

**THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE ON CULTURE
SHOCK**



**A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT
COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY
2022**

COPYRIGHT OF MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY

Thematic paper
entitled
**THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE ON CULTURE
SHOCK**

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

on
December 16, 2022



.....
Ms. Salma Bazo Izquierdo
Candidate

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

.....
Assoc. Prof. Randall Shannon,
Ph.D.
Chairperson

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

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to show my gratitude to my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Astrid Kainzbauer for providing me with great support and meaningful suggestions throughout the process of writing this paper. Her advice has been extremely useful, and her guidance has been crucial for the success of this thematic paper.

I would also like to express my acknowledgement to all of the participants who took part in this research for using their time for answering the questions of the interviews and completing the Cultural Intelligence self-assessments successfully. They shared valuable experiences and examples that successfully met the purpose of the paper. Without their contributions, the result of the paper would have not been as satisfactory.

My special thanks are extended to Toulouse School of Management, as they provided me with the opportunity to enroll in an exchange program for an entire year in Thailand. I would never have been able to live such an enriching cross-cultural experience and learn about the multiple cultural differences between my home town and Thailand. I would also like to thank College of Management of Mahidol University for accepting as part of their alumni for this 2021-2022 year.

Salma Bazo Izquierdo

THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE ON CULTURE SHOCK

SALMA BAZO IZQUIERDO 6449061

M.M. (GENERAL MANAGEMENT)

THEMATIC PAPER ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ASSOC. PROF. ASTRID KAINZBAUER, Ph.D., ASSOC. PROF. RANDALL SHANNON, Ph.D., ASST. PROF. PORNKASEM KANTAMARA, Ed.D.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore the culture shock and cross-cultural experiences of European Expats living in Thailand and observe the impact of Cultural Intelligence in the management of those experiences. This research was held by collecting data from interviewing six Europeans and inviting them to complete a Cultural Intelligence self-assessment.

The Theory of Cultural Intelligence developed by Early and Ang in 2003 will be used for the analysis of both the cultural differences exposed by the interviewees and the results obtained from the participants' reflections for the Cultural Intelligence self-assessment. The observations will reflect whether Cultural Intelligence can have an impact on the management of Culture Shock and cross-cultural experiences in Thailand.

KEY WORDS: Cultural Intelligence / Culture Shock / European Expats / Thai Culture
/ Cross-Cultural Adaptation

43 pages

CONTENTS

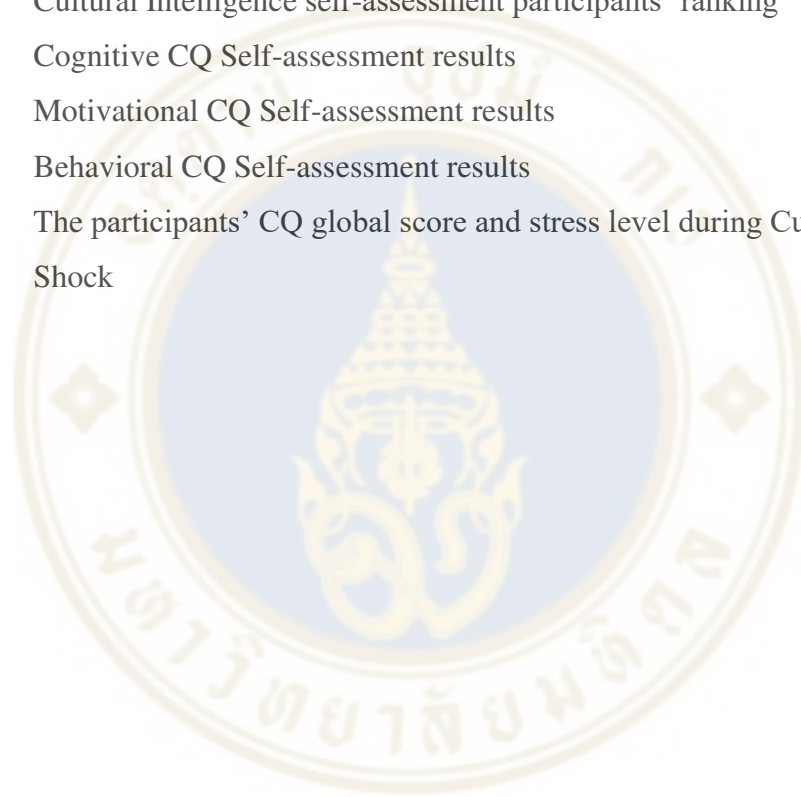
	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	3
2.1 A Growing Trend of Non-Thai living in Thailand	3
2.1.1 Statistical reports on the increasing number of Expats and international students living in Thailand	3
2.1.2 Reasons to move to Thailand and its attractiveness to Expats	4
2.2 The culture shock and its 4 stages by Oberg (1954)	5
2.3. The Theory of Cultural Intelligence by Early and Ang	7
2.3.1. Self-assessment Cultural Intelligence Test	8
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	11
3.1 Research Design	11
3.2 Data Collection	11
3.2.1 In-depth interview	11
3.2.2. A Cultural Intelligence Self-assessment	13
3.3 Sample Selection	13
3.4 Research Framework	14
CHAPTER IV DATA ANALYSIS	15
4.1 The participants' International experiences	15
4.1.1 Anna	15
4.1.2 Bill	15

