THE STUDY OF CROSS GENERATION MANAGEMENT: CASE STUDY OF A PRIVATE COMPANY
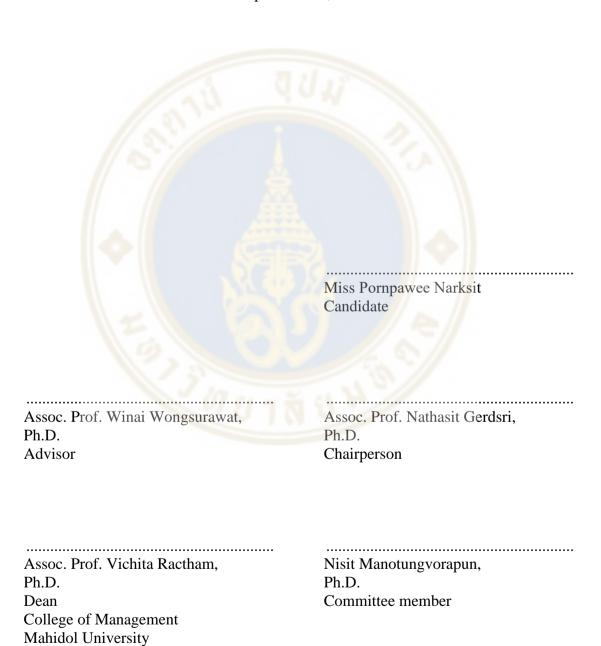
PORNPAWEE NARKSIT

A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT
COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY
2021

Thematic paper
entitled

THE STUDY OF CROSS GENERATION MANAGEMENT:
CASE STUDY OF A PRIVATE COMPANY

was submitted to the College of Management, Mahidol University
for the degree of Master of Management
on
September 12, 2021

....
Miss Pornpawee Narksit
Candidate

....
Assoc. Prof. Winai Wongsurawat,
Ph.D.
Advisor

....
Assoc. Prof. Nathasit Gerdsri,
Ph.D.
Chairperson

....
Assoc. Prof. Vichita Ractham,
Ph.D.
Dean
College of Management
Mahidol University

....
Nisit Manotungvorapun,
Ph.D.
Committee member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE STUDY OF CROSS GENERATION MANAGEMENT: CASE STUDY OF A PRIVATE COMPANY

PORNPAWEE NARKSIT 6249191

M.M. (ENTREPRENEURSHIP MANAGEMENT)

THEMATIC PAPER ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ASSOC. PROF. WINAI WONGSURAWAT, Ph.D., ASSOC. PROF. NATHASIT GERDSRI, Ph.D., NISIT MANOTUNGVORAPUN, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

   This research will find out the solutions of working with cross generation. Currently, most of the companies are facing the various generations in the workplace which each of their characteristics are completely different. To be able to work with the diversity of generations, this paper will provide the characteristics of each generation to gain more information about what they think and expect toward other generations. At the same time, basically, Thai workplaces are also based on femininity, collectivism, and power distances. With all these factors involved, it makes the workplace become more complicated and difficult to work across generations. However, this paper will search for solutions to serve these workplace issues.

   The writer selects qualitative methods to search and gather information from both primary and secondary resources. This paper has interviewed three different generations from the anonymous private company where it includes Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y.

KEY WORDS: Cross Generations / Baby Boomers / Generation X / Generation Y

31 Pages

CONTENTS

CONTENTS (cont.)

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Thailand is internationally known as the land of smiles. From an outsider's perspective, people would think that Thailand has a very long history and cultures which Thai people still uphold to this day. Many foreigners appreciate Thai cultures a lot as the country has combined and been influenced by neighbouring countries. Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Thailand had been able to attract a high amount of tourists thanks to its cultures and tradition. From 1995 to 2019, the tourism rate in Thailand has increased positively and annually (Source : Worlddata).

The core culture for Thais is molded by prosperity, orderly characteristics, literature, and good morals. Thai cultures could be distinguished into several aspects such as the belief that it could protect Thai people from evil and the power to unite people. Not only that, Thai cultures are based on languages, norms, values, religion and belief, social collective, and status and role in society (Source : Thai Culture That ASIAN Students Should Know, Assoc.Prof. Klinchan). For languages, as Thai people are divided into many parts and states, the dialect and verbal communication are different. Northern, Eastern, Southern, and Center parts of Thailand have different linguistics regarding the history. Each part has been inherited from ancient times and still used nowadays. For norms, Thailand has different practices which people perceive as the norm and pass from generation to generation. For instance, Thai people respect unseen objects as they believe that they contain good or bad energy that could affect your life and that people should respect Buddha by not disparaging or using Buddha as any parody (Source : Isvolunteer, 2013). Furthermore, Karma has played a crucial role in the society where everybody could earn reciprocation when they have done something good or bad to others, resulting in the core values for Thais to be based on good and fairness. For religion and beliefs, Thais believe in reincarnation where everybody must do good for everybody, especially their parents. If you behave well in society and do good for the people, you will be able to go to heaven after death. For social collectives,

Thai people tend to live as a social group, community or organization more than practicing individualism. People would do anything by following the norms to be accepted by social groups. Most Thais would try to avoid having problems with the social movement as it can affect their personal life. They are shaped in the same direction. Lastly, For social status and role in the society, as Thais have to live together, it leads to social construction, hierarchy, power, and systems where the young have to follow the rules and regulation or even the senior direction in order to be accepted among the social group (Source : THAI SOCIETY: HIERARCHY, STATUS, CLASS, HI-SO CULTURE AND THE PATRON-CLIENT SYSTEM, Hays) (Source : Thai Culture That ASIAN Students Should Know, Assoc.Prof. Klinchan).

However, the main focus of this culture in Thailand is the social collective and with it, the social statuses and roles and how it is related and has impacted the business world. Since Thai society has been shaped as a social collective where everybody tends to stay in a group and stay in the same frame and border, if anyone has different ideas or wants to distinguish themselves from others, the rest in the society will mark these groups of people as rebellious and unacceptable. With the Thais mainly also staying as a collective, this resulted in hierarchy among themselves. Hierarchy was started from the sakdina system; it has been applied in Thai society since the history of time (Source : Malikhao, 2017). The hierarchy is mainly based on age and generation, which means that people have to respect their elders no matter if they are right or wrong. The elders or seniors are always regarded to be right as they believe that they have more social power. Furthermore, masculinity and connections have also been one of the most important factors in determining roles in the business world. A male is regarded as a better leader than a female and connections being the main reason for promotions instead of being based on performance. (Source : Characteristics of Culture in Thai Society and Virtual Communities, Buriyameathagul, 2013).

