

**CULTURAL CHALLENGES AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION
BETWEEN
THAI AND INDIAN EMPLOYEES IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY**



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entitled
**CULTURAL CHALLENGES AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION
BETWEEN
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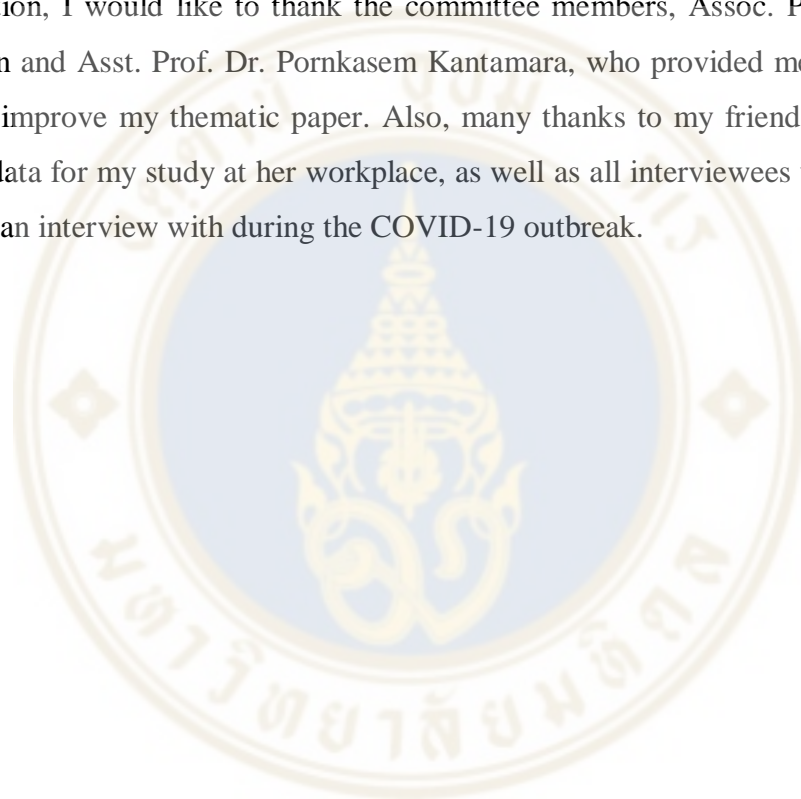
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to identify the cultural challenges Thai employees encountered when working with Indians, as well as how they adapted to work together. 8 Thais and 2 Indians from the hotel are chosen to participate in a face-to-face interview using a probing technique to inquire about their experiences working in a cross-cultural community. The qualitative data were analyzed to answer our research question. The result of the study revealed that the difficulties Thai workers in the hotel faced while dealing with Indians can be divided into two categories: communication and working style. The accent and fluency in English of Indians is one of the communication challenges. Another barrier to communication is nonverbal language, which can lead to misunderstanding. In terms of working style, Thai employees discovered that the Indian culture's hierarchy affected Indians' working behaviors and the way Indians viewed people, causing Thai employees feel uncomfortable to work with in certain circumstances. However, as a result of the learning and adaptation process, both Thais and Indians can perform more efficiently.

KEY WORDS: Cultural difference/ Cultural adaption/ working style/ communication/
Thais and Indians

25 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The world these days has become globalized, investors have expanded their businesses has been expanded from one country to another with the hope to gain competitive advantages, including price efficiencies, production capabilities and government subsidies in the market. Countries, especially in South East Asia, are opened for foreign companies to conduct and expand their business oversea. Thailand has been attractive for various countries as the country with plentiful resources including human resource, natural resources and capital resources.

In order to perform overseas business effectively, investors allocate human resources from their homeland to the host country, resulting in workforce mobility across nations. Companies' structure has changed and reformed to be more flexible and dynamic responding to changing business needs and members from different countries. Employees that are expatriates, or people who live in a country other than their home country, must adapt to work in a variety of cultural circumstances that could be seen as barriers to the achievement of organizational goals. Therefore, the organization should be concerned with recognizing cultural differences, because the lack of understanding of cultural differences contributes to cultural conflicts and ultimately affects business operations. Individuals should be conscious of this cultural difference in order to avoid the negative consequences, and they must strive to understand the characteristics of people from different backgrounds in order for this diverse company to achieve positive business outcomes.

With a large number of tourists worldwide, the tourism industry in Thailand has expanded massively from year to year. Many hotels in Thailand have employed a number of foreign workers to provide services to attract customers from various countries. There will be a diversity of workers in the organization from

different backgrounds, including education, experience and culture, who have to work together. They could be faced with some difficulty interacting and working together.

Therefore, the scope of this research is to focus on the cultural disparities and difficulties faced by Thai employees in the multinational corporate workplace of the hotel industry. Indians are the majority of foreign employees who mainly interact with our interviewees in the studied hotel.

