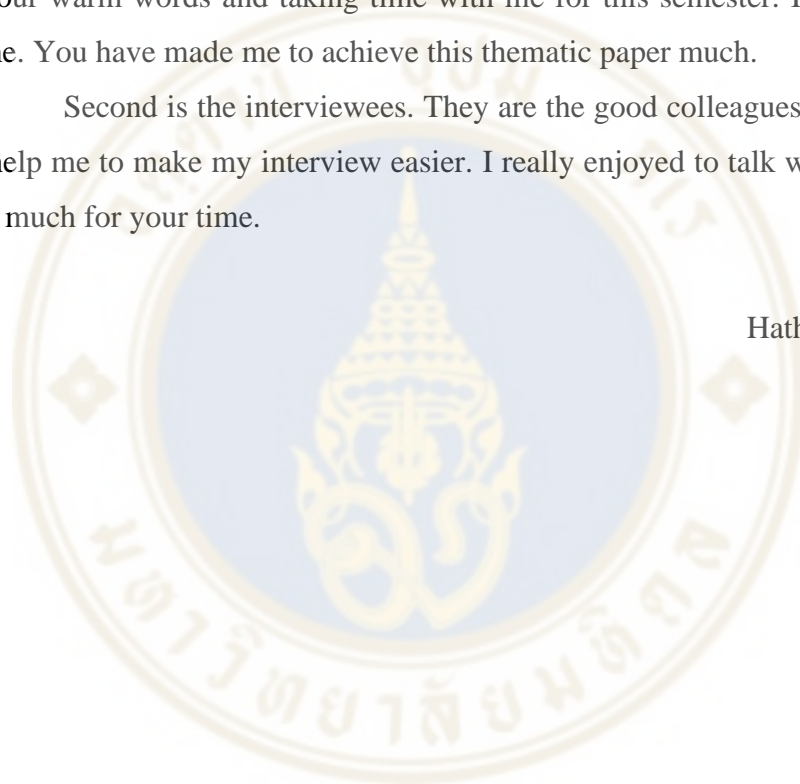
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CROSS CULTURAL CHALLENGES AND COMPETENCIES FOR THE RED LINE PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of cultural diversity in the international organization project, including personality type dimension, cross-cultural dimension, communication dimension, and management dimension, and their impact on team working performance, practices, and interaction.

The qualitative research method is used to collect the primary data from specific employees on the Red Line Project in Bangkok, aged 30 – 50 years.

From the results, the expat managers are flexible in dealing with cultural differences and adaptive in management styles and practices in the working situation to develop the work capacity and enhance respect and collaboration among employees.

KEY WORDS: Cross culture/ Personal type/ Communication/ Management/ Diversity

40 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Sumitomo Corporation was established in 1919 by Sumitomo group to be the main trading business player in the global economy. The business units are operated in various industries such as metal, construction, transportation, infrastructure, media & digital, living & real estate, chemicals, energy, electronic, and mineral resources. There are 626 consolidated subsidiaries, of which 531 are companies overseas and 95 companies in Japan. Furthermore, there are 305 associated companies; 252 located overseas and 53 in Japan. The employees worldwide are nearly 65,000 people.

With its expertise and experience in railway construction and train supply, Sumitomo Corporation participated in the bidding for the construction of the Thai Electric Railway (Red Line Project) in 2016. It is one of three consortium who won the bidding for the Red Line Project from State Railway of Thailand (SRT). The work scopes are to manage administrative work, coordinate with related parties both Expats and Thais, design and build the electrical and mechanical systems such as track work, overhead catenary system, power supply system, signaling system, automatic fare collection system, communication system, and rolling stock. The construction project is expected to be completed in 2020.

Employees for this project with specialized skills including project manager, construction manager, design manager, signaling manager, business manager, contract manager, accounting manager, quality assurance manager, safety manager, civil interface engineer, track work engineer, CAD Operator, overseas coordinator, and so on are recruited worldwide. Here is the proportion of employees in Red Line Project from different nationalities: 50% Thai, 20% Japanese, 8% Taiwanese, 5% Pilipino, 4% British, 4% Indian, 2% French, 2% Australian, 2%

Malaysian, 2% German and 1% Italian. Not surprisingly, this workplace tends to face cross-cultural issues in the business environment.

1.2 Problem statement

When employees of different nationalities work together within the company, overcoming cross-cultural problems are the big challenge because of diversity such as attitude, belief, language, age, race, education level, and so on. In the daily work, all different cultures have slightly different expectations about role model, leadership, trustworthiness, charisma, and persuasiveness. The managers, employees, colleagues, and clients interact and perform in the different ways that impact on organizational performance, interpersonal communication and relationships. For example, the way of each person see, hear, translate, and react to the same thing is different even though it is same the same event. With the many cultures involved in the Red Line Project, the misunderstanding by communication and context among all engaged parties occurs due to lack of cross cultural competence. To work productively, the company has to study and reconsider across all party levels to perceive the cross-cultural issues, manage multicultural communication competency and relationships, reform intercultural norms, and monitor organizational culture framework in order to create more positive outcomes for all stakeholders.

1.3 Research Question

The research questions asked in this study are as follows;

1. What are the pain points of cross-cultural collaboration of the employees on the Red Line Project?
2. How to deal with cross-cultural problems on the Red Line Project?
3. What are the Pros and Cons of Cross Cultural management for the Red Line Project?

1.4 Research Objectives

Since Red Line Project involves employees from many nations, the different characteristics of people such as value, interests, traits, age, gender, race, religion, education level, ability, experience, social status, and economic status take place within the company that affect the social norms, corporate culture and team performance. This research will study company core values, investigate and analyze the existing cross-cultural challenges, and recommend the strategic plan for all engaged parties to interact properly with professionalism to increase organizational performance.

Firstly, the turning point for all engaged parties should understand and accept the different individual characteristics and facts of the multicultural team players, and enhance the way to work together with more productivity and happiness. Moreover, this research aims to raise awareness and deal with the complex diversity upon personality type theory and Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory that may help all engaged parties to acquire high cross cultural competence, be able to manage conflict situations, create good communication and deal with negotiations in cross-cultural situations.

1.5 Research Scope

This research focuses on both expats and Thais employees from 30 to 50 years old who work for the Red Line Project. The qualitative methodology will be used to collect the data by interviewing 2 Expat managers, 1 Thai manager, and 3 Thai subordinates.