CONTENTS (cont.)

	Page
4.1.3 Conny	16
4.1.4 David	16
4.1.5 Evan	17
4.1.6 Frank	17
4.2 Cultural Intelligence Self-assessment results	18
4.3 Cognition	20
4.3.1 Collectivism	20
4.3.2 Hierarchy	21
4.3.3 Relationship with time	22
4.3.4 Communication	23
4.3.5 The analysis of Cognitive Cultural Intelligence	25
4.4 Motivation	29
4.5 Behavior	32
4.6. The impact of Cultural Intelligence in the management of Culture Shock	35
CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	37
5.1 Conclusions	37
5.2 Advice for Expats	39
5.3 Limitations of the Research	40
REFERENCES	41
BIOGRAPHY	43

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.1 Participants list	14
4.1 Cultural Intelligence Self-assessment results	18
4.2 Cultural Intelligence self-assessment participants' ranking	19
4.3 Cognitive CQ Self-assessment results	25
4.4 Motivational CQ Self-assessment results	30
4.5 Behavioral CQ Self-assessment results	33
4.6 The participants' CQ global score and stress level during Culture Shock	38



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	Expatriate Insider Survey 2022 findings. (Source: InterNations.org)	4
2.2	CQ Self-assessment (Source: Cultural Intelligence, Early and Mosakowski, E. 2004)	9



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Thailand is a country located in Southeast Asia. It has always been independent and belongs to the group of countries which can proudly say that they have never been colonized. Thai people are commonly known for being exceptionally hospitable, and for welcoming guests from all over the world. In Western countries, it is believed that Thailand holds a set of features forming the perfect combination for traveling during holidays or simply enjoying one's life. Thailand is indeed an extraordinarily rich country, probably holding the most stunning landscapes in the world. It possesses multiple natural characteristics lacking in the Western world such as the combination of its lively green nature with majestic Buddhist temples, the multiple vast jungles filled with endemic flora and fauna, and the wild beaches extended across its sea borders. In terms of local food, there is a wide range of well-seasoned dishes and local tastes at extremely low prices. The good weather also stands out among the virtues of Thailand. The temperature usually stands at around 30 degrees with bright and shiny sun. Thus, all of the above-mentioned aspects create the perfect blend for those Westerners who seek to spoil themselves while enjoying their holidays and disconnecting from their routines at home at an affordable price.

In addition, Thailand's location at the international crossroads of Southeast Asia allows one to travel easily and explore the neighboring countries. Cambodia, Malaysia, Laos, or Myanmar are easily reachable by road, and flights to countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, or Singapore are relatively affordable. Concerning Thai culture, although the entire country is wrapped in tradition and numerous Buddhist temples can be found across the different cities, Thailand is well known in Western countries for having a very open-minded and tolerant society. Thai people respect all cultures and prove to be far beyond other developed countries in welcoming communities such as LGBTQ+, as well as more advanced in controversial matters like the latest legalization of marijuana in the country's territory.