The paper focuses on answering the following research question:

Which cultural challenges do Thai employees working with Indian colleagues in the hotel industry experience, and what should they do to overcome the difficulties?

This paper will collect variables of cultural differences between Thais and Indians by gathering secondary data from recent reliable sources including theories and stories. Next, in-depth interviews will be conducted to find out their real-life stories with Thai employees, particularly HR departments, who have experienced working with Indian employees at the hotel. As primary data, these real life stories or experiences will be gathered, analyzed and divided into positive and negative factors, and finally we will try to address the research question previously stated and conclude the research findings.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is focused on the cultural difference and challenges in the multinational corporate workplace of hotel industry in the aspect of Thai workers. Therefore, literature review was conducted from academic journals and articles related to cross cultural communication, cultural challenge and cultural difference.

Organizational culture is a key component of the sources that encourage competitive advantages in organizations (Pfeffer, 1998). In a multi-cultural corporate workplace, cultural diversity can be perceived as an opportunity to enhance creativity and effectiveness in an organization. On the other hand, cultural differences can be obstacle on the efforts to achieve a goal. Furthermore, internal communication in a diverse community is also important as effective communication can lead to better performance. A number of studies described that cultural difference without good understanding and awareness could lead to various negative outcomes.

Various researches have defined culture, but the most cited studies are by Hofstede, who defined culture as “the collective of programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one group or category of people from another.” (2011, p.3). This collective programming is generated by the socialization process, through which an organization or community transfers values from one generation to the next. Each collective contains a diverse group of people. Individual characteristics can differ due to cultural shifts from one society to another. In other words, cultural differences have an effect on how people behave at work. The majority of people learned cultural values from the agents of socialization, including their family, educational institution and workplace.

Many past researches have shown that there is no a universal effective way of management to apply to any organization with multi-cultural members as management practices are a part of national cultures (Hofstede, 1980). People who are embraced with a certain cultural context are prone to share their particular worldviews, including representations of appropriate ways of cooperating, managing conflicts,

accepting authority, or simply communicating (Chevrier, 2003). It has not been confirmed whether the variety of worldviews shared by multicultural members has a positive or negative impact on the organization's operation. However, the diversity of worldviews contributed by cross-cultural members can enhance the number of resources to overcome complex problems. In other words, they are more innovative in problem solving than national homogeneous organizations (Chevrier, 2003). On the other hand, diversity introduces ambiguity and complexity into group processes, causing chaos on team performance. It is difficult to identify underlying cultural roots of conflict and lead the team in the right direction in a multicultural organization.

The challenges that members of multicultural organizations can face may be classified into four categories: communication styles, difficulty with accents and fluency in a foreign language, differences in attitudes toward hierarchy and authority, and conflicting norms for decision making. (Jeanne, Kristin & Mary, 2006).

2.1 The challenge in multicultural organizations

2.1.1 Direct versus indirect communication

Communication challenges reduce information sharing and even create interpersonal conflict which generates barriers to the effectiveness of teamwork or cooperation in an organization (Jenifer, 2015).

The researcher named Hall (as cited in Nishimura, 2008 ,p.784-785) has described these two types of communicating culture as high context and low context. Basically, people in different culture have differences in communication style and cultural issues

Communication in Western cultures or low context culture is usually direct and obvious through language. The meaning can be understood easily, and a listener doesn't require a lot of effort to interpret the context. When the message is missing or unclear, people in the culture expect explanations. Westerners typically ask questions directly in order to exchange and get vital information from opponent. However, in many other cultures, the meaning of the message is embedded deep in the information and is not in the way the message presented.

Communication style in High context culture, which is common in non-Western societies, is shaped by intimate human relationships, a well-structured social hierarchy, and strong behavioral norms. People are likely to rely on their history, status, relationship and religion. The information transferred is implicit, ambiguous and reserved which understand hardly at the first time. The listeners are expected to be able to discover the hidden meaning or the unsaid with their own background knowledge or closeness with opponent. To emphasize the high context communication, most of the information conveyed is in physical context or internalized in the person, only a very little part of the message is explicit. Saying “Yes” in certain cultures doesn’t mean accept or agree with that, but people in the culture hesitate to refuse directly by saying “No” which sometimes is seen to be offensive. Countries with high context cultures are, for example, Japan and Arab countries.

2.1.2 Trouble with accents and fluency

English is the world’s international language often used to communicate between people from two different cultures as an interlanguage. Using interlanguage sometimes leads to misunderstanding or frustration due to the accents of nonnative speaker, lack of fluency or even translation. With the limit in the communication with interlanguage, the knowledge and expertise of nonfluent members in an organization are not efficiently transferred causing the team to recognize and utilize hardly. Other members become frustrated and intolerant with a lack of fluency leading to interpersonal conflicts. Furthermore, nonfluent members would feel less motivated to contribute their expertise to the organization, or even concerned on their performance evaluation and future career prospect from superior.