1.6 Expected Benefits

Hopefully, the company will gain benefits from a better cross corporate culture such as enhancing efficient company performance, increasing employee engagement, and reducing employee turnover. For the employees, the benefits can be

to develop cross-cultural and interpersonal skills that enhance their teamwork and effectiveness in the organization.

For better productivity, performance, mindset, and relationships in the cross-cultural workplace, both expat commanders and Thai subordinates may gain benefits from this study that helps all employees to adopt themselves to challenges at the workplace and develop themselves in a better sense of understanding such as self-awareness through learning themselves and others (e.g. demographic, personality, behavior, ability to work, and life experience), self-control in difficult challenge situation, self-confidence with team players. When the cross-cultural barrier is better understood and lowered, the employees can become greater intercultural communicators and negotiators. They can see more clearly their roles and goals and go in the same team and company direction. Furthermore, the employees can enhance their cross-cultural skill development for their future competitive career path in global business companies with multicultural staff.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

To learn the Cross Cultural differences on the Red Line Project, the conceptual models from the literature are applied. To capture the dimensional factors and conditions between Asian and Western employees that reflect on cross cultural values, problems, competencies, and management styles.

2.1 Personal Types

In of personality type theory, it is a category of people based on their particular way of thought and action. There 8 main styles that include Extrovert refers to person who loves to speak out, contact with other people, take apart of social events, and enjoy the social interaction. They perform same characteristic in private and public. Second, introverts refers to person who is quiet, love to communicate by written, comfortable to stay alone, and desire to work alone rather than in team. Third, sensing mention to person who uses his senses e.g. see, hear, touch, and smell, focus on detail, and emphasize on data (facts) such as Japanese detail-oriented culture (Attaporn Pohkaew, 2017). Fourth, Intuition describes a person who look for possibilities and patterns. Fifth, Thinking refers to people who use logical and analysis according to data and facts. Sixth, Feeling speak of person who use feeling to emphasize on personal values and believes. Seventh, Judging refers to person who focus on structure, timeline, and deadline. Eighth, Perceiving is person who is flexible for all things, be able to change, and prefer open-end. For example, Thai employees prefer the flexibility and easy-going in work environment (Attaporn Pohkaew, 2017).

2.2 Cultural dimensions

To examine different national cultures and organizational values, the framework of Hofstede (Hofstede, G. 2001) is used as the conceptual model to study the impact of culture on the employees' attitudes and work life.

2.2.1 Power Distance

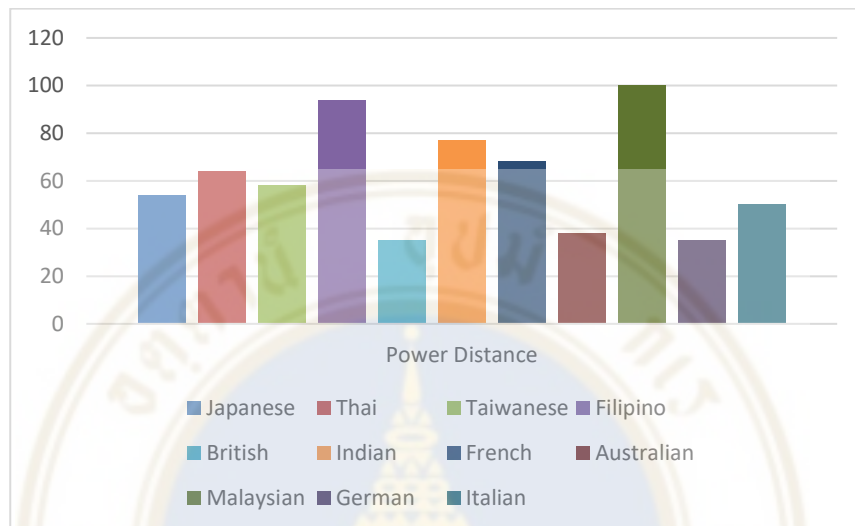


Figure 2.1 Power Distance (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>, 2019)

The study as shown on figure 2.2.1 indicates that Malaysian has the highest power distance in comparison with others. Malaysian junior people easily accept the hierarchy in society e.g. family, school, and work without argument and objection. Therefore, Malaysian is good adapter to learn quickly, engage the managers' instruction, and able to adjust to themselves into task or work environment. For, Thai managing style uses a centralized control approach based on seniority and relationship orientation (Waralee Thiemthao, 2015). On the other hand, in such an environment it is quite hard to create equality in authority and wealth, and lower-ranked people may be more reluctant to take initiative or raise important problems for the organization.

Move to British and German's society, they have the lowest score on power distance. Similarly, British and German treat other people more equal regardless of age, money, power, position, and status. In British and German working environment, the junior employees are allowed to talk, share and comment in the meeting or discussion. The senior managers are more open and closer with other levels of

employees, which tends to lead to more engagement, fast communication and decision-making in flat structural organizations.

2.2.2 Individualism

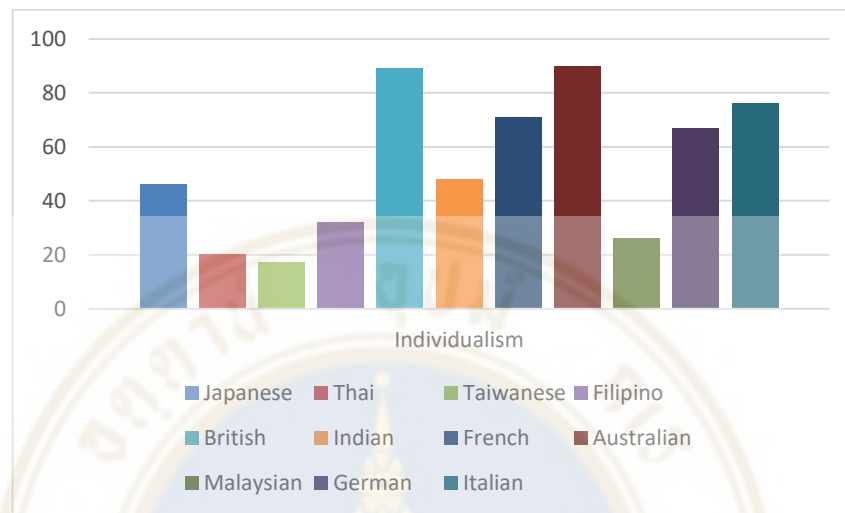


Figure 2.2 Individualism (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>, 2019)

According to the study, Australian and British culture are more individualistic that focuses on autonomy, uniqueness, achievement, and determine themselves upon their self-interest, personal trait, attitude, values and behavior. People in an individualistic culture are more likely to work alone, concentrate on rationalization, solve problems by their own, and prefer direct communication. To illustrate by www.hofstede-insights.com indicated that there are additional more countries which define themselves in terms of individualistic culture including Italian, French, and Germany cultures.