It can happen that after visiting Thailand and discovering all the virtues the country can offer, some foreigners decide to stay longer or even move for the short or long run. However, the experience of being in a country for holidays can largely differ compared to the one of actually moving to it for some time. On the second occasion, numerous aspects such as language, work, legal paperwork, accommodation facilities, daily life, and culture... should be carefully considered, not only in the preparation period but also when adapting to this new life. Consequently, it is rather common for newcomers to suffer Culture Shock after spending some time in their new destinations. The management of challenging cross-cultural situations in the individual may be influenced by multiple factors, among which their level of Cultural Intelligence can be found. In other words, being mentally prepared and possessing the skills to face any shocking cultural differences can, indeed, make a difference in the process of a successful adaptation.

The purpose of the paper is to explore the impact of Cultural Intelligence on the management of those challenging cross-cultural situations. In order to achieve a meaningful result, this thematic paper will observe both the levels of Cultural Intelligence and the different cross-cultural experiences of six Europeans who decided to move to Thailand for a long-term period (1.5-2 years). Data will be collected through six in-depth interviews with Europeans currently living in Thailand. These interviews will include a round of questions regarding the participant's cross-cultural experiences in the Kingdom and a Cultural Intelligence Self-assessment. The self-assessment will serve as a reference for their Cultural Intelligence levels. The Theory of Cultural Intelligence (Early and Ang, 2003) will be used to support our observations. At the end of the research, we will observe how their level of Cultural Intelligence impacted the participants' management of Culture Shock and challenging cross-cultural situations encountered during their adaptation period in Thailand.

Ideally, this thematic paper will also provide future Expats with significant cultural information in advance about Thailand through real-life examples of difficulties experienced under culture shock, and meaningful advice from experienced Expats on how to handle these multiple cultural differences.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 A Growing Trend of Non-Thai living in Thailand

Thailand has always been a popular tourist destination. Nowadays, the trend is shifting toward moving to Thailand for a longer stay. This section will provide actual relevant data about the growing trend and will seek to explain the reasons behind the Kingdom's increasing attractiveness to Expats.

2.1.1 Statistical reports on the increasing number of Expats and international students living in Thailand

Thailand's latest Migration Report (2019) reveals that around 4-5 million foreigners live in the Kingdom, making up a total of 6.4% of its overall population. The IOM estimates that the number of registered workers stands at 2.2 million and the employment chart from Trading Economics shows that in 2019, the number of people employed in Thailand stood at 37.7 million, suggesting that foreigners constitute around 6% of the country's total labor force. In addition, today, Thailand is considered the third most popular destination for international students across Southeast Asia, after Singapore and Malaysia. Only less than 20 years ago, Thailand hosted around 2,000 non-Thai students. Today, the figure stands at 30,000 including short-term or exchange students (Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences, 2022). These findings prove that Thailand is progressively becoming a popular destination for Expats and international students. In addition, after the pandemic, remote working is becoming increasingly popular, making it easier to travel while working or simply change home for a short period of time. These growing figures on expatriation, along with the possibility to do remote work, encourage more and more non-Thai citizens to come to live in Thailand.

2.1.2 Reasons to move to Thailand and its attractiveness to Expats

According to Expat Insider 2022 survey, including approximately 12,000 respondents from 52 different countries, Thailand has been ranked among the Top 10 best countries for expatriates. In the current year, the country stands at 8th place in the world rank, moving 6 positions forward since 2021 (14th). The table below shows the main aspects behind Thailand's strong appeal to Expats:

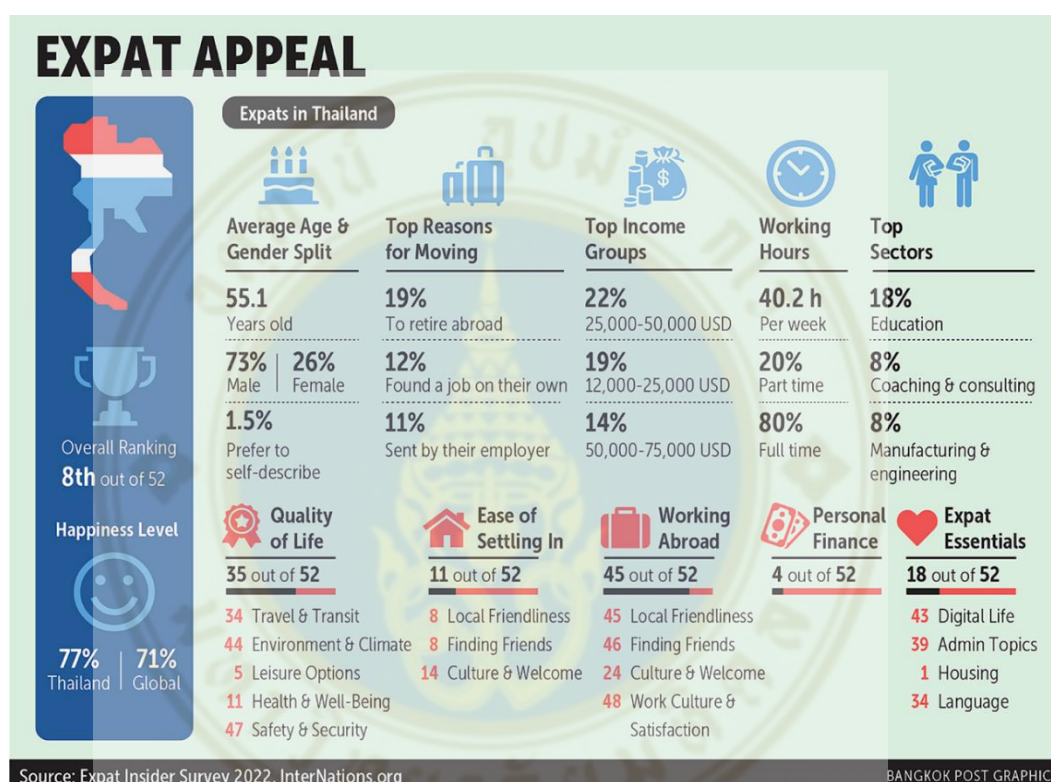


Figure 2.1 Expat Insider Survey 2022 findings. (Source: InterNations.org)

As reflected in the image, Thailand is considered one of the most affordable and friendly destinations to live in among the participants, holding the 4th position in terms of the “Personal Finance Index” and the 11th in “Ease of Settling in”. In general, 77% of the participants in the survey mentioned being happy with the overall life in Thailand, and 85% affirmed that their incomes are “more than enough” to cover the expenses of a comfortable life. Thailand is commonly referred to as “the land of smiles”, therefore, “Local friendliness” and “finding friends” stands out among the sub-categories, making it easier to develop a social life with locals and eventually, contributing to a successful adaptation of the foreigners to the new culture.

Nevertheless, Thailand is poorly ranked in the “Expats essentials”, “Quality of life” and “Working abroad” categories, holding the 18th, 35th, and 45th positions respectively out of 52 countries. These categories include the easiness of paperwork for Expats, daily life facilities, such as traffic, time spent in transportation, convenience, language barrier for essentials, and settling-in procedures. Apparently, these categories may have caused difficulties in the adaptation of the survey’s participants at a certain point of their stay in the Kingdom. These categories may contribute to the seriousness of the individuals’ Culture Shock. Nevertheless, the newcomers’ level of Cultural Intelligence has a key role in reducing the mental impact of these cross-cultural and adaptation difficulties caused by these categories, as they can develop different measures of empathy and tolerance toward the host country, for instance.

2.2 The culture shock and its 4 stages by Oberg (1954)

Oberg defines the concept of Culture Shock as “the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse” (Oberg 1954:142). According to Oberg, an individual is not born with a culture already set, but only with the capabilities to understand it and make use of it. However, an individual irrevocably attaches to these cultural values since he is born and throughout his life. They become part of the individual’s identity. The notion of cultural shock can be explained by the concern of losing these cultural gestures and signs that are used to interact in our daily life. The loss of these norms can threaten the prevalence of our own culture, causing a breakdown in interpersonal communication, and in the worst case, might lead to an identity crisis of the individual (Weaver, 1994).

According to Oberg (1954), every individual that is put in a different cultural context needs a certain period of time to fully adapt to the new culture. He named this adaptation period “Culture shock curve” and divided it into 4 different stages: Honeymoon, Rejection, Adjustment, and Mastery. Depending on the adaptation capabilities of the individual, each of the stages can have different durations.

The honeymoon stage occurs during the first weeks or months in the new country. During this period, your mind is amazed by the incredible aspects of this new country, enjoys the new experiences, and only sees the bright side of the new culture.