2.1.3 Differing attitudes toward hierarchy and authority

Members in an organization from diverse culture are treated differently due to individual’s status in the organization. When working under flat structure, members from different cultures, hierarchical culture and egalitarian culture, may feel uncomfortable to work together. For example, some cultures, members with lower

level feel hesitated to argue with leader as they see it is offensive. This obstructs the ability of the organization to add value on a project.

2.1.4 Conflicting norms for decision making

Cultures also influence how quickly your decision making is and how much analysis is necessary. For example, U.S. managers tend to make decisions quickly with less analysis rather than many other countries. We may perceive that they are not detail-oriented. Comparing with many countries in Asia, most of them prefer to see and understand the whole picture of the project before making decisions.

There is a model of Hofstede which is widely used to explain the relationship between organization and culture. It is used in various fields and well known as the national cultural framework. Country of origin affects modes of thought, feeling, and behavior as their systems of cultural value differ from nation to nation. These patterns affect people's ways of life, philosophies, and value systems of a particular country. This research applies this framework to understand the underlying cultural factors and levels that lead to the challenges in the cross cultural organization.

2.2 Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede 1984)

Hofstede created five dimensions for each of the countries and applied these five dimensions to aspects of society, such as demography, geography, economics and politics. A comparison of Hofstede's cultural dimension index between Thailand and India is shown in the figure below and described in detail as follow.

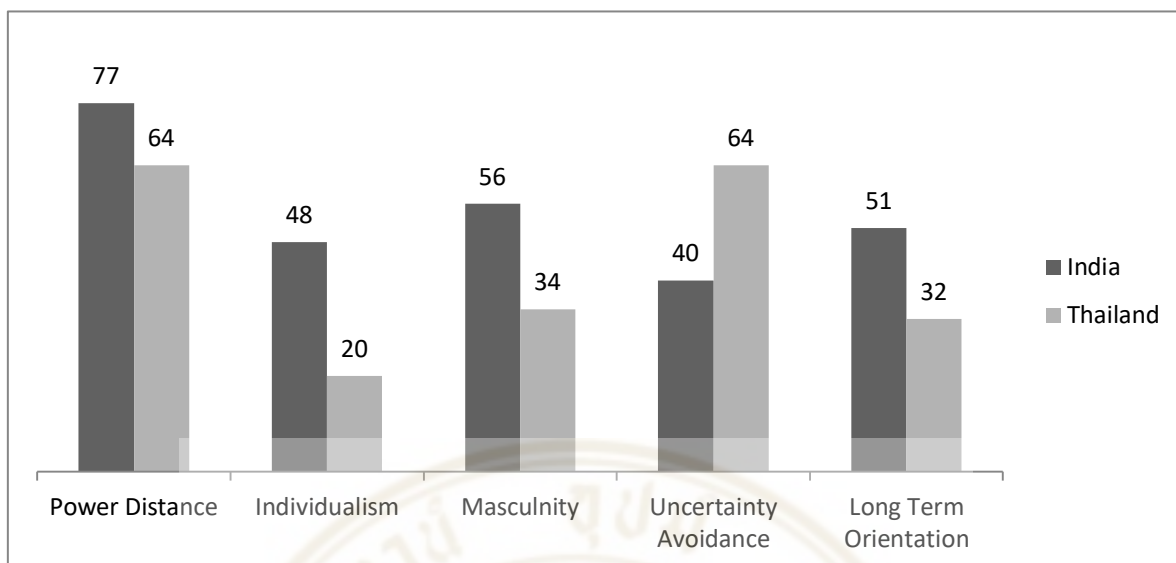


Figure 2.1 Hofstede's cultural dimensions index comparing Thailand and India

2.2.1 Individualism–collectivism

Individualism–collectivism refers to the interactions that individuals have in each society.

India has an intermediate score of 48, which reflects both collectivist and individualist characteristics. On the other hand, Thailand is a highly collectivist country with a score of 20

In individualistic societies, individuals look after themselves and their immediate family only. On the other hand, individuals in collectivistic cultures demonstrate a close long-term commitment to the member 'group'. Members take care of each other in exchange for unquestioning loyalty

2.2.2 Uncertainty avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance can be described as the extent to which people feel uncomfortable to encounter with uncertainty and ambiguity and try to keep away from these situations. This dimension deals with the need for well-defined rules for prescribed behavior.

In this dimension, Thailand scores an intermediate 64, but it marginally shows a preference for ambiguity avoidance. A society with a high uncertainty avoidance index is likely to follow a strict rule and manner. People with high uncertainty avoidance feel insecure to be under unstructured situations, such as the

unknown or different condition from usual. People prefer to have laws and rules or regulations to guide their behavior step by step.