In Thai context, societies and roles, any business leader or management team should be someone who is full of experience, good decision-making skills, and high seniority. The elders are always expected to be the seniors and thus, believe that they have more experience than younger generations. In the workplace, Thais working concepts and styles could be classified into various ways. First, the young should always respect the elders and their decisions without any question. Any form of objection could

be seen as disrespectful or disgraceful. Second, due to the elders having power, they make use of abuse of power on the younger one by giving them harder pressure or difficult situations if the younger ones do not follow their instructions. Moreover, the elders always adhere to their past experiences and the solid data they have gathered before, but the world has been changing and the new generation started getting inspired and generating ideas from their ever-changing surroundings (Source : Pimpa, 2012).

As the time passed, some Thai people, who are considered as the new generation, have different viewpoints from the current point of view which consists of religious beliefs and traditions compared with the old generation beliefs. Based on Thailand's capitalist society structure today, it tends to push people to focus only on earning money rather than to be concerned about prosperity and cultural aesthetics. Currently, new generation lives are based on *neo-westernization* where they derive ideas and influences from foreign cultures that have slowly infiltrated into Thai society. Neo-westernization has impacted the new generation in Thailand in various aspects such as the workplace, self-discipline, and lifestyle. First, in the workplace, the new generation tends to give priority to the activities they are more interested in than working. They have the mindset that life should be filled with enjoyable activities and that work shouldn't be the main thing in their lives. Second, self-discipline, as the country becomes more capitalist, everything goes and happens fast. The new generation tend to have fast decision making and choose the most convenient alternative options that suit them better over options that are made with the rules in mind. Also, as they can see that the new society is distorted, they do not believe in the rules and regulations as they can see the society's failure. Lastly, the lifestyle the new Thai generation has adopted comes from cultures from abroad, abandoning their existing cultures which implies to their country's image (Source : Kulrattanamaneeporn et al., 2012). They believe that everybody has the same social status as no one holds power more than others. They believe qualifications and experiences are more important than age and seniority. This influence has changed their way of thinking, making them more critical thinkers to every aspect of their daily life (Source : Influences of Culture from Outside ASEAN, Khanobbhorn Wattanasukcha Sangvanich + & Yootthana Chuppunnarat).

The two generations, Baby Boomers and Gen Y, born between 1946-1964, and the new generation, millennials who were born in 1981-2000, have to work together

in the same organization (Source : Rice, 2021). Baby boomers were born during the cultural revolution when it was the start of the old cultures and western influences mixing. Their working style prefers more analog work, such as using the telephone more than emails and having in person meetings compared to online meetings. In doing so, they believe they are doing real work instead of looking like they are working (Source : Murray & Chua, 2014). In the organization, they tend to dedicate themselves to work and are more dutiful and respectful for the job as they think that work is one of their lives' priorities (Source : Murphy et al., 2010)(Source : Thongpithukwong, 2017). Meanwhile, Millennials or Generation Y, were born when technologies slowly began to be adopted and used in the workplace, such as computers, the internet, email and IT. Exposure to the internet allowed the new generation to be able to perceive external influences easily, which started to impact and penetrate their minds and behaviors (Source : Gibson et al, 2008)(Source : Murphy, Mujtaba, Manyak, Jatuporn, Greenwood, 2010). The characteristics for Gen Y or Millennials are that they require learning and development, as they would like to gain knowledge from other employees in order to improve themselves and be able to use these skills in the future and complete the work as fast as possible then they would be able to manage time to do other activities. Gen Y tend to give a larger significance on having a work life balance, putting their life first than work, compared to Baby Boomers. They would be able to boost their work performances, flexibility, it could be anywhere as long as the task is completed. They will use technology to involve themselves in their work life as it could make the work become easier and more convenient and would like to use these technologies for the best work quality (Source : Generation Y In The Workplace, Sharma, 2012).

This mix of working styles leads to the problem of Baby boomers sticking with their own ideas and always asserting that they have more experiences than millennial generations. They also still believe that their own way and solutions work better as they are used to appling their strategies in dealing with customers and solutions before and it worked. What they have failed to realise is that the world has become more globalized and their thoughts are slowly turning outdated and not all of their previous strategies can be applied the same way anymore. Furthermore, with their characteristics, they still believe that everyday is a working day. They put work as their priority which means that they expect other people to follow them and always respond without

respecting others' private time. Meanwhile, for Gen Y, they tend to focus on their lives first and put work aside when it comes to their personal life. It could be said that both of these generations are contrasting and may affect the work environment in the future. Out there right now, there are new generations who are seeking job opportunities but most of the companies are ruled and run by the old generation. These contrasts that could lead to conflicts would definitely happen in the workplace frequently.

1.1 Objectives

1. This paper aims to study the differences of each generation's perspectives.

2. This paper would like to seek for alternative mutual agreements between these two generations

1.2 Research Questions

For more indications, it leads to

1. How to deal with the differences between these two generations?

2. How do these generations adjust themselves to fit with the workplace environments?

3. How have they dealt with the conflicts in the organization regarding the age gap?

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Thailand is one of the ASEAN countries where it has a long history from ancient times. The country has been receiving influences from other surrounding countries which has impacted the creation of a new culture Thai society. The concept of believing in power applies in almost every country and most parts of Thailand. Thai society is homogeneous in which people live in a group that could be categorized by language, identities, and beliefs. In each group, it will be led by the leader, who they believe has more power to rule, regulate, and unite people altogether in the group, which was impacted by the Buddhist value system.