You are overwhelmed with the kindness of the people, the quality of life, the prices, the weather, the facilities... It can be comparable to when you travel, you're a tourist, and you feel treated as such. Thus, you can unquestionably imagine yourself living there. However, after a couple more weeks or months, they will begin to face real-life situations leading to the stage of rejection. After some months, the individual starts facing challenges and realizing the difficulties, and so, he begins being critical of the cultural aspects of the host country, focusing on the negative aspects and developing a feeling of rejection toward it. The individual feels no longer a tourist. He misses his home and roots. A person with high adaptation skills and international experience might go through this critical stage relatively fast. However, the cultural distance between the home and host countries might as well affect this period. In the opposite case, it might either last longer or in the worst case, cause the mental breakdown of the individual. In the Adjustment phase, there is a change in the attitude of the individual. He still faces difficulties, but instead of feeling frustration and desperation, he accepts the new situation and makes efforts to adjust to the new culture. Adopting manners from the host country, such as adapting to new eating habits, or even learning the local language could be examples of a mindset shift. The Mastery phase is the final stage, in which the individual reaches a satisfactory state of adaptation. He incorporates the new cultural dimensions and disparities into his daily life and starts to understand the people and enjoy living in the host country. Unfortunately, not every expatriate can reach the mastery phase. However, it constitutes an ideal ending for the individuals experiencing culture shock, as achieving being at the mastery phase of the curve will provide the individual with a peaceful state of mind in their journey abroad.

In 1954, Oberg studies in depth the culture shock phases and constantly aims to find different solutions to help reduce the Rejection phase duration and reach Mastery as fast as possible. He believes that the individual immersed in the new culture will have a better experience by genuinely getting interested in understanding the people. For instance, learning the language would help substantially. Indeed, the structure of a language has a very strong linkage to the behavior and culture of the people. Having notions of the language will not only allow the individual to make human connections, and create bonds and feelings towards the people of the country, but also join local activities, which will eventually make him feel closer to the new culture and welcomed

by the people. Certainly, preparation is a key factor to minimize the impact of culture shock. Reading about the host country's cultural norms and different customs before arriving can be extremely helpful in reducing the extent of the shock at the first impression.

2.3 The Theory of Cultural Intelligence by Early and Ang

Why is it that some people are able to adapt relatively easily and quicker than others to a different culture? Early and Ang (2003) seek to give an answer to this very complex question by introducing the Theory of Cultural Intelligence (CQ). The concept of Cultural Intelligence is defined as "A person's adaptation to new cultural settings and capability to deal effectively with other people with whom the person does not share a cultural background of understanding". The theory identifies 4 capabilities that contribute to the analysis of the mental and behavioral intercultural capabilities of an individual: Cognition, Meta-cognition, Motivation, and Behavior. Developing cognition is the first stage toward full adaptation. It represents the awareness of cultural differences, in other words, knowing the different cultural aspects of your home country and the host country. Metacognition refers to the act of reflecting on those differences and the reasons behind them such as historical events, and social standards among others. In other words, a deep understanding of the "why". Motivation is commonly defined as the inner force that drives you to a particular outcome. In this case, it can be intrinsic such as a personal career goal, a special interest in the country's culture, etc., or extrinsic, for instance, a salary increase, reputation, etc. In either case, motivation needs to be strong enough to push you to adapt to the society of the host country. And finally, Behavior is the most revealing capability, as it can be seen by physical signs, changes in manner, behavior, or habits that the individual has made visible changes with the purpose of fitting in a new environment. According to Early and Ang the combination of cognition, metacognition, motivation, and behavior will lead the Expat to successfully adapt to this new cultural context. This means adopting a new lifestyle, tolerating different insights, learning to identify the positive side of new habits, and, eventually, obtaining the most out of this cultural immersion.

In 2004, Early and Mosakowski, E. expound on the Theory of Cultural Intelligence theory and justify how it is sustained by three sources working together: The human body system - head, body, and heart. The development of cognitive and metacognitive capabilities is led by the brain (head), as it is the organ that enables individuals to use their rationale to understand different beliefs, customs, or taboos. The heart serves as a guide through the process of keeping the individuals' self-confidence growing as they go through confrontational or challenging situations. It is a reminder of the reasons why giving up should not be an option when facing barriers and obstacles. Lastly, the body shows the change in the individual's behavior by adopting manners and gestures in accordance with the new cultural context.