In opposite, India scores 40 on this dimension and has a medium low preference to avoid uncertainty. Low uncertainty avoiding cultures feel comfortable and accept in unstructured situations or changeable circumstances and try to have fewer rules in the society. They are more tolerant to a change.

2.2.3 Power distance

This dimension can be defined as the degree to which members of organizations accept unequal power distribution. Power distance has an effect on relationships and organizational hierarchy. Power Distance Index or PDI is used to measure the acceptance of power created between the persons with the most power and those with the least.

Comparing PDI between Thailand and India, both countries obtain a relatively high index which means they appreciate hierarchy and a top-down structure in organizations. However, PDI index of Thailand is lesser than the average Asian countries (71) including India (77). High power distance tends to follow a hierarchy where people do not seek for further justification, and high-level person are respected and admired. There is a boundary line between managers and subordinates. Inequalities are accepted and the direction is relied on the power holder. True authority is centralized and managers depend on the obedience of their team members.

Many European countries, on the other hand, have a low power distance and a flat organizational structure. Everyone in an organization expects to be listened to regardless of rank or background, and they will reject leaders whom they perceive as dictatorial or betraying a feeling of superiority.

2.2.4 Masculinity–femininity

Masculinity-femininity refers to the distribution of male-female roles of which a variety of approaches are discovered.

On this dimension, India scores 56 and is thus considered a Masculine society. Masculinity is considered to be the characteristic that portrays ambition, wealth accumulation, and distinct gender roles. However, with millions of deities and

various religious beliefs, India is also a spiritual region. It is also an ancient nation with one of the longest living cultures, providing it with enough lessons on the importance of modesty and abstinence.

Thailand is considered India receives a score of 56 on this dimension and is thus classified as a Masculine society. Masculinity is considered to be the trait that represents ambition, wealth accumulation, and distinct gender roles. India, on the other hand, is a spiritual region, with millions of deities and various religious beliefs.

Thailand is categorized as a Feminine society, with a score of 34 on this dimension. Thailand has the lowest masculinity ranking among the average Asian countries of 53, and the world average is 50. Femininity is considered to be the characteristic that focuses on interpersonal nurturing, equality of sexuality, awareness of the environment, and more fluid roles of gender. Women's values are less different from men's values across cultures. The lower level is representative of a less assertive and competitive culture.

2.2.5 Long-term orientation

Long-term orientation, as Hofstede described, is "the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular perseverance and thrift." India gains intermediate score of 51 in this dimension which cannot determine its dominant preference. The concept of 'karma' dominates religious and philosophical thought in India. India has great respect for religious beliefs from all over the world.

Short-term orientation is the fostering of virtues linked to the past and present, in particular reverence for tradition, preservation of the "face" and fulfillment of social obligations. Thailand obtains score of 32 showing Thai society is more normative (Short-term oriented) than pragmatic. People in those cultures are very careful with the establishment of absolute truth; they are normative in their thought.

Another framework used in this research is Cultural Intelligence (CQ) to understand how Thai hotel industry employees adjust to working effectively with foreign workers, especially Indians.

2.3 Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence became more and more interesting among management researchers. Cultural intelligence is early defined by Earley and Ang as “a person’s capability to adapt effectively to new contexts” (as cited in Thomas, 2008, p.126). This ability helps to adapt to the cross-cultural interaction context and construct appropriate behavior in a new cultural environment (Sternberg, 1997b). Cultural intelligence is also defined as a system of interacting knowledge and skills, linked by cultural metacognition, that allows people to adapt to, select and shape the cultural aspects of their environment. Based on Sternberg and Detterman’s framework (as cited in Ang & Van Dyne, 2008 ,p.4), cultural intelligence is constructed by a multifactor including metacognition, cognition, motivation and behavior.

- Metacognitive cultural intelligence

Metacognition can be defined as “knowledge of and control over one’s thinking and learning activities” (as cited in Thomas, 2008, p.131). Metacognitive cultural intelligence is referred to degree of conscious cultural awareness of individual during cross-cultural interactions. It is the process individuals use to organise and comprehend cultural knowledge. Metacognitive CQ lets people be more aware of the cultural expectations and intentions of others before and during intercultural interactions.

- Cognitive cultural intelligence

Cognitive cultural intelligence represent explicit comprehension of values, traditions, practices and conventions in different cultures gained from educational and personal experience including social, economic and legal structures. People with high metacognitive CQ are able to understand similarities and differences across cultural contexts.

- Motivational cultural intelligence

Motivational cultural intelligence reflects the ability to maintain, sustain and pay attention on learning and other functional behaviours in diverse situations contributed by cultural difference. People with high motivational CQ are likely to be naturally keen on approaching new cultural environment and to be confident when they discover themselves in culturally diverse situations.