Nowadays, Thai society is more flexible as there are not as many fixed factors to categorize the role in the society. Most Thais identify their role in the social group by age, sex, wealth, power, and education. For instance, in age, people who are older would be respected and seem as someone with a higher rank in the society. The youngsters are taught to listen to the elders and to avoid having an argument with them as it does not show any respect. To the Thais, if there is not any respect shown by the young, it reflects that the family has not brought up their children well, which further reinforces the idea that the young should respect elders. For sex and gender, Thais tend to respect men more than women. Men tend to have higher status than women in almost every social setting. A man is set as the icon as a family leader, workplace leader, or even the country leader. On the other hand, women or girls have limited activities in regards to society, rules, and norms. Some social roles do not allow women to have any companionship. Women are set as icons as housewives and being family oriented more than being decision makers (Source :Boonto, 2008).

In the business world, the concept of power holding is still around and creates inconveniences for employees. Some cultures are difficult to change, yet, hierarchy is still another one that keeps happening in Thai society. In Hofstede's theory, he has mentioned various aspects regarding cultures and the workplace. First, power

distance, it is the power that the superior is holding upon the subordinate. It is a gap of inequality of power in which one has more power than the other. For instance in Thailand, based on the idea of social roles that power is distributed due to age, sex, and education, the workplace is where identify people role mostly based on age and education (Source : Buriyameathagul, 2013). Seniority is when older people have more power than others as they are perceived as a 'Senior or Supervisor'. To protect their identity, social role, reputation and respect, these people attempt to not change anything and therefore, their mindset makes it more difficult for society to develop (Source : Andrew, 2001). Second, collectivism, Thai society tends to live in a group more than individuals. People always have an idea that every success should have teamwork behind it. Co-workers or employees are afraid to be singled out in the workplace and society for their way of thinking that's not in line with the rest of the company. They would like to be accepted by their superiors or supervisor as it could affect their job performance otherwise. This collective concept is regarding the hierarchy system, yet, in terms of work, in the organization where people do not want to have conflict with each other (Source : Komin, 1990). Third, femininity, Thai working structure has more 'Femininity'. In Thai organizations, people are not only there to work but also believe that it should have relationships and social reactions involved which could be demonstrated that being accepted by society is more important than other aspects of work (Source : Andreassi, Lawter, Brockerhoff & Rutigliano, 2014). Lastly, uncertainty avoidance, Thai employees feel uncomfortable if there is uncertainty in the company. Most Thai companies tend to use uncertainty avoidance to impact employees' feelings. Thai companies do not use concrete rules and regulations to measure employees' performances but instead, it is based on superior or leader satisfaction. Employees do not have the feeling to bond with the company but have to be patient and wait for new opportunities that would help them leave the place (Source : Andreassi, Lawter, Brockerhoff & Rutigliano, 2014, Chaisilwattanam Punnakitikashem, 2017).

For each generation's characteristics, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y, in the workplace, for Baby Boomers, they are born between 1946 and 1964. When Baby Boomers were born, there were a large number of children in this generation regarding the tradition in that period of time. Baby Boomers were overcrowded in the schools and it led to the competition for resources and success back

then. As they grew up, whoever could start a business was counted as someone successful as everything was treated as a competition. The general Baby Boomer characteristics are work-centric, independent, goal-oriented, competitive, and self-actualization (Source : Kane, 2019). For work centric, Baby Boomers tend to be hard-working and are convinced by being promoted and have power status. They would like to devote themselves to work and wish that the younger generation, Generation X and Generation Y, should do the same thing. For independence, Baby Boomers are confident and self-reliant. This generation was born with the belief that they could make society better as they grew up in the evolution era. For goal-oriented, to compare with the previous generation, they were lucky to have better knowledge and education. They are achievement oriented, devoted, and career focused. For competitiveness, they tend to focus on the job position where they are worth being. They truly believe in the hierarchy and ranking which could make it difficult in the workplace where they have to always focus on work without any relaxation. They also wish that the younger generation should have focused on the job more than this and work should be practical as everybody must have face seeing in the workplace rather than online (Source : Kane, 2019,& Tjahja, Yee, 2018)

For Generation X, they were born between 1965 and 1980, during the transition from old to new technology. Their character is more independent compared with Baby Boomers. They would like to be autonomous in their role and accomplish the success to prove to the company that they are independent enough to work on their own. This generation is also the beginning of Generation Y where they want to have work-life balance while devoting themselves to work. They grew up in the transition of technology but if they think that they could not follow the trend anymore, then they tend to stop and let the younger generation proceed with it (Source : Characteristics of Generations X Professionals, Indeed Editorial Team, 2021).

For Generation Y or Millennials, they were born between the 1980s and 2000s. There are various characteristics for millennials which can be categorized into six different aspects. First, they are the trophy generation. This generation is raised by Baby Boomers who tend to protect their children and do not want to disappoint them. Baby Boomers, in the family aspect, would like to support their children to accomplish the goal in either ways. It could make this generation have more self-confidence through

the development period and have the idea that they would not want to walk the same way as their parents. Other generations would think that Generation Y is a spoiled generation. Second, they are a multitasking skill group. Generation Y were influenced to accomplish the goal cooperatively. Their parents would like them to have as many skills as they could have by letting them have many activities to try. To cope with this, millennials have learned and developed their skills through various ways since they were young. They also learned to have multitasking skills to be able to focus on each activity in a day. Third, they have less loyalty and engagement, Generation Y would like to have work-life balance to overcome their childhood life. They have seen their parents work hard with long hours which led to suffering at work. They have learned this as a lesson that they would not let themselves reach that point. Millennials do not perceive any bond with the organization as much as the previous generation does. Work is not the most essential thing in their lives and it is normal to shift from one place to another if they are not comfortable with the job or company. Fourth, digital natives, as this generation has grown up in the changing period of technology, particularly, the internet. They perceive and easily access new information better than previous generations. The previous generation sees technology as a tool to help finish the job. For Millenials however, it penetrates and is considered as a way of life. Fifth, they seek meaningful work. They would love to have a job that gives them the tools to succeed and be able to express themselves freely through the workplace. They are most likely to be attracted by mission-driven organizations. They are confident, eco-aware, optimistics, and self-conscious. Lastly, they are more individualistic. They have high expectations of themselves, along with self-respect, self-expectation and self-confidence to accomplish any life goal. Even though they have been taught to work as a team, they were also encouraged to have self-thinking and individuality. They do not let their job overcome their identity (Source : Jirapinyo, 2017).