2.3.1 Self-assessment Cultural Intelligence Test

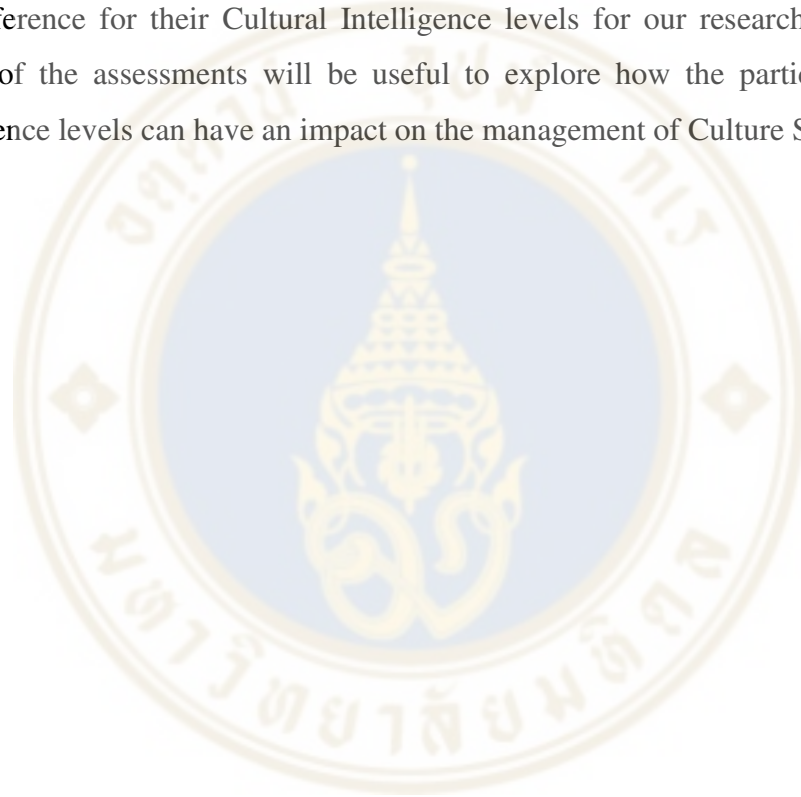
In 2004, Early and Mosakowski, E. included a Cultural Intelligence self-assessment to help the reader diagnose his level of Cultural Intelligence. The assessment invites the individual to a reflection covering the three main capabilities: Cognitive (including cognition and meta-cognition), Physical (behavior), and Emotional/Motivational (motivation). In this reflection, participants are invited to indicate to which extent they agree with the statements appearing on the sheet (1 = strongly agree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). Generally, if the average stands at 4.5 or above, the assessment suggests that the individual possesses a high level of Cultural Intelligence. On the contrary, if the average falls below 3, improvement shall be made. The image below shows the Cultural Intelligence self-assessment, retrieved from Harvard Business Review, 2004.

_____	Before I interact with people from a new culture, I ask myself what I hope to achieve.
_____	If I encounter something unexpected while working in a new culture, I use this experience to figure out new ways to approach <i>other</i> cultures in the future.
_____	I plan how I'm going to relate to people from a different culture before I meet them.
+ _____	When I come into a new cultural situation, I can immediately sense whether something is going well or something is wrong.
Total _____ ÷ 4 = <input type="text"/>	Cognitive CQ
_____	It's easy for me to change my body language (for example, eye contact or posture) to suit people from a different culture.
_____	I can alter my expression when a cultural encounter requires it.
_____	I modify my speech style (for example, accent or tone) to suit people from a different culture.
+ _____	I easily change the way I act when a cross-cultural encounter seems to require it.
Total _____ ÷ 4 = <input type="text"/>	Physical CQ
_____	I have confidence that I can deal well with people from a different culture.
_____	I am certain that I can befriend people whose cultural backgrounds are different from mine.
_____	I can adapt to the lifestyle of a different culture with relative ease.
+ _____	I am confident that I can deal with a cultural situation that's unfamiliar.
Total _____ ÷ 4 = <input type="text"/>	Emotional/ motivational CQ

Figure 2.2 CQ Self-assessment (Source: Cultural Intelligence, Early and Mosakowski, E. 2004)