- Behavioral cultural intelligence

Behavioral CQ, which represents the ability of individuals utilise effective verbal and non-verbal actions while interacting with individuals from various cultures. Such behavior includes tone-related actions, gestures, physical space and touching rules, dress codes, and the practice of suitable norms of time management. Those with high CQ behaviour have an adequately flexible range of culturally diverse behaviors and are able to present and adjust them according to the situation's cultural demands.

Culturally intelligent behavior leads to more efficient intercultural interaction. The indicators of cultural intelligence can be summarized as follows (Thomas, 2008).

1. Good personal adjustment

The feeling of happiness and well-being demonstrates good personal adjustment. Individuals who are well integrated will feel comfortable engaging with individuals from different cultures or circumstances. It does not stress them out to communicate with individuals from other societies rather than with members of their own community or cultural background.

2. Development and maintenance of good interpersonal relationships with culturally different others

3. The effective completion of task-related goals

Although people have different goals, the achievement of goals is a measure of efficient cooperation in a cross-cultural environment.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions are used to understand cultural differences between Thais and Indians in the organization. Cultural difference leads to the challenges in the organization. Cultural intelligence helps to construct behaviors to interact with other people in a new cultural environment. With high cultural intelligence, individuals can overcome the challenges in the cross cultural organization and generate advantages of cultural diversity in the organization

2.4 Research Framework

Based on a literature review, we can construct a research model to guide our research to reach to the answers of research questions (Figure 2). The information

obtained from an in-depth interview is analyzed in efforts to answer our study questions. Some theories are used to better explain the results of an in-depth interview.

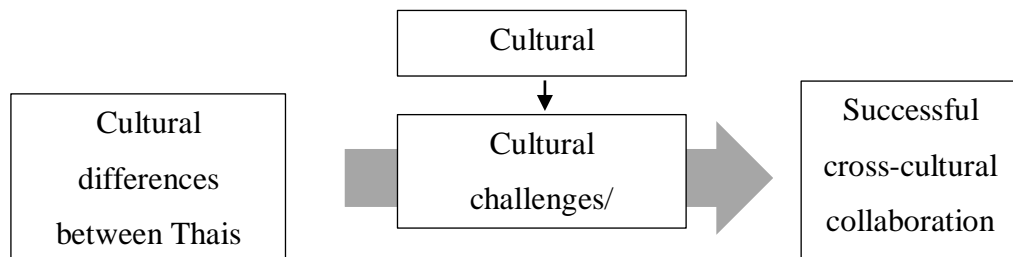


Figure 2.2 Research model



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Primary Data Collection Method

In this literature review chapter, previous academic studies are used to develop the background for this study. However, there have been no case studies related to the challenges of cultural difference between Thais and Indians in an organization. Qualitative research with in-depth interviews with Thai employees who work with Indians is conducted to collect data. Through the real life experiences of Thai employees, insight information could be obtained to analyze and answer our research question.

3.2 Interview Method

Qualitative interview is widely used to collect data and conduct research. Research can gain verbal data in-depth from experience of interviewees. Also, emotion through tone and voice of interviewees can be interpreted. In other words, Face-to-face interview allows researcher to have access more than just verbal information. It encourages interviewees to freely disclose or express their perspective in a detailed and productive manner. In addition, face-to-face interviews encourage researchers to keep interviewees involved.

Data collection in this paper is mainly from interviews with the probing interview technique which allow gathering in-depth information from Thai employees who experience in working and interacting with Indians in hotel industry. Our research questions could be answered concretely based on our research model constructed. The interview is conducted in the form of a face-to-face conversation. The benefit of face-to-face conversation is that gesture and facial expression of interviewees can be seen. The location of the interview is at their office in the area where there is no interruption during the interview. The time length of interview for each is approximately 20

minutes. The interview starts from introduction and open-ended questions, then probing questions are used to understand in detail.

3.2.1 Sample selection

In this paper, total 10 interviewees, 8 Thais and 2 Indians, who are employees in the hotel, are selected. Some interviewees belong to human resources department who may often interact with those Indian employees and face difficulties to deal with. Other interviewees are chosen from different position and working experience in the organization. Over 90% of foreign employees are Indian, therefore this hotel is chosen for this study to understand the cultural challenges in the organization.

Table 3.1 List of interviewees

The list of interviewees

Code	Position	Experience (years)	Gender	Nationality
A	Human resource supervisor	3	Female	Thai
B	Liaison Manager	24.9	Male	Thai
C	Recruitment Executive	2	Female	Thai
D	Asst. Chief Security	4	Male	Thai
E	Front Office Manager	3	Female	Thai
F	Asst. Front Office Manager	2.3	Female	Thai
G	Director of Rooms	1.3	Female	Thai
H	Asst. Director of housekeeping	3.9	Female	Thai
I	F&B Supervisor	3	Male	Indian
J	F&B Supervisor	2.3	Male	Indian

3.2.2 The list of open-ended questions

What are cultural difficulties you have faced when working with Indians / Thais?