However, this creates the generation gap in the workplace where both generations have to work together. It reflects the diverse working style in the company for these two different generations. First, innovation and technology. The older generation would prefer to rely on manual and close networks more than using the help from technologies. On the other hand, the younger generation is more likely to embrace technology as they know that it could benefit them and help to overcome problems in

the organization. Second, with flexible working lives, the older generation would like everybody to work physically in the same place to consider that as working but for the new generation, they believe that work can be done anywhere as long as results are shown in the office. Lastly, leadership style, older generations tend to focus on hierarchy and power more than performance and skill. They believe that employees must work well and should be fearful of authority. On the other hand, the younger generation is more likely to respect others by the performance and aspects rather than age and position (Source: Sethsathira and Satityathiwat, 2020).

To overcome the generation gap in the workplace, previous research has mentioned the solution that the company should build collaborative relationships, study employees, create opportunities for cross-generational mentoring, and motivate them to consider life paths (Source : Subramanian, 2017). First, building collaborative relationships, the idea is to make everybody involved with every activity. The younger generation should let the older generation in the discussion as their character from their past is collaborative and the older generation should be open to listen to others as well as the world has changed and new information keeps updating. Second, studying your employees, the company should survey to learn employee satisfaction. Some younger people may be uncomfortable talking directly but they are still loyal to the company. The company should plan an alternative path to let these two generations be able to work together and respect each other. Third, to create opportunities for cross-generational mentoring, the company should pair these two different generations to learn the concept and work together where the younger people would be able to teach new technologies and new information to the older. The older is able to teach the younger about their perspective, ideas, and past experiences, while making sure it is not too much and not too little. Lastly, to motivate them to consider life paths, the company should develop incentive plans that are able to support employees' goals. The company should also learn the employees' desires through the survey and learn their interactions and try to motivate them to accomplish (Source : Subramanian, 2017)

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This paper will use qualitative methodology in order to seek information for analyzing. The qualitative approach that this paper uses is trying to collect all the deep information from various sources to analyze and be able to answer the questions from the previous chapter. This paper will give significance to real situations that occur in the workplace to be able to learn the environment and comply with the related theories. The qualitative approach will be categorized into two types which are primary sources and secondary sources.

The primary sources will be conducted by interviewing a company where it has various generations included. This company has been established for more than a century and is run by a CEO who is considered as part of the Baby Boomer generation. The company sells scientific and digital tools such as simulators to various customers with around 20 to 30 people in the company. The process of working is a combination between old and new processes since their customers are still stuck with analog approaches. The customers still prefer to have loads of physical paperwork from the first process until the completion which may affect the innovative look for the company. Since the customers prefer to have an analog approach which influences the company management to absorb working on the paper and work manually. The new generation however tends to work using technology to help enhance the workflow to be more effective. Undeniably, the management level for this organization are the Baby Boomers and Generation X who are unable to follow the new and current technology trends as well as the new generation does. A below level, which works as an administrations, purchasing, and customers executive, is most likely to be Generation X. Lastly, the lowest level which includes engineers, IT, and project coordinators are mostly considered as Generation Y or Millennials Generation.

Each generation in this company will be interviewed individually. The paper aims to know each generation's perspective and thoughts regarding cross generation

working. The interviewees will be interviewed through a phone call for their convenience. The interviewees' backgrounds would be described as these followings;

The first person is the CEO or the highest management level. He has a huge amount of experience through working in this industry for a long period of time. He has also worked in various industries before, so he would be able to explain specifically his desired working style that would help generate his perspective regarding the working concept for this paper. He also has experience in working with customers in the same generation as him where their ages are nearly the same and the company structure is similar. When he has to conduct the work, he is the one who forecasts and plans ahead for the best way the company direction at the time to make the company move forward related to the customers' needs. The CEO also assigns the tasks to each employee individually according to employees' characters, satisfactions, and conditions. As the company has various generations combined, he has to adjust himself to suit every generation in order to make work flow smoothly.

The second person is Generation X, who is between 38 - 53 years old. His role is just below the CEO and he still has power to demonstrate the work to other people and help to oversee the company. This role has to cooperate with high position customers in order to receive the feedback and coordinate all the projects. He also has to take care of different projects in his hand and be able to control the direction to ensure it goes along with the CEO ideal. This generation is slightly more open to learning and using new technology compared to Baby Boomers as they are in between new and old generations. He is willing to learn new technologies if needed but with his over-loaded task, it does not give him any much time to understand the new technologies teaching and new suggested tools from the younger generations. However, this generation or role has to work under Baby Boomers and has to control millennial generations at the same time which is tough and creates an uncomfortable environment for them.

The last person is Generation Y, who is between 21 - 37 years old. Most of the people in this company are counted as Generation Y. They are categorized in different positions which are mostly engineers, IT, and project coordinators. The chosen interviewee is an engineer who has to cooperate with manager and CEO everyday to report daily tasks, receive directions from CEO, receive orders from management level for internal issues between the company and customers. This position also has to interact

with the customers who are the end users. He has to make the work happen smoothly while maintaining a good relationship with the customers to prevent the problem that may affect the organization image. The end users could report the work and satisfactions to their boss as well which could impact the team and organization regarding the whole company image. This position is really tough as it has to cooperate and serve everybody in the organization including customers.

To search for information, the questions would be conducted mainly with the same question to see the idea regarding working with different generations. The questions are as follows;

3.1 Questions

Table 3.1 Interview questions

Questions
1.How long have you been working in this company?
2.What is the obstacle in working in this company regarding human resources?
3.Have you ever had a hard time cooperating with other employees? Please specify
4.How do you solve that problem?
5.How do you assimilate yourself to work with others?
6.What is your life plan to achieve?
7.Please give a percentage of your work-life balance?
8.Regarding work, what is the most difficult process in working?

For the second source, this paper will gather theories and information from different sources such as previous research regarding to generations, cross-cultural management, human resources, culture and workplace in Thailand and history that could

reflect current situations in the workplace. All the information will also be collected from topics, journals, and websites from different authors to compare and contrast the ideas from different places. Moreover, this paper will use the management strategies from the Managing People in the Organization in College of Management Mahidol University which is taught by Aj. Astrid Kainzbauer, Program Director from College of Management, Mahidol University.