On the contrary, collectivism values the group more than the individual. Belonging to a group makes people feel secure more than alone, such that team members will help each other to accomplish the shared values and goals. To survive and succeed, the members of the group emphasize on team values, harmony, and personal relationships. In such a culture, the people accept the hierarchy and more likely prefer indirect communication. Cultures in Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and India are more collectivistic.

2.2.3 Masculinity

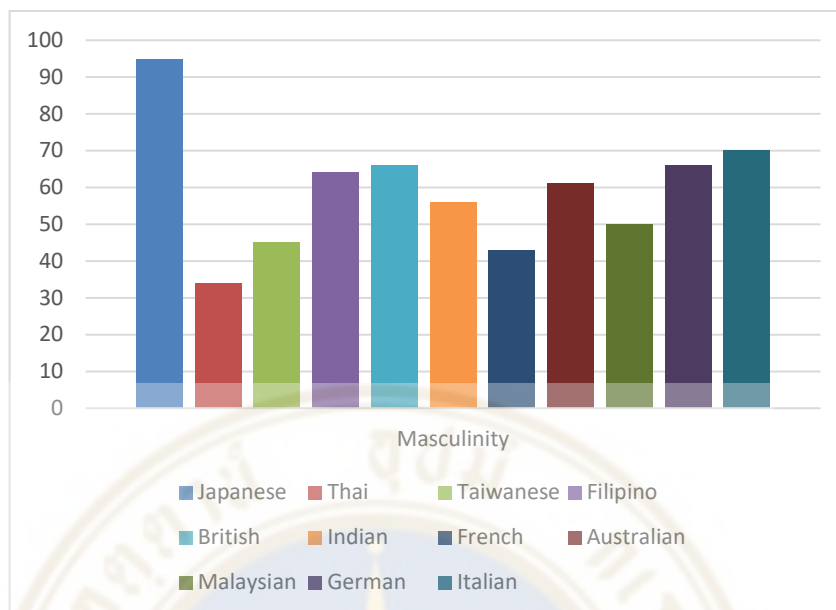


Figure 2.3 Masculinity (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>, 2019)

Masculinity focuses on success to acquire recognition, advancement and wealth for instance top management position with a higher salary pay. The characteristics of this culture are ambition, autonomy courage, strength, and leadership. Link to index as above, Japanese, Italian, German have high masculinity, who appreciate to live or work far away from their origin countries, make more extra effort, and spend long working hours to achieve the goals such as getting higher salary pay and being promoted to a higher job level. The best performances lead to a successful result.

In a feminine culture, people care about have better life and relationships rather than getting better and more money. In feminine workplace, the environment is different from masculine culture that feminine people work to live with same salary pay and a few working hours. The management style is a more flexible structure. The conflicts will be solved by collaboration and negotiation. In the graph, some Asian and European countries such as Thailand, France, Taiwan, and Malaysia are considered highly feminine.

2.2.4 Uncertainty Avoidance

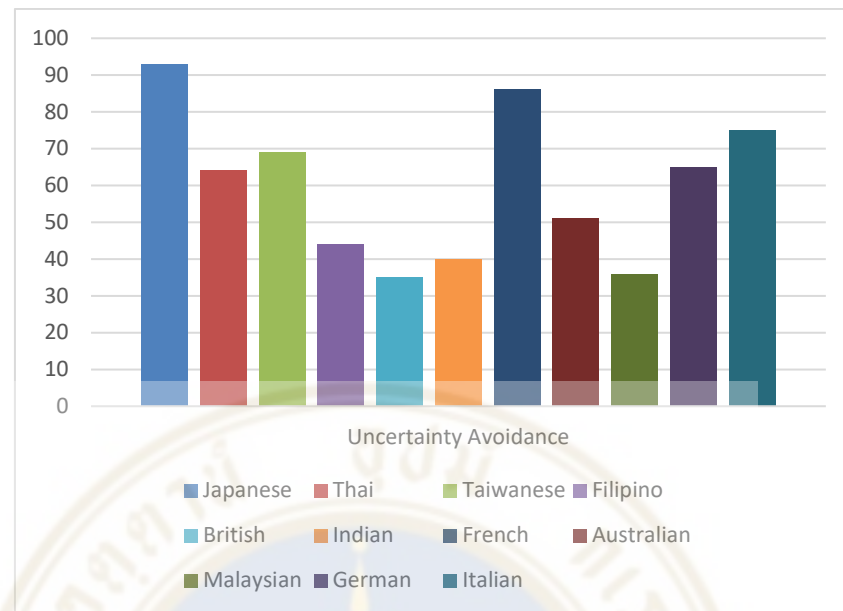


Figure 2.4 Uncertainty Avoidance (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>, 2019)

Uncertainty avoidance describes how at ease people are dealing with uncertainty and risk. The high scoring countries on the uncertainty index are Japan, France, and Italy. In countries with high uncertainty avoidance, people desire formal policies, regulations, goal, and interaction for their security. In the workplace, Thai staff try to avoid uncertainty (Onishi, J., & Mondejar, R.2011) and they believe in the professional managers, leaders and experts who protect them and avoid risk taking.

On the other hand, the low uncertainty avoidance culture countries are UK, Malaysia, India, and the Philippines who are more suitable and capable in dealing with disorganized or unpredictable situations. The people are strong believe with common senses, more open for the changes, and willing to take the risks and challenges rather than high uncertainty avoidance culture. They desire open-ended learning, informal norms, communication, and activity. Employees in these cultures are more flexible in their thoughts, prefer more flexible roles, policies, and structures, and they also can take more risk for long-term investment.