According to the Theory of Cultural Intelligence, a person richly endowed with Cultural Intelligence has strong adaptation capabilities, which facilitates the

adaptation period. In this case, it might take weeks or months. Meanwhile, for those with a lower Cultural Intelligence level, this period of adaptation might take up to months or even years, strongly affecting the individual's state of mind throughout the process. In order to meet the expectations of this research, this Cultural Intelligence self-assessment will be used in the interviews and each of the participants will reflect on their past experiences and give themselves a score for each of the capabilities. After this self-assessment is completed by each participant, they will be asked to justify their scores and explain their thoughts and reasons, as these self-assessment scores will serve as a reference for their Cultural Intelligence levels for our research. Therefore, the results of the assessments will be useful to explore how the participants' Cultural Intelligence levels can have an impact on the management of Culture Shocks.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The objective of the paper is to explore the impact of Cultural Intelligence on Culture Shocks and cross-cultural experiences of six Europeans living in Thailand. The method of data collection used will be in-depth interviews and the Cultural Intelligence self-assessment (see Literature review). Data selection comprehends six full-time employees from Europe who have been living in Thailand for one year and a half to two years. The interviews will include a round of questions regarding the participant's cross-cultural experiences and Culture Shock in Thailand. After answering the interview questions, a Cultural Intelligence self-assessment will be handed to the participants, and they will be asked to justify their scores. The Theory of Cultural Intelligence (Early and Ang, 2003) will be used to analyze our observations. At the end of the research, we will explore the impact of Culture Intelligence on the management of their Culture Shocks and different cross-cultural experiences during their adaptation period in Thailand.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 In-depth interview

Firstly, qualitative data from the participants will be collected through in-depth interviews. In order to obtain detailed information, understand feelings, and identify their attitudes, all the questions will be open-ended. The duration of each interview will be approximately 30 minutes. During this time, the participant will tell us about the different cross-cultural experiences he/she encountered in Thailand. The questions will mainly focus on cultural differences between Thailand and European

countries, the participants' culture shock experiences, and their cross-cultural adaptation.

The following list includes the set of questions used in the interviews:

1. Why did you decide to come to Thailand? Tell us about your background
2. How much international experience do you have? Even about the people around you or your family roots?
3. Please tell us about the company culture that you work in Thailand (overview of our interviewee's daily environment).
4. What cultural aspect do you miss the most from your home country?
5. According to you, what are the main cultural differences between your home country and Thailand? You can give specific examples (dimensions)
6. Did you ever offend a Thai person unintentionally? If so, what happened?
7. Did you ever feel offended by a Thai person? If so, how did you react?
8. Did you ever have to change or adapt your behavior/ manners to please Thai people or fit in their society? If so, please give a specific example... did you prepare in advance for this adaptation? Tell me more
9. Is there any Thai cultural norm that you're still not used to?
10. Is it challenging to deal with Thai people at work?
11. Did you ever feel homesick to the point of considering going back home? If so, when and why? How did you succeed in getting this feeling out of your mind?
12. What is your motivation for staying in Thailand? To sacrifice being close to your family, your culture...
13. Would you stay here permanently?
14. Today, do you enjoy Thai culture?
15. Would you say that currently you're fully adapted to Thailand?
16. Is there any Thai cultural habit you have adopted into your daily life that has positively affected you?
17. How did you prepare to come to Thailand? (Talking to people, books, internet...) What did you learn?
18. What helped you settle?
19. What would you recommend to a new Expat from your home country to do in order to prepare to live in Thailand?

3.2.2 A Cultural Intelligence Self-assessment

Secondly, in order to complete our data collection set, participants will be given a self-assessment test (see Image 3 from the literature review) and they will be asked to reflect on their Cultural Intelligence capabilities and evaluate them. After they have finalized their self-assessment tests, they will be asked to justify their scores and share their reflections in detail. In our data analysis section, both this self-assessment and the in-depth interview will be connected in order to explore the impact of the Cultural Intelligence of participants on the management of their Culture Shocks and cross-cultural experiences.

3.3 Sample Selection

The sample selected consists of six European Expats who have been living and working in Thailand for one year and a half to two years. These interviewees, currently having a common duration of stay (1.5-2 years) and similar cultural backgrounds (European), can provide insightful and comparable cultural information and interesting experiences. Currently, all of the participants are full-time employees in the Kingdom. Among the organizations at which they work, we can find different corporations, non-profit organizations, as well as international schools. All our interviewees have confirmed that they deal with either Thai colleagues or Thai customers on a daily basis. Thus, they usually encounter cross-cultural situations with which they have had to learn progressively how to deal. They age from 28 to 38, starting or in the middle of their professional careers. In addition, all of them have had more than 10 years of international experience, including growing up in a multicultural environment, living abroad, and traveling. The participants were given different nicknames to protect their identities. The following table shows relevant information for each participant.