CHAPTER IV
DATA ANALYSIS

To apply the scope theory with the real case, this paper has done interviews with various generations in the same organization for data analysis. The company would like to stay anonymous, as it is in the scientific and technology tools industry where most of their customers are bureaucrats and the work process between customers and company is still analogical. The company is considered as the middle man between international vendors and local Thai customers. For internal processes, the work process is contrasted with working with customers as most of the employees who are assigned to look after the projects are millennials who tend to use technologies to apply with the tasks. Since the company has diverse generations combined, the first generation is Baby Boomer who is the CEO and the top management. The second is Generation X who is just below the CEO in management levels and they make sure that every project is followed by directions and in the scope and also needs to cooperate with Generation Y to follow up their work. The third is Generation Y or millennials who mostly take care of the projects and try to make each step to follow the orders.

The first person who was interviewed is the CEO of the company. His role is to oversee all aspects of the company, marketing strategies, managing projects regarding vendors and customers. He also manages and assigns people to projects. He has talked about working with two different generations as these followings;

4.1 Generation Y: Fall Through

In terms of working with them, he mentioned that this generation is intolerant as their characters are supported by technology and everything could happen within one click. They also perceive that they all are smart based on what they have learned even though it is specific knowledge. Yet, since they do not have much experience, he needs to give this generation a working scope for them to know the

direction of work. If not, they could go beyond and further than the actual plan. There is also some cost required to employ this generation. The company needs to give more time to train and let them practice their soft skills before letting them completely work individually with full decision-making power. The company has to invest in this human resource by educating them for specific skills. For working with this generation, he has to be calm, lead the direction for each step, and let them crystalize the task after receiving orders by themselves, so they would be able to learn things and they also feel respected by their boss.

4.2 Generation X : Another day, Another dollar

He mentioned that working with this generation also needs some time like Generation Y. The CEO actually wants the company to be more innovative but Generation X is creating some blocks to stop the company from going in that direction. When the company would like to invest in some technologies to help boost performance, Generation X would indirectly go against it as they always think that the usual ways are already good, so why do the company have to learn new complicated things to disrupt the original processes. To work with this generation, the CEO needs to give time for this generation to adapt themselves with the new trend and invest in educating them to learn about the changes as well. Furthermore, the CEO is also indirectly pushing this generation to learn new technologies that would be viable and beneficial for the company.

The second person interviewed is second in terms of management level. She has worked with this company since the beginning. Currently, she was to work with diverse generations where she is in the middle between Baby Boomers and Millennials.

4.3 Baby Boomers : Been there, done that

She stated that a Baby Boomer is able to teach every step of work to her like writing a letter to customers. The boss used to train and develop her to become more confident and ready to communicate outside. She said that a Baby Boomer is considered as a sibling relationship where she can learn from him and repeat their working steps to

accomplish their work goals. However, there is also a difficulty with working with this generation as most of the work process has emotions involved. She is unable to speak out her thoughts as she respects the boss for training her up, so she will accept any work even if it is not right. To work with this generation, she has to use high tolerance in working with Baby Boomers. She cannot speak back much but only just to accept first and tries her best to reach the goal given. Working with this generation does not care about the process but only focuses on the performance.

4.4 Generation Y: New Generation

She mentioned that working with Generation Y is fun as she is in the middle between boss and the younger generations. Generation Y is smart and has specific skills which they are experts in. They are fast learners where she can teach and share the information with. However, she also has obstacles in working with this generation. She said that she could not follow the technology trend as well as Generation Y. The experiences in working with technology are comparable with Generation Y. Yet, it does not mean that she does not want to be open to new information. She could be open minded but she is just afraid to get out of her safe zone as she knew that she can learn from Baby Boomers their experience but with new technology, she does not have any previous path to follow. Working with this generation is easy as she mentioned that she could share and discuss with the youngsters and not be afraid to speak out.

The last person interviewed is in operation level where he has to maintain the relationship with both customers and boss or higher level. He has to follow the boss' direction even if sometimes it goes against customer satisfaction. He has stated as these followings;

4.5 Baby Boomers : No rest for the wicked

Working with Baby Boomer gives a lot of benefits in learning about both working and living. It gives comfort to employees that the CEO or management level would be able to lead and can be relied on. Baby Boomer is able to influence his life perspective to think in more detail and make sharp decisions which could impact the

whole project effectively. The interviewee mentioned that it is like working with family members who can comfort and teach at the same time. However, working with this generation is a little bit terrifying. As Baby Boomers have a lot of experiences, they tend to have a proud ego, which is a lot of trouble to work with. Baby Boomers think that people working overtime are hard working and they tend to work by focusing on progress more than focusing on the end result. It affects employees' lives as they have to show their progression and devote their personal time to impress their boss. In order to work with this generation, Generation Y tends to use 'listen first and explain later'. He mentioned that if their understanding does not improve much, they would find good timing to privately explain again to make Baby Boomers accept their thoughts.

4.6 Generation X : Neo Baby Boomers

He stated that Generation X is considered as the previous Generation Y before but they have to adjust themselves with Baby Boomers in the organization. The benefits of working with this generation is that we are able to see some examples from them as they have walked through the path before. To point out under Generation Y's perception, Generation X is a good lesson-learnt where they can learn from the failure and success from Generation X. Working with Generation X is not that difficult as Generation X is also considered as a transition generation which is combined between new and old generations. Generation Y can find ways to serve the boss's satisfaction and, at the same time, be flexible with Generation X people's absorption and brainwashing by Baby Boomers. To work with this generation, like Baby Boomers, Generation Y needs to take some time to compromise and explain the reason privately. The main difference is that Generation X tends to be more open to listen than Baby Boomers as they also want the work to be completed as soon as possible. Generation X just wants to work day by day to finish the task.

4.7 Analysis

Baby Boomers tend to put work before everything. They think that an employee working overtime is an employee who devotes their life to work which makes

Baby Boomers very appreciative and impressed. They do not like flexibility but prefer a solid practice in the workplace where everybody works face-to-face in person rather than online. They tend to use hierarchy structure in order to assign work and measure the performances for employees (Source : Thongpithukwong, 2017).