Can you please give examples of situations you experienced?

How do the cultural difficulties affect your operation or work performance?

How do you adapt to deal with these difficulties?

What are the differences between working with Indians and Thais?

What are advantages of working with Indians / Thais?

What would you recommend to other Thais / Indians who start to work with Indians / Thais?

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

From our qualitative research by having an in-depth interview with both Thais and Indians employees, the challenges found in Thai-Indian organization and cultural adaptation of Thai employees to work with Indians can be analyzed and concluded.

4.1 Cultural challenges and misunderstanding

4.1.1 Non-verbal communication (High context)

3 of 8 Thai interviewees mentioned about the gesture Indians used during a conversation which is Indian head shake. When people would like to express that they agree with or understand the opponent's state, they nod or tilt their head up and down as a gesture. On the other hand, they turn head left and right along the transverse plane repeatedly to indicate the disagreement or rejection. However, Indians have their own common gesture to express their agreement and disagreement which sometimes is called head bobble. Head bobble or Indian head shake is to tilt the head side-to-side in arcs along the coronal plane. Indians normally do Indian head shake during a discussion to indicate that they are listening to opponent or even means "Yes" in some occasions depending on the context. There are three interviewees said that sometimes it caused them confused if Indians agree or understand them or not. Ms. A said, "When I was new staff here, I wasn't sure if he (Indian manager) understands what I explained about company's welfare". It could make Thai employees carry out their tasks which do not conform to their order. This is generally true with new staffs who have never had experience dealing with Indians. Furthermore, sometimes Indians move their heads up and down during a conversation, like drawing number 8, which means they doubt or are not sure. It seems to be the way Indians behave in general

because they hesitate to reject someone directly. Some Thai employees at the hotel experience that Indians prefer to answer a question whether the answer is correct or not since they perceive that it is better than having no answer.

4.1.2 Accent and fluency in English

English is the interlanguage used to communicate at the hotel between Indians and Thai staffs. The Indian accent is distinctive and is thought to make it difficult for Thai workers to follow the whole conversation. All Thai interviewees said that Indians speak English fast with the regional accent which is tough for Thais to follow the conversation. Their mother tongue influences English accent of Indians including intonation, pronunciation and diction. Even Thai staffs who are fluent in English also found its frustration. They have to ask Indians to repeat or explain more on the point they could not follow which sometimes cause Indians annoyed. It's much more difficult when it comes to phone calls. Ms. F, who often communicates with Indian customers over the phone, had some difficulty understanding what her clients desired. Some staffs decided to ignore detailed information and gained only core message the opponent tried to convey. However, it is better to be confident enough to ask when you are confused rather than left in ambiguity.

There was a case that the staff arranges a buffet line with the wrong selection of food due to miscommunication. Thai staff misunderstood the menus requested by the Indian manager, resulting in food arranged for the buffet line that did not meet the Indian manager's demands. Moreover, Thai staffs also noticed that Indians have their own words, shorter and handier than using the phrase, used to express in English. For example, Indian uses the word "Prepone" which means to move forward to an earlier time. This word is not widely used among Thais. This cause it more complicated for Thai staffs to interpret the message. Fortunately, Indians are patient and polite to explain repeatedly. Hand gestures are sometimes used to help for Thai staffs in communication with Indians.

4.1.3 Hierarchical relationship

Human resource supervisor (Ms. C) of the hotel perceived that there is a gap between lower-level employees and Indian senior managers. Subordinates are

expected to show respect to Indian managers. Even though Indian expatriates in Thailand have adapted themselves to work in a Thai cultural environment with less hierarchical mindset, a high need of structuring relationships can still be seen. Therefore, the relationship between lower-level employees and managers reflects the hierarchy. 2 of Thai interviewees feel uncomfortable to approach to Indian manager or even hesitate to give opinions or ideas on certain issues. Mr. B said, “I feel that Indians expected us to obey their instructions and that they would be pleased if we did not object to their orders.” Mr. B added, “This could restrain the creativity shared from members in the organization”. Referring, to the country score rated by Hofstede, power distance in India is higher than Thailand. Some employees are familiar with this hierarchical relationship as it is relatively similar to Thai culture. This hierarchical segregation among Indians seems to be larger than between Indians and Thais. Ms. F said, “I feel the relational distance between Indians manager and Indian service staffs is greater than the relationship between Indian managers and Thai staffs, as I witnessed their conversation at the restaurant.” She felt that the way Indians manager talked with Indian staffs and their voices were not as gentle and compromised as when they spoke with Thai employees.