2.2.5 Long Term Orientation

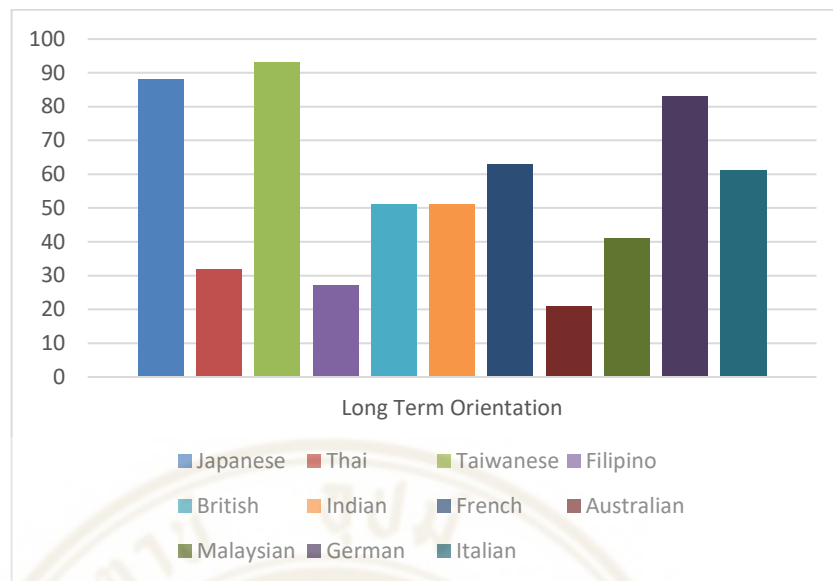


Figure 2.5 Long Term Orientation (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/>, 2019)

Time orientation reflects the cultures that value long-term commitment to achieve results, advantages, and build relationships. Cultures like Taiwan, Japan, and Germany, are long-term orientated as shown in the graph. The people are concerned about the virtue, perseverance, personal adoption, self-discipline, and future goals. Their working plans go step by step to achieve goals before starting the new job assignment. In causal point of view, they are accept the challenges and change over time from the unstable condition.

On the contrary, the short-term orientation society are in Australia, Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia whereas maintain time-honored tradition, and emphasize their own values that is right or wrong in the past and present. In the cross-cultural workplace with short-term orientation, the employees fit with their original community, have a sense of harmony, and enjoy their free time. For example, Thai employees are short-term oriented, but they also recognize the value of long-term service (Swierczek, F. W., & Onishi, J. 2003). Individuals with short-term cultural orientation can maintain the team to focus on current tasks or short-term goals to accomplish the quick result. Furthermore, they also concern about face preservation, seeking the truth, and fulfilling organizational roles.

2.3 Communication across cultures

To communicate effectively with across cultures, it is quite big challenges for the sender to convey the information through speech, telephone call, voice message, PowerPoint presentation, written email, memorandum, work procedure, and reports to the recipient in the different ethical and cultural in the global workplace. When communicating with other people, it is significant to understand the differences and learn how to interact with wide range of people whereas they come from. In communication, the people belong to varied culture that describes the different process to encode, share, decode, and perceive the meaning of message through word, gesture, and behavior. To disrupt the communication process, the noises cause by accent, jargon, slang, illness, hunger, light intensity, weather, and temperature reflect to the recipient meaning, feeling, and thinking. In any communicative channels, the sender speaks, writes, listens, or reads, they should keep in mind the possible interpretation of each individual recipient may differ from them. Furthermore, the sensitive issues or topics in communication between the different groups have to avoid and emphasize on empathy.

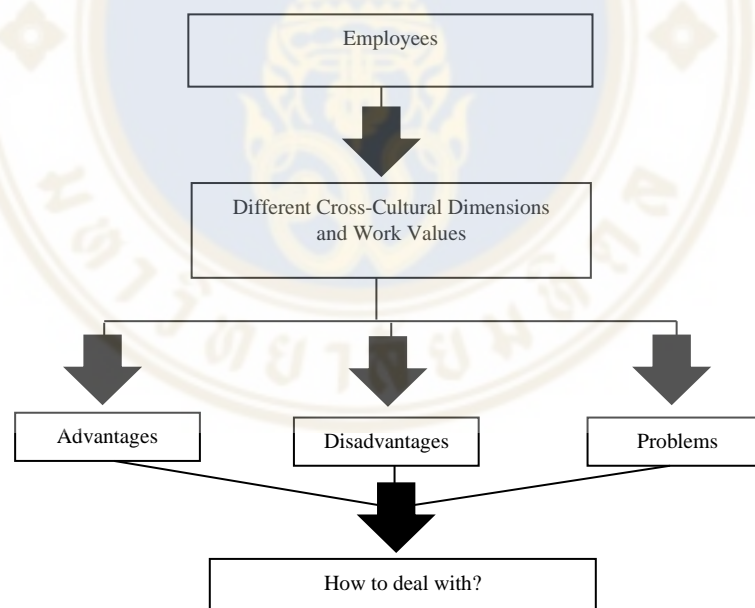
2.3.1 High Context

As explained earlier, people with high context culture usually act and convey the messages by implicit communication styles such as on non-verbal language, facial expression, eye movement, and tone of voice. Especially, Japanese and Thai perform in behavioral high context. Whenever, Thai say “yes”, it may mean “I’m listening” only. The whole message might not be interpreted and conveyed to the recipients. Only a few people in the same culture might understand the meaning behind a complex message. For example, Thai subordinates are too shy to say anything that may signal disagreement or lack of understanding. This may create conflicts which can result in misunderstanding (Hatainus Phewthongngam Cross, 2018). In high context working environment, the employees focus on relationship-oriented, team-oriented, team achievement and prefer personal face-to face and in-depth discussion with group of authorized managers before decision-making.

2.3.2 Low Context

The style of communication in low context culture is the direct, simple, and clear message delivered in words, and the information is described in detail to avoid misunderstanding. People with low context tend to be individualistic, focus on privacy, short-term relationships, and feel comfortable with standards, roles and regulations such as German, Australian, and British. In organizations, the employees focus on the tasks and responsibilities that need to be done more than on relationships. They tend to convey by words for explaining information, exploring ideas, and exchanging opinions rather than by non-verbal communication. The relationship cycle begins quickly and also ends quickly. The communication style emphasizes on learning, task clarification, rational problem solving, and goal achievement.