Generation X, this generation tends to manage the work to meet both boss satisfaction and manage to dispatch the work to the lower hierarchy, millennials. Generation X is born in between new and old generations which leads to them being more open-minded but still believe in their own ego and experience which is influenced by Baby Boomers (Source : Rothenburger, 2020).

Generation Y or Millennials, they would like to have work-life balance where they do not put work as their top priority. They prefer to have a flexible working life where they can access work anywhere. They also prefer to work out of the box more than working in routine. They want to make use of technology tools to benefit greatly for their jobs unlike other generations (Source : Ngotngamwong, 2019)

To apply the theory with generations, the characteristics of Thai work place is power distance, collectivism, and femininity. The power distance is where people think that they have more experience and are able to put themselves over others. In this case, as you can see, Baby Boomers think that they have more experience with their skills and experience and think that Generation Y is a new generation who would mostly fail in terms of experiences. Baby Boomers like to teach other generations and use their soft powers to influence other people in the organization. It could be said that the power distance in this company is pretty high and mostly based on experiences where the youngsters have to respect the elders. For collectivism, everybody would like to stay in a group rather than individually. From the case reflection, it shows that both Baby Boomers like to work with the same generation better than communicate across each other. At the same time, Generation X is able to stay in the middle between these two generations where they can receive the boss' order and be able to discuss with Generation Y. However, they are afraid to speak out as they think that if they have said anything not aligned with the group, people will think that they are a black sheep and not in the same group with them. As you can see in this company, people do not want to be different by speaking out as they are afraid that people would not accept them and are also afraid of their seniors' power. Lastly, femininity, people would like to have

social interaction along with the work process. They tend to find relationships with their colleagues. In this case, the company structure is more femininity where people would like to seek for relationships rather than just working and completing the tasks, especially for Generation X and Y where they are able to discuss and share their personal lives with each other.

4.8 Working with generations combined

In order to work with diverse generations, the previous research has mentioned that when working with generations, the company should follow as these followings;

4.8.1 Implement Training Program

The company should pay attention to generations seriously then it would be able to train their employees and let them assimilate themselves with an organization and people. A training program which gathers all generations altogether and encourages communication where everybody is free to speak regardless of power, hierarchy, and generation in order to make the works have progression. The activity that should be applied is to let all generations sit down and brainstorm to exchange ideas, experiences, and specific skills. Every generation would feel more comfortable to confront other generations and be more open-minded to welcome new information which they have not had experiences and background before (Source : Kubheka, Kholopane, Mbohwa, 2013).

4.8.2 Flexibility

Every generation should consider the working concept to be flexible. For Baby Boomers, they should acknowledge that since technology steps in, it means that it could help the business world be more convenient by being able to work and access the data everywhere and anywhere. It should not be only face-to-face working where everybody has to be together. At the same time, Generation X and Y should be flexible when it comes to urgent work, they should be able to respond quickly and immediately.

Every generation has to learn to respect and support each other to help boost up the performances (Source : Berkup, 2014)

4.8.3 Changing management style

The company should change management style to focus more on the big picture with the fixed goal. The KPI should be based on the result of the performance if that person is able to fulfil the company's goal with their role. It should reduce the position power rather than personal power. When the boss assigns the overview to management level, Generation X should receive full autonomy to respond for their task by assigning the work task to Generation Y again. During the process, a boss or anyone higher level should be more open-minded to listen to the assigned person's thoughts by not interrupting and understand the reasons why they chose to work on this path. It should not have any emotions involved. If the boss or management sees that the path is wrong, then communication should be applied to teach and lead employees (Source : Comperatore & Nerone, 2008).

4.8.4 Feedback is the key

Everybody in the organization, including Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y always need someone to give feedback to help them motivate themselves to improve. Every generation should be welcome to listen to their feedback to know that what they are doing is right or wrong and how to improve it to make the company go forward. Ego should not be applied in an organization as everybody has their own specific skills where others do not have. The discussion should happen where everybody is allowed to talk and discuss openly regardless of power, generations, and ego (Source : Comperatore & Nerone, 2008).

4.8.5 Stimulate employees to know their strengths and weaknesses

Always let the employees know their strengths and weaknesses then they would be able to know how to improve or strengthen it to be better. For instance, if any task does not only require experiences to deal with but also management skill, Gen X should be assigned to look after the project. At the same time, Generation Y should be able to get along to perceive the working processes and absorb the soft skills that would

be able to apply in the future. If any task requires working as a team, then it would be better to gather all generations together to let each of them gain benefits from each other. Regardless of age, everybody should be able to suggest benefits for the company (Source : Comperatore & Nerone, 2008).

However, in order to work with multi-generations in the workplace by reducing power distance, collective and femininity, the key actions are understanding, communicating, and knowing self-weaknesses and strengths so that we would be able to develop our own skills and apply with other people in the organizations. Everybody must respect others and be more open-minded as each generation has different strengths and weaknesses which could be used to create high benefits for the organization.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

Almost every country in Southeast Asia has received the same influences where it shapes the social structure based on cultures, traditions, and norms. For instance, people choose to believe in Buddha and monks as they believe that it could fight against animism and invisible spirits. It leads to the result that whoever has more power is considered that they could be a leader to the social group. This concept led to social hierarchy and applied in almost everywhere in Southeast Asia.

In Thailand, hierarchy is considered to apply in every industry such as family, school, and also in the workplace. In the organizations, the structure is considered by age, experiences, genders, and etc. People tend to consider those factors as power on their hands to command and suppress their subordinates. Thai society and the workplace is shaped in femininity, collectivity, and power distance where everybody does not seek work but needs relationships and power involved. For femininity, people in the organization would like to have some interaction along with the work activity. They would love to have a relationship where they could hang out after work and feel free to speak and discuss any topics or solutions in the workplace. For collectivity, people would like to stay in a group. They try to avoid any social differences and in the spotlight. Being in a group means that people would like to follow the norms and traditions as they want to be accepted in the social group. For power distance, people are categorized based on experiences, age, knowledge, etc. where subordinates have to listen and follow. Regarding this, it shapes the workplace structure as a hierarchy and perceives that people who are in the old generation are considered to be a leader based on their age, said by Hofstede.