4.1.4 Strong emotion through facial expressions and gestures

6 Thai interviewees mentioned about strong emotion Indians express through their facial expressions and gestures. It can be realized easily whether Indians are being irritated or not through their face. Their eyes will be widened and their eyebrows will be raised during an argument. Many Thai workers have faced this kind of situation when they have dissatisfied Indian managers with their unpleasant result of work or when they are unable to complete their duties as expected by the Indian manager. Therefore, Thai employees feel uncomfortable to work with the Indian manager and avoid having conflict with them. Ms. C said, “I feel bad when he (Indian managers) express his strong emotion and do not listen to me”. “He has even hit the table when he is upset”, she added. She expected that the Indian manager would express emotion calmly in order to relieve the tension of their conversation. In contrast, Indian service employees are totally different from Indian managers as they are more friendly and emphatic. Hierarchy seems to have influence on the way Indians

treat their subordinates or colleagues. Ms. E elaborated that Indian managers are likely to be task-oriented. If they are so focused on doing their tasks, they are not mindful of the feelings of others. That is why their facial expressions and gestures are in this manner with less concern about others.

4.2 Advantages of working with Indians from Thai perspectives

4.2.1 Friendliness and politeness

The majority of Thai interviewees (7 persons) mentioned about how polite and approachable Indians are, even though their appearance and body language are intimidating. They strive for harmony and avoid conflict. The interviewees said that Indians are willing to help when you are in trouble; particularly service employees who are kind and generous to others. They respect and treat others properly. When the staff (Ms. A) walked to the restaurant in the hotel, Indian service employees approach to her and offer her some drinks and foods to impress her. However, due to her duty, she could not receive those goods every time, since it may be seen as bribery.

Religion seems to play important role to influence the way Indians behave to others. Most of Thais and Indians have common belief in “Karma” which is the effect of one’s actions on their current or future life. The belief in “Karma” may be helpful for the service industry because it teaches Indians that they must treat everyone nicely, particularly their customers. Furthermore, they are playful and have light-hearted sense of humor. Indian employees often greet Thai staff with smiley face. Ms. F said that Indians are talkative and easy to get along with. This can create good atmosphere in working place and encourage productivity.

4.2.2 Hard worker

Indians are considered as hard working people among Thai employees. All of our Thai interviewees said in the same way that Indians are more diligent and energetic than Thai people. Thai employees at the hotel can see Indian staffs performing their duties with willingness and attention especially those staffs who work as waiter in the restaurant in the hotel. They have good service mind to treat and take

care of their customers. They are determined to complete their tasks on plan. They have been brought up to be patient and diligent. Ms. H explained that they have a sense of responsibility towards their family members. They have to work hard to collect money for their parents, kids and relatives to grow with better quality of living. Furthermore, it is kind of their culture that Indians inherit a sense of devotion to things they attach themselves to. They dedicate themselves to their job. It is beneficial to the company as their dedication brings to high productivity and customer's satisfaction.

4.2.3 Goal-oriented and well-planned

7 of 8 Thai employees said that Indians are eager to accomplish their goal. In their minds, anything must be possible. They will seek for any possibility to complete their work as their expectation. Indian managers keep monitoring the progression of the work they assigned to subordinate. They expect staffs to report the progression. Indians are likely to see the big picture, but they still need to ensure that all is going as planned. Mr. B explained that when an Indian assigns a task to someone, the Indian will ask as to how and when the task will be completed. Some Thai employees felt uncomfortable and lost confidence when they were asked in depth. They will be frustrated shaking their head when they were said "No" or "I do not know" from others. Indians expect their subordinates to be bright and able to response actively. Working with Indians can make Thai colleagues nervous, but it helps the job to be accomplished more rapidly. Furthermore, they are able to control expenses with less mistakes.

4.3 Advantages of working with Thais from Indian perspectives

4.3.1 Conflict avoidance

Both Indian interviewees agreed that Thai people are conflict avoidant same as Indians. However, Thai people are more likely to be in group and maintain the relationship of the group. Mr. I said, "Even though Thai people are friendly, they are not opened to foreigner as they do with Thai Thais, especially lower-level employees, show politeness and respect in the workplace when interacting with others who are

older or in a higher role than them. When Thais want to withdraw from an argument, they will become silent to show their indirectness. Mr. H mentioned that the term that adequately describes Thai behavior is “Kreng Jai,” which means to be considerate or unwilling to inflict on another person. Thai people avoid to make the opponent lose face. Mr. H found that sometimes “Kreng Jai” is confusing because it does not allow Thai people to share their true feelings. Instead, they may send you the answer they think you want to know, or if you ask a question, you may receive the ambiguous response, “up to you”. Furthermore, Thais are empathic and caring about the feelings of others. Thais, according to Mr. H, are not aggressive and seek harmony. They are willing to forgive the mistakes of others. This Thai personality is somewhat similar to that of an Indian in that they both respect others and seek peace, so they can work well together.