2.4 Summary of literature review



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the research objectives, the researcher may use the qualitative research method to collect the primary data from specific employees on the Red Line Project for analysis, summary, and recommendation in term of personality types, cross cultural, communication, and management dimensions.

3.1 Primary Data Collection

This research will collect data from first-hand sources, obtained by face to face interviews. The interviews will address the relevant issues that the author would like to seek and clarify for the study. To summarize, the data gathering will be conducted as follows:

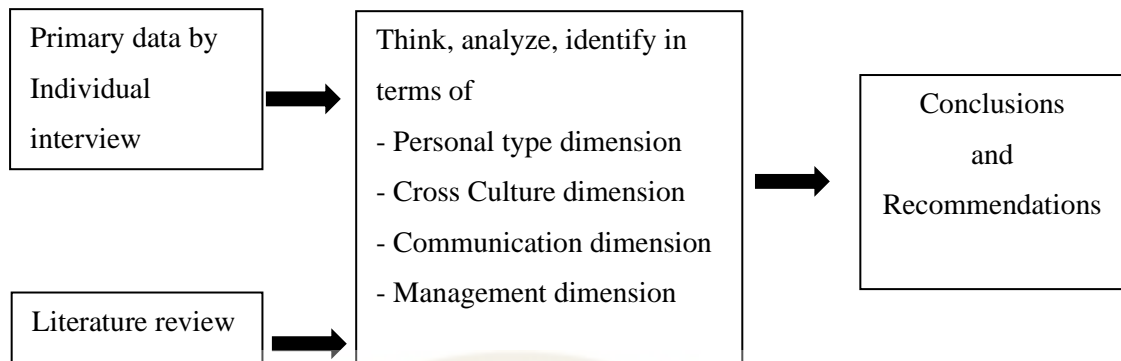
Interview Method	: Qualitative research with open-ended questions
Sampling Survey	: Individual interview for 20 – 30 minutes per person
Sampling Frame	: Expats and Thais who work for the Red Line Project
Ranging Age	: 30 to 50 years old

At the beginning of the interview, each interviewee will be asked for their consent to participate and to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix). Data collected from interviewees will be treated confidentially and anonymously, meaning that their names or other identifying information will not be revealed in this thematic paper or elsewhere.

2.1. Data Collection Table

Interviewee Code	Gender	Nationality	Position	Career path	Area of Study
01 - UK	Male	British	Manager	Design	- Personal type dimension - Culture dimension - Communication dimension - Management dimension
02 - JP	Male	Japanese	Manager	Construction	- Personal type dimension - Culture dimension - Communication dimension - Management dimension
03 - FP	Male	Filipino	Manager	Operation	- Personal type dimension - Culture dimension - Communication dimension - Management dimension
04 - TH	Female	Thai	Manager	Accounting	- Personal type dimension - Culture dimension - Communication dimension - Management dimension
05 - TH	Male	Thai	Senior	Business	- Personal type dimension - Culture dimension - Communication dimension
06 - TH	Female	Thai	Junior	Procurement	- Personal type dimension - Culture dimension - Communication dimension
07 - TH	Female	Thai	Junior	Administration	- Personal type dimension - Culture dimension - Communication dimension

3.2 Research Framework



3.3 General Questions (5 - 10 Minutes)

First, the interviewees introduce themselves and talk a little bit about their background, e.g. origin country, nationality, educational background, and work experience as asked by the interviewer.

3.4 Specific Questions (20 Minutes)

Second, the interviewees answers the particular questions from the interviewer that focus on personal experiences, norms, work values, personality types, cross-cultural communication, and management issues. The purpose is to find out cross-cultural pain points, advantages, disadvantages, engagement, negotiation, communication, relationships, competency, and managerial style in the multi-national work environment.

3.5 Question list for interview

1. Have you noticed that (Thai or expat) colleagues working on the project have different work values than yourself? Please describe.

2. Have you noticed that (Thai or expat) colleagues working on the project have different communication styles than yourself? Please describe.

3. Have you experienced any issues or problems collaborating with (Thai or expat) colleagues working on the project? Please describe.

4. Do you think that the diverse cultures impact on work performance and relationships (advantages and disadvantages)? How? and How to adapt?

5. What is the role that the employees should play in managing cross-cultural complexity?

6. Does the senior management of the project provide guidance and training on how to manage cross-cultural complexity?



CHAPTER IV RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the summarized results based on interviews with expat and Thai employees on the Red Line Project. The gathered data was analysed in each finding dimension according to the research framework.

4.1 Expat personal type dimensions

4.1.1 Japanese Traits

Japanese employees are loyal to the company that they work for. Many Japanese employees work from their graduation and prefer to work at the same company until their retirement that are 60 – 65 years old. So, the employee turnover is too low. From interviewing Japanese manager (02 – JP), he is the contract employee who work on railway and high speed transportation projects approximately for 2 - 5 years for the duration of the project term. Whenever the project is ended, his working contract also ends. If the current company has no new project for him to work, he can switch and apply for a new job in a new company. This behavior is acceptable from current company to recruit him back once company has new project for him. In case of unethical termination, there is no chance to come back for work.

In addition, Japanese manager (02 – JP) would like to work with current company until retirement because of belief and trust in the company. The work values are matched with his life. Cultural diversity is not a major problem for his work because of understanding, respect, compromise, and adaption. He also foresees the opportunity in career growth and prefer job security for family. Sometimes, it is difficult to deal with the multicultural issues. Referring to strong loyalty as a Japanese traits, the Japanese manager intents to take high responsibilities on his tasks and engages with commitments, policy, and goals of company. Focusing on Japanese culture is to work

hard and work until late night because Japanese employees hope to get highly productive performance as much as possible. Sometimes, they get job stress or Karochi Syndrome instead. For social trait in the working environment, Japanese employees are kind and polite. They always greet and bow both Japanese and foreigner customers and senior people. To build the relationship among colleagues, they usually go to karaoke, having lunch and dinner, or drinking after work. In case of their manager invitation to play golf on holidays, they have no right to say no.