Not only are the three concepts above to illustrate Thai working concept but generation is also being applied as it is considered to be one of the factors that influence to create hierarchy regarding the age. Nowadays, in general in the workplace, it is categorized in mostly three generations which are Baby Boomers, Generation X, and

Generation Y or Millennials. The characters of each generation are able to impact others in the workplace. To summarize and demonstrate each generation's character, firstly, Baby Boomers have a strong work ethic or work centric. They tend to devote themselves to work and always perceive that work and promotion are another way to help them succeed in their lives. They also prefer to stick with the analog working process as it can prove and demonstrate how hard working they are. They expect other generations to be more devoted to their lives than current. As they were influenced before from their previous education and influences, they tend to go into hierarchy and believe in power ranking and role more than performance. This generation would like to hold power and be able to command other people in the organization in the same direction (Source : Pappas, 2016).

For Generation X, this generation is hardworking, has responsibility and work royalty. They are most likely to be independent where they desire to work autonomously after they are assigned for work. They would like to be favourable for Baby Boomers, so they are able to devote themselves to work for their better future results. At the same time, if they do not see any progression to stay at the same place, it could make them leave and find a better place for a better role and lives. Also, they are in the middle between Baby Boomers and millennials where they have to assimilate themselves with Baby Boomers but also be able to discuss with Millenials. Yet, sometimes, they also consider their power over Millennials as well as they are impacted by the hierarchy ideas from the previous generation (Source : Kothapalli & Thiruchanuru, 2018).

For Millennials or Generation Y, this generation was born during the early and rising technology period. They tend to access all new information from the internet quite easily and more effectively which could change their ideas and perspective to be more western. This generation is known as flexible, which means they are able to adjust themselves to suit the environment easily. As this generation is more open-minded, they tend to receive a diversity in the workplace better than other generations. In terms of flexibility, they do not let working life go beyond their personal life. Millennials would like to have work-life balance more than devote their lives for the job. Also, working is everywhere. Since technologies have stepped in, this generation would like to make use of these technologies to create high profits in the workplace. They believe that work

should be accessible everywhere and does not have to be face-to-face working as always. They are also a multitasking generation as in their childhood lives, their parents would like to let them know the skills as much as they can which reflects that they are able to multitask in the workplace (Source : Mansor, 2013).

From the case above, it can be illustrated that this company has power distance, femininity, and collectivism in different aspects. For power distance, this company tends to have a high-power distance between each generation pretty obviously. They respect and work with each other regarding the experiences as Baby Boomers mentioned that millennials do not have as many experiences as Generation X, even though they have specific skills but it is difficult to let them work on their own. Meanwhile, Generation X has mentioned that she respects and afraid (เกรงใจ) to express their thoughts and feeling to Baby Boomers as they have more experiences and train her to have better skill. For femininity, it shows that, in this company, only generation x tends to have femininity in the workplace more than other generations. Gen X tends to stay in the middle in between both Baby Boomers and millennials generation where they can listen, receive orders, and discuss with Baby Boomers and also be able to discuss personal life with millennials and share their lives much better than Baby Boomers do with millennials. While millennials, they are uncomfortable to share and discuss any topic with Baby Boomers. They do not seek any interaction across generations but only want to work for the result more than have emotion and relation involved. For collectivism, even Gen X and y are not satisfied with any working processes or want to discuss on any topics, they are uncomfortable expressing their thoughts out to Baby Boomers. They are afraid that if they deliver their ideas straightforwardly, they would be in the spotlight and see themselves distinguish from other people in the organization. By this collective, it leads to the communication solution in order to solve the problem between each generation. For instance, Gen X will agree and find their ways to work following Baby Boomer's orders first and millennials will seek a great opportunity to discuss with Baby Boomer's privately.

To solve the problem in the organization, first, implement a training program. This solution would be able to help these generations to understand each generation's characteristics even more and be able to break the ice between each generation. They would be able to well-behave and express their thoughts in the

workplace more freedomly. Secondly, flexibility, each generation should be more flexible and open-minded to be able to assimilate themselves with other generations. Third, changing in management style, the management style should be changed by giving more autonomy to each generation to work on their own rather than forcing them to work following someone's experiences. The big picture should be applied within the company as each person has their own creativity working process which may or may not satisfy someone but it gives better results and performances. Fourth, feedback should be reflected in the performance, after giving autonomy to each generation, giving feedback should be provided to employees. Their performance and work processes should be informed if it is right or wrong or even still on the right path to achieve the goal. At the same time, everybody should welcome others' opinions in order to gain that information to prove themselves to be better and make the work processes go smoother. Lastly, to stimulate employees to know their strengths and weaknesses, each generation or even each person has different personal skills which could help the company in various ways. Also, the company should let employees know their strengths and weaknesses in order to improve and even make them better. The most important thing is they should know themselves and are willing to improve it which could benefit themselves and the company.

REFERENCES

Andreassi, J. K., Lawter, L., Brockerhoff, M., & Rutigliano, P. J. (2014). Cultural impact of human resource practices on job satisfaction: A global study across 48 countries. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, *21*, 55–77. https://doi.org/10.1108/CCM-05-2012-0044

Andrews, T. G. (2001). Downsizing the Thai Subsidiary corporation: A case analysis. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, *8*(2), 149–170. https://doi.org/10.1080/713999139

Berkup, S. B. (2014). Management Of Different Generations In Business Life. *Working With Generations X And Y In Generation Z Period*, *5*(19). https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n19p218

Boer, C. de. (2019). *Factors Influencing Cultural Integration of Expats in Thailand*. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137347374.0013

Boer, C. de. (2019). *Integrated in Thai Society*.

Boonto, P. (2008). WOMEN'S DECISION - MAKING POWER IN THE RURAL FAMILY IN NORTHEASTERN THAILAND. https://libdcms.nida.ac.th/thesis3/2008/b158097.pdf

Buriyameathagul, K. (2013). *Characteristics of Culture in Thai Society and Virtual Communities*, *13 (2)*, 207–270. https://www.thaiscience.info/Journals/Article/SUIJ/10969033.pdf

Chaisilwattana, R., & Punnakitikashem, P. (2017). Thai culture and its effects on organizational engagement in Thai privately held companies. *UTCC International Journal of Business and Economics (UTCC IJBE)*, *9*(2), 2–6.