Table 3.1 Participants list

Given Name	Nationality	Occupation	Position	Total duration in Thailand	Age	Gender	Previous International experience	Traveled Thailand before
Anna	French	Full-time employee	Working for a non-profit organization	2 years	31	Female	10+	Yes
Bill	British	Full-time employee	English teacher at International School	2 years	37	Male	10+	Yes
Conny	Spanish	Full-time employee	Project Manager in a Corporation	1.5 years	29	Female	10+	No
David	German	Full-time employee	Product Manager in a Corporation	1.5 years	38	Male	10+	No
Evan	German	Full-time employee	Accountant in a Corporation	2 years	28	Male	10+	Yes
Frank	Dutch	Full-time employee	HR in a Corporation	2 years	31	Male	10+	Yes

3.4 Research Framework

Early and Ang defined Cultural Intelligence as “A person’s adaptation to new cultural settings and capability to deal effectively with other people with whom the person does not share a cultural background of understanding” (Early and Ang, 2003:12) and conceptualized Cultural Intelligence as a set of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral capacities. The Theory suggests that the successful adaptation of the individual to a different culture will be affected by the individual’s level of the three of them combined. In other words, individuals with high Cultural Intelligence levels will adapt more easily to any cross-cultural situation than individuals with a lower level of Cultural Intelligence.

After answering relevant questions about their cultural experiences in Thailand, each of the participants will complete the Cultural Intelligence self-assessment. Both the answers from the interviews and the self-assessment results will be used to study the impact of Cultural Intelligence levels on their Culture Shock and cross-cultural experiences in Thailand. In order to understand this impact, Cognition, Motivation, and Behavior (Cultural Intelligence capabilities) from each participant will be analyzed in depth in the data analysis section.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 The participants' International experiences

This first part of the analysis will cover the participants' personal backgrounds with the purpose of having an overview of their international experience. Thus, participants will briefly expose their international background and explain the reasons behind their decision of coming to Thailand.

4.1.1 Anna

Anna is a 31-year-old French woman. She grew up in France and moved to England at the age of 19 and started working in an international company, where she would meet people from different places of the world. During her stay in England, she shared a home with people from Norway, the US, and Japan. Anna used to observe the cultural differences from a very young age, and when she lived with the Japanese girl, she experienced her quietness, focused mind, and self-discipline. Anna also worked with European and Asian people for 8 years. Later, she integrated the cabin crew, where she had the opportunity to travel to multiple cross-cultural countries. She decided to come to Thailand because her family is partially Thai, but she never invested her time in getting to know them, so she wanted to come to properly learn the culture of her roots. So she decided to come with the purpose of working or studying. Now she has been working for nearly 2 years in Bangkok for an international non-profit organization with international staff, including Thai colleagues.

4.1.2 Bill

Bill is a 37-year-old British man who lived in Norway for 2 years for work. He has been affiliated with a University and a Church holding members from all over the world for nearly 15 years now. His hometown in England is quite multicultural as it is also the home of Pakistanis and Indians. Since he was in elementary school, he has

made friends and eaten all types of exotic food from the Middle East. He has been married for 10 years, and his wife is French. It was she who convinced him to move to Thailand. Bill has been an English teacher at an international school in Bangkok for 2 years now. He is also the Head of the Department, so he manages his own team, who is predominantly British and Chinese. He is extremely proud of his team, as they successfully tackle problems together. But according to Thai law, the owner of the company must be Thai, and when he interacts with the Thai management team, it becomes slightly challenging. He also struggles sometimes when dealing with Thai parents, Thai students, or even the Thai administration staff of the school.

4.1.3 Conny

Conny is a 29-year-old Spanish woman. Her family is fully Spanish, but they have always loved to travel, so she has been to many countries in Europe, America, and Asia throughout her life. She was also an Erasmus student in Germany for 1 year. She always felt a special attraction to Asian countries, so once she finished her University degree, she decided to explore China, becoming an English teacher for kids for 2 years in Chongqing city. After this experience, she realized she wanted to move to Asia for longer, so she began working for a multinational company in Germany, and they offered her the opportunity to do an assignment in Thailand for 3 years. Now, Conny