4.3.2 Easygoing attitude

Both Indian interviewees perceived that Thai working style is easygoing. Thais does not take things seriously. Thais prefer to be relaxed by smiling and laughing to relieve stress at work. “There is a term that many foreigners have heard and learned while they are in Thailand, and that is “Sabai Sabai” which means “relaxed” or “comfortable” Mr. I said. Mr. I, as a service worker, really enjoys working with Thais' easygoing attitude. This could be perceived as a good attitude in workplace as the service in hotel industry requires relaxing atmosphere. However, Mr. I think that this could be also frustrating for Indian managers because they are more likely to be serious than Indian subordinates. Since Indian managers are goal-oriented, taking things less seriously might irritate them.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

When dealing with Indians, Thai workers face two major challenges: communication and working styles with Indians. We are able to summarize critical points we gain from the interviews as below.

The majority of our Thai interviewees felt in a similar way, implying that the hierarchy of Indian society influences their thought and behavior in various aspects, including working style. The way they treat others is affected by the culture in which they were raised. High-level management expects subordinates to follow their orders. There is a gap in the relationship between managers and their subordinates. Since they have a lot of power, they can express themselves completely without any hesitation. Strong facial expressions and gestures of Indian managers are obviously perceived by both Thai and Indian subordinates. In contrast, those Indian service employees are more approachable and willing to help when you are in need. Indian managers are more likely to be concerned with their jobs than with their coworkers, especially those in lower-level positions.

In terms of communication, every level of Thai workers is confronted with a communication challenge. The accent, speed, and words used by Indians in conversation are difficult for Thai staff to understand. Also, high context communication cause it more complicated to interpret a message between Thai and Indian

On the other hand, Indian service staff perceived Thai actions of conflict avoidance and easygoing attitude as allowing them feel more comfortable to work with. However, the uncertainty of action and lack of seriousness may be detrimental in the eyes of the Indian manager.

5.2 Recommendations

From the interviews, we can conclude the recommendations from interviewees for both Thai and Indian staff on how to adapt themselves to work together.

5.2.1 Organizational aspects

Arrange session for new staffs to build awareness

HR department should arrange a session for new staffs to build awareness of cultural difference between Thais and Indians. The session should allow employees to learn how to work in a diverse environment. Formal training should cover the issues that new employees need to know about doing business with people from different culture as well as the scope of their responsibilities. Communication, business etiquette and negotiating skills in cross cultural organization should be covered.

Celebrate Diversity and Cultures

Cultural literacy, awareness, and acceptance can all be enhanced through celebrating diversity. Start by highlighting other cultures' holidays and festivals in company's email or news bulletin, and then celebrate them at work when it is suitable. This will convey to the staffs that the company is aware of and accepting of their cultures. The company could also arrange a company dinner or an international food day with the subject of cultural awareness and encourage your employees to bring a traditional dish from their native country.

5.2.2 Individual aspects

Be open-minded for new culture

It is important to have an open mind when encountering unfamiliar cultures and environments. They must suppress the pessimistic feelings and prejudices towards the culture in order to be open-minded. Negative thoughts prevent from taking positive actions. When they are in an unfamiliar situation, they should try to view that as a new adventure. They should understand values, beliefs and backgrounds of opponent who they are working with. Once they become open-minded, they will try to understand the difference of culture.

Become an observer

Being observant helps them to identify the point of cultural difference and the cause of the difficulties they are experiencing. They can be puzzled at first by what they are seeing as culture shock. They can learn over time through direct experience. Since they will be confronted by new rules and norms, seeing how people behave in situations will help them understand what behavior is required of them. Give attention to both verbal and nonverbal communication from others to get a more clear understanding of what is going on. Furthermore, they need to be confident to ask for help when they need it. Asking for help or a clarification should not have to be seen as a form of weakness. Understanding people and getting yourself understood in a foreign language generally requires a rephrasing, repeating and explanation.

Utilize the positive aspects of a new culture and adapt to a new working environment in the right situation

Both Indians and Thais must learn how to deal with each other properly in order for their collaboration to go smoothly and successfully. For example, if we know that Indian management requires detailed explanations, Thai workers should prepare themselves to provide timely responses. Indians, on the other hand, should listen to Thai perspectives and obey company regulations. When Thais and Indians know each other well, the job would be more satisfying because both will contribute their full effort and potential.

Improve operation through effective communication

Communication by using second language can lead to misunderstanding. Indians speak English with fast pace which Thai employees are unable to follow. Indians speak English at such a fast rate that Thai workers are unable to catch up with. When Thai staffs are not clear in what Indians said, it is better to ask them to repeat or speak slowly. Thai staff can repeat the opponent's sentence to allow Indians to clarify if their understanding is accurate or not. On the other hand, the speaker should pay attention to opponents' facial expressions and reaction to see if they understand what the speaker said. The speaker will then change their sound and accent to better their communication. Another way to improve communication is to use simple words in the conversation. In addition, non-verbal communication can be used to help understand more quickly like hand gestures.

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