Comperatore, E., & Nerone, F. (2008). Coping With Different Generations In The Workplace. *Journal of Business & Economics Research*, *6*. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/268111681.pdf

Connecting Generations. (n.d.). *Generation Y In The Workplace*. generationy.com. http://www.generationy.com/generation-y-in-the-workplace/.

Hays, J. (n.d.). *THAI SOCIETY: HIERARCHY, STATUS, CLASS, HI-SO CULTURE AND THE PATRON-CLIENT SYSTEM*. Facts and Details. http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Thailand/sub5_8c/entry-3228.html.

Indeed Editorial Team. (2021, June 10). *Characteristics of Generation X Professionals*. Indeed Career Guide. https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/generation-x-professional-characteristics.

ISVOLUNTEERS. (2013, May 13). *Thailand Cultural Norms and Traditions*. International Student Volunteers RSS. http://www.isvolunteers.org/blog/thailand-cultural-norms-and-traditions/.

JIRAPINYO, P. (2017). Thai Millennials' Perception of Career Success: Implications for HRD Strategies A Case Study on the Siam Cement Group (SCG).

Kane, S. (2019, October 7). *How Baby Boomer Traits and Characteristics Affect the Workplace*. The Balance Careers. https://www.thebalancecareers.com/baby-boomers-2164681.

Klinchan, N. (n.d.). Thai Culture That ASIAN Students Should Know. *Faculty of Humanities, Mahachulalongornrajvidyalaya University*, 194–196.

Komin, S. (1990). Culture and work-related values in thai organizations. *International Journal of Psychology*, 25(3-6), 681–704. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207599008247921

Kulrattanamaneeporn, C et al. (2012). *Strengthening of Social Value: An Extensive Review Literature and Research Approach of Thai Values in the Future*. Department of Cultural Promotion, Ministry of Culture.

Kubheka, I., Kholopane, P., & Mbowah, C. (2013). The Effects of Flattening Hierarchies on Employee Performance in Organizations: A Study of a South African Retail Group. *International Conference on Law, Entrepreneurship and Industrial Engineering (ICLEIE'2013)*.

KUWINPANT, P. R. E. E. C. H. A. (2002). *Thai Society and Culture*, 4–8. https://www.gsid.nagoya-u.ac.jp/sotsubo/OFW2008_Thai_Society_by_ProfPreecha.pdf

Malikhao, P. (n.d.) (2017). Communication, Culture and Change in Asia. *Springer*, *3*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4125-9

Mansor, M. F. (2013). A STUDY ON GENERATION Y BEHAVIOR AT WORKPLACE. *Conference: International Conference on Business Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Engineering 2013*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261290919_A_STUDY_ON_GE NERATION_Y_BEHAVIOR_AT_WORKPLACE

Murray, D., & Chua, S. (2014b). Differences in leadership styles and motives in men and women: How generational theory informs gender role congruity. Proceedings of the European Conference on Management, Leadership & Governance, 192-199

Murphy, E. F., Mujtaba, B. G., Manyak, T., Sungkhawan, J., & Greenwood, R. (2010). Generational value differences of baby boomers in Thailand. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, *16*(4), 545–566. https://doi.org/10.1080/13602380903503762

Ngotngamwong, R. (2019). Working with Millennials: From the Perspective of Baby Boomers and Gen Xers. *Human Behavior, Development and Society*, *20*(2).

Pappas, C. (2016, January 29). *8 Important Characteristics Of Baby Boomers eLearning Professionals Should Know*. eLearning Industry. https://elearningindustry.com/8-important-characteristics-baby-boomers-elearning-professionals-know.

Pimpa, N. (2012, November). *(PDF) Amazing Thailand: Organizational Culture in the Thai Public Sector*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/ publication/232272712_Amazing_Thailand_Organizational_Culture_in_th e_Thai_Public_Sector.

Rice, D. (2021, January 28). *Generations in the Workplace*. HR Exchange Network. https://www.hrexchangenetwork.com/employee-engagement/articles/generations-in-the-workplace.

Rothenburger, S. (2020, January 17). *Generation X Characteristics in the Workplace: Mentor Works Ltd.* Mentor Works. https://www.mentorworks.ca/blog/ business-strategy/generation-x/.

Rurkkhum, S. (2011). Human Resource Development in the Thai Private Sector. วารสารวิทยาการจัดการ, (2).

Sangvanich, K. W., & Chuppunnarat, Y. (n.d.). Values, Lifestyle and Arts Study in Thailand and Laos. *Influences of Culture from Outside ASEAN*. https://doi.org/http://www.cujucr.com/downloads/Individual%20Articles/17/vol17%20Khanobbhorn%20Wattanasukchai%20Sangvanich%20et%20al.pdf

Sethsathira, P., & Satityathiwat, S. (2020, January). *Family-owned businesses: Leading in an evolving business ecosystem: Deloitte Thailand: Business*. Deloitte Thailand. https://www2.deloitte.com/th/en/pages/deloitte-private/articles/family-owned-business.html.

Subramanian, K. R. (2017). The Generation Gap and Employee Relationship. https://doi.org/https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321670836_The_Generation_Gap_and_Employee_Relationship

Saileela Kothapalli, S., & Swetha Thiruchanuru, S. (2018). Capturing the Nature of Generations at Workplace. *Human FResouce Management*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329337372_Capturing_the_Nature_of_Generations_at_Workplace

Sharma, L. (2012). Generation Y at Workplace. *Human Resource Management*, *V*. https://www.sibm.edu/assets/pdf/generationY

Thongpithukwong, S. (n.d.). Focus on Needs Satisfied by Social Media Usage. *Social Media and Thai Baby Boomers*.

Tjahja, C., & Yee, J. (2018). Social Hierarchy in Design and Social Innovation: perspectives from Thailand. *DRS2018: Catalyst*. https://doi.org/10.21606/drs.2018.420

WorldData. (n.d.). *Tourism in Thailand*. Worlddata.info. https://www.worlddata.info/asia/thailand/tourism.php.