4.1.2 British Traits

For interviewing British manager (01 – UK), western employees are individualistic and have low power distance rather than eastern employees. They are open and easygoing to create the relationship and communicate with. Sometimes, they speak rather loud. The Asian colleagues, especially Thai and Japanese, feel like they are aggressive but there is no negative meaning behind, but just to make it clear.

In the relaxing time during working day, British manager is friendly and enjoy the break time for smoking and drinking tea or coffee. Whenever, he acts in manager position, he has self-confidence in professional problem-solving, decision-making, and leadership styles. He believes that the work performance can be done and controlled by human's rational and logical arguments, even though it come with multicultural opinion conflicts.

With the global work, British manager try to adopt their behaviors that fit with the local culture. He always treats fairly and respects other people by quality of work.

4.2 Cross Culture dimensions

4.2.1 Time Value

Time is an important role for the employees who work in a multicultural company. For western people, they give the priority to effective time management

because it can measure on their work performance. In case of overdue date, they will suffer because of mismatching with the milestone and time schedule, and losing reputation, trust, or their job. From interviewing a Pilipino Manager (03 – FP), he informed that British and Japanese are good in a time management culture. His observation from small situations such as internal meetings, British and Japanese managers are punctual. They are in the top three of arriving on time to participate in the meeting room. On the other hand, Thais sometimes prefer to participate in meeting by Thai time.

For interviewing Thai junior (07 – TH), she stated that when Thai managers instructed to support for the super VIP company meeting and made an appointment at 10.00AM for Thai participants even though super VIP will arrive at 10.30AM. By working in multicultural team, the attitude of time management culture are settled and notified for all teammates who work on the project. The checkpoint is the best tool to check and follow up the progress of performance. Sometimes, western manager is quite aggressive to push for getting effective performance and success. It can lead to feelings that diminish harmony and relationship failure.

In additional information from British manager (01 – UK), he cannot accept subordinates who come late and miss the milestones because missing targets is the symbol of poor individual ability of planning and time management.

4.2.2 Safety Value

Religion plays an important role in Thai culture. The majority of Thais are to Buddhists. Their daily lives from birth to death are influenced by Buddhist beliefs and values because Thais believe in karma and next life. If their actions in the present life are so bad, in their next life they will suffer. Therefore, they concern to do everything correctly and carefully about mentality, life, value, and harmony.

From interviewing Thai officer (05 – TH), on the construction site, the incidents and accidents might happen easily when people lose safety awareness. Many Thai workers usually require the spiritual and safety protection. Therefore, some Thais

pay attention on Thai amulets according to Buddhist culture. Some Thais wear Thai amulets at their neck, or hang on rearview mirror in their vehicles. They believe that Thai amulets, especially Luang Por Thod Wat Chang Hai, have magical protection against accidents like they wear safety helmet and safety belt during work.

From interviewing Japanese manager (02 – JP), Japanese work value of safety prevention and protection are from “Go Anzen Ni” that means the organizational and personal values that are shared together to create the safety concept. All level of employees are allowed to act on behalf of the organization, following the safety manager who shows his leadership, builds a safety culture, provides, enforces, protects, and recommends high safety standards for the workplace and employees in terms of health, environment, and welfare under their different work conditions. The safety managers always care about each other and transfer the benefits of safety knowledge as a profitable opportunity to others in operating a construction to achieve zero incidents.

4.3 Communication dimension

4.3.1 English spoken

In Thailand the official language is Thai, and English is not a national language. Nowadays, global business investments and tourist destinations are expanding, and Thailand is a popular place attracting many expats officers and tourists from worldwide. With so many foreigners, Thais are automatically forced to learn and communicate in English. Especially in Bangkok, Phuket, Chiang Mai, and Chonburi. Whereas in the rural area, the local people are hardly speak English. Therefore, the commercial area and tourist attractions often require English for official business communication and symbol of upper level in social class.

Senior business coordinator (05 – TH) mentioned that Thais have no confidence enough to speak English with expats even though they have opportunity in daily work to practice English in the multicultural workplace. When the manager asks

something, the Thai junior staff member feel shy and does not want to speak more details because she doesn't know how to explain in English. The particular problems of shyness makes them afraid to use incorrect English grammar, show lack of English vocabulary, and fear other people look down on pronunciation that is different from the mother tongue.

On the other hand, many Pilipino can speak fluently, understand clearly, and write correctly in English even though they never go outside Philippines because in the past, the Philippines was colonized and educated by the United States. Whenever Pilipino go abroad, they have no barrier in English communication. Filipino manager (03 – FP) informed that when he makes conversation with Thai subordinates, he feels that Thais often speak English softly, formal, and polite because Thais always say “Krup” and “Kha” at the end of the conversation. They are not good explainers, but he tries to catch up with their conversation and find a way to communicate such as drawing or written confirmation via email after discussion.

4.3.2 Thai Smile

Smile is common culture in Thailand. Normal meaning of smile means fun, happy, or easy going. In case of bad situation between Thai subordinate (06 – TH) and her Japanese manager in the complex cultural environment, Thai subordinate realized the mistake about her lower performance than standard. She suddenly reported and delivered her apology by starting with “I might be wrong and I am sorry for this matter” and ending with a smile. Her Japanese manager wondered why she smiled during asking for forgiveness in serious situation. Her smile was interpreted to have a negative meaning by her Japanese manager, as an apology without sincerity. In fact, she expressed her emotion as regret, sad, nervous, afraid and laid-back. She intended to repair relationships, reduced the negative effect, avoided stress in the relationship, and made her Japanese manager to reboot the positive feeling, feel more comfortable and more easily to move on and opened the door to communicate in the next step. It is an example of a weak point of communication and interpretation between different cultures. Therefore, all expats who live in Thailand and emphasize on Thais culture and the relationship should understand more Thai smile culture and placed correctly different meanings in different situations because Thai smile does not show only

happiness. Additional meanings of smiles are “I am self-confident”, “I am going to try my best”, “I am proud of you”, “I am smiling but inside I am crying”, “Your idea is not good enough”, or “I am smiling at the bad joke for saving your face and helping the situation to move on”.

4.4 Management dimension

4.4.1 Ho Ren So

Japanese management style is conducted by Ho Ren So, where the general pattern is to report, communicate, and consult among people. From interviewing Japanese manager (02 – JP), Ho Ren So is the essential practice for all Japanese in the organization. When Japanese subordinates would like to create the working plan or other assignments, they always go directly to report, communicate, and discuss with their manager for building collaborative business relationships from the beginning, ensuring to meet the manager's expectations, avoiding uncertainty, and following organizational directions and goals. On the manager side, they also appreciate to jump in discussion and share the accountability and work experience. Their feedbacks and specific working suggestions are passed through simple business communication to their subordinates without surprise.

However, Ho Ren So is not comfortable for the western managerial style. British manager (01 – UK) is high on individualism. He feels like some small work information or issue is unnecessary to share with other people, such as having unofficial meetings with colleagues or suppliers. British manager believe that the manager's duty is to give the direction, share the guideline, let subordinates sit down alone, and work independently until done by themselves. The manager stays with his subordinates only at beginning and ending step. Therefore, Ho Ren So is good to be a milestone and checkpoint for western manager only. By British manager's experience, he submitted his work reports via official e-mail to all concerned multinational recipient managers. He realized that only Japanese manager always reply and react his e-mail by adjusting some small issues and giving annoying comments even though his work is already best. To create healthy working environment, British manager does not

hesitate to open his mind and shows the respect to another work value for keeping professional business management and relationships when they work together in a multicultural workplace.

4.4.2 Paternalism

Thai management style is conducted by paternalism. The structure looks like a hierarchy in a family that the manager acts in father role who is the head of the family with full power in hand to manage, control, and make the final decision for family members. At the same time, the subordinates act in children's role. Naturally, Thai junior subordinates respect and obey seniority and position of managers same as in Japanese culture. From interviewing Thai manager (04 – TH), paternalism is good to have clear roles, directions, and responsibilities for all subordinates. It is easier than other management styles to monitor employee work performances and given deadlines. In paternalism management style, Thai manager is the center to conduct every major or minor work in the department and also involve every final decision-making based on the cultural work value of the group orientation such as security of subordinates and best outcome for the company. By the way, she expects to get the loyalty, respect, and trust from her subordinates in return.

From interviewing generation Z junior subordinate (07 – TH), she follows Thai management style even though sometimes it goes against her mind. She always faces the high power distance from the managers, especially Thai and Japanese by seniority and position that sometimes makes her uncomfortable and dissatisfied in the working environment. In the meeting room, the VVIP manager's chair is the center of the meeting table and be far away from the junior subordinates' chair. Seeing her experiences, she prefers less paternalistic and loves to work with the managers who have the same work values, empower employees, treat everyone equally, secure her job and evaluate employee by actual performance. Some perspective of experience learnt by dealing with paternalism in the workplace, junior employees must understand the authority structure, adopt the tradition on workplace relationships, and respect the senior generation who bring stability to the company by their knowledge and

experiences. So, this is the big challenge of new generation to integrate management styles and corporate culture into the current beliefs and values.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

With the purpose of answering the research objective, the author conducted a literature review, summarized interviews, and analyzed every concerned issue that happened among the multi-cultural employees at the workplace, briefly described as follows.

Table 5.1 Finding conclusion

5.1.1 Expat personal type dimensions	Summary
5.1.1.1 Japanese Traits	Japanese have a high sense of loyalty value in their collectivism and prefer long-term relationships with bosses and colleagues that they emphasize on matching between organizational culture and their personal traits. Japanese also keeps good working environment and create a great relationship by harmony for avoiding cultural conflicts and working problems.
5.1.1.2 British Traits	British tends to be extroverts who are outgoing, seek out social and be quick to make conversation with various people who engage with different cultures in the company. British is more individualistic and has high confidence to speak loudly and publicly that sometimes they fail to listen and make others feel uncomfortable.

Table 5.1 Finding conclusion (cont.)

5.1.2 Cross Culture dimension	Summary
5.1.2.1 Time Value	<p>With cross culture, people think, evaluate, and spend their time in different ways at the workplace. Time value is the first priority in management for British and Japanese to run the business for internal and external shareholders. Even though small activity, they also organize when to start and how long to spend on it. The advantage is to be professional, and enhance self-decline. On the other hand, time is flexible for some Thais. So, they can be less punctual that leads to less trust and low performance or KPI.</p>
5.1.2.2 Safety Value	<p>Buddhist beliefs and values affect some Thais' thoughts about safety in the workplace. Wearing Thai amulets, they believe their power can protect Thai wearers from accidents. However, other people from different cultures think differently. They believe that if people do not act carefully, so it leads to incidents or accidents. Therefore, the safety policy was set by safety work method and procedure for all people to act accordingly.</p>
5.1.3 Communication dimension	Summary
5.1.3.1 English spoken	<p>English spoken is a pain point of cross-cultural collaboration and quite a challenge for Thais. It can create the long social distance in the communication between Thais and expats because some Thais are weak in grammar, vocabulary, and accent. They have less self-confidence and take a long time to think before communicating with expats. In case of too fast</p>

Table 5.1 Finding conclusion (cont.)

	English speaking or using idioms or slang by expats, Thais cannot catch up and might be confused about the meaning of conversation. So, they cannot reply and respond correctly.
5.1.3.2 Thai Smile	High context as a smile carries different meanings across cultures depending on the conversation and situations. With the sense of positive attitude, Thai smile means happiness or delightfulness, but the sense of negative attitude, Thai smile means abhorrence or execration Therefore, different cultural interpretation leads to the source of misunderstandings and conflicts in the workplace.
5.1.4 Management dimension	Summary
5.1.4.1 Ho Ren So	Japanese has high uncertainty avoidance that they perform and follow Ho Ren So to avoid risk and negative impact. Japanese feel more comfortable to obey the company policies and structure because they get a stable job security in exchange. On the other hand, British are not comfortable to follow Ho Ren So. They are able to work individually and challenge themselves.
5.1.4.2 Paternalism	The leadership style in Paternalism cultures makes a big gap among Thai senior and junior staff in the workplace. The senior manager has the comprehensive power to make the final decision for all subordinates. However, generation Z dislikes Paternalism but she deals with this situation by restraining, accepting the decision, respecting in the hierarchical structure, and sticking to Thai social roles.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Understand self-awareness and work traits

To manage employees in and across cultures, firstly, the managers should understand deeply themselves and other employees with different personality, working style, and set the clear team goals. For instance, extroverted people are enthusiastic, talkative, sociable, and solution-oriented. So, the manager should promote opening conversation and encourage them to speak freely, share ideas and brainstorm for solutions among teammates in the meeting. To bring their passion and commit them with meaningful work, make them feel like valued in the company, and allow to socialize for collaboration with other departments. By the way, the managers should set norms and policies to control their ego issues that will affect teamwork performance.

5.2.2 Arrange company orientation program

The company should have orientation program for newcomers that will be held approximately one hour with agenda. To brief company culture, norms, values, policy, task, and responsibility such as grooming, clocking in, clocking out, meeting room reservation, transportation schedule, work procedures, company intranet, and safety conduction (health, safety, and environment of work regulation). To ensure a smooth orientation day, the company should distribute the employee handbooks and request them to review before class. To allow them to take notes and ask questions at the end of orientation.

5.2.3 Enhance communication by events

The expat managers should encourage Thais to have more self-confidence and feel relaxed to speak English by face to face communication. The expat managers should begin with basic daily conversation such as good morning, how are you, and how was your weekend. To avoid yes and no questions because the conversation will end suddenly with their smiles. In the working environment, the expat managers should ask some open questions to Thais by the end of presentation in the meeting

room for checking understanding, practicing listening skills, and capturing feedback and comment. For the company side, HR should arrange bi-monthly English conversation and business writing seminars together with design of pre-test and post-test to collect data and evaluate their skills and knowledge from this program for further development. Moreover, company should arrange staff party that is indirect way to keep them engaged, challenged, and up their English skills. They will be more comfortable and feel free to interact with others without boundary in a party at the workplace.

5.2.4 Adapt Management style

The managers should be flexible and adaptive in management style depending on different employee cultures. At first, they should have a clear understanding of the mission and goals to go in the same direction. To spend time with employees, or keep them engaged in their tasks depending on their working style across cultures. The managers should treat the employees with respect and sometimes, should offer the opportunity for employees to engage in decision-making because they are an indicator to measure team performance.

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Appendix A: Letter of Informed Consent

Letter of Informed Consent

Date.....18...../.....October...../.....2019.....

Title of project: Cross Cultural Challenges and Competencies for the Red Line Project

Name of researcher: Ms.Hathaitip Fonglamul

Name of supervisor: Assoc.Prof. Roy Kouwenberg

Contact information of the researcher: 69 Thanon Vibhavadi Rangsit, Samsen Nai, Phaya Thai, Bangkok 10400

Dear Sir or Madam,

You are invited to participate in the above research project, initiated at the College of Management, Mahidol University.

The objectives of this research are: to study company core values, investigate and analyze the existing cross-cultural challenges, and recommend the strategic plan for all engaged parties to interact properly with professionalism to increase organizational performance.

To achieve these stated objectives, I would like to request your help in (check):

Filling out a survey form

Participating in an interview

Other (specify) _____

The risks involved in participating in this research include:

Details _____

None

In the research report, your identity (name and contact) will be (check):

Kept confidential

Revealed

Explanation (if necessary): _____

Please be aware of your rights to:

- Decline to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering
- End your participating at any time

Thank you very much!

I have carefully read and fully understand the information above.

Signature (Research participant)

(Ms. Hathaitip Fonglamul)

Date.....18...../.....Oct...../.....2019.....

Letter of Informed Consent

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 Revealed
Explanation (if necessary): _____

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- Decline to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering
 - End your participating at any time

Thank you very much!

I have carefully read and fully understand the information above.

Signature Thitimaporn Sulekaseu (Research participant)
(Thitimaporn Sulekaseu)
Date 18 / Oct / 2019

Letter of Informed Consent

Date.....21...../.....October...../.....2019.....

Title of project: Cross Cultural Challenges and Competencies for the Red Line Project

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Name of supervisor: Assoc.Prof. Roy Kouwenberg

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Explanation (if necessary): _____

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Thank you very much!

I have carefully read and fully understand the information above.

Signature *None* (Research participant)

(*Tossapon Vipassanatham*)

Date..... *21* / *10* / *19*

Letter of Informed Consent

Date.....21...../.....October...../.....2019.....

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Revealed

Explanation (if necessary): _____

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Thank you very much!

I have carefully read and fully understand the information above.

Signature (Handwritten Signature) (Research participant)

(..... Darinnee Methae)

Date..... 21 / 10 / 2019

Letter of Informed Consent

Date.....22...../.....October...../.....2019.....

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Other (specify) _____

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Kept confidential

Revealed

Explanation (if necessary): _____

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Thank you very much!

I have carefully read and fully understand the information above.

Signature (Research participant)

(Watharee Hawichit)

Date.....22...../.....Oct...../.....2019.....

Letter of Informed Consent

Date.....25...../.....October...../.....2019.....

Title of project: Cross Cultural Challenges and Competencies for the Red Line Project

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Name of supervisor: Assoc.Prof. Roy Kouwenberg

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Thank you very much!

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Signature  (Research participant)

(..... T. S. BRAY)

Date.....25...../.....10...../.....2019.....

Letter of Informed Consent

Date.....29...../.....October...../.....2019.....

Title of project: Cross Cultural Challenges and Competencies for the Red Line Project

Name of researcher: Ms.Hathaitip Fonglamul

Name of supervisor: Assoc.Prof. Roy Kouwenberg

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Signature  (Research participant)

Date.....29...../.....10...../.....2019.....

Appendix B: Letter of Request for Interviewing



College of Management
Mahidol University

No.78.32 / **1294**

November **12**, 2019

To: Managers
Mitsubishi Hitachi Sumitomo Consortium (MHSC)

Dear Sir:

This is to certify that Miss Hathaitip Fonglamul, Student ID. 6149004, is currently pursuing the Master of Management Degree, with the major in Entrepreneurship Management at the College of Management, Mahidol University. She is assigned to do a report for the course MGMG697 Thematic Paper. She would like to request for interviewing your team in order to collect data related to her topic regarding "Cross Cultural Challenges and Competencies for the Red Line Project". All information appearing in the report will be used for an academic purpose and will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Your consideration is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Asst. Prof. Dr. Thanaphol Virasa
Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs
College of Management Mahidol University

Contact: Miss Hathaitip Fonglamul
Tel. 082-426-9665
E-Mail: pingpinggoogfong@gmail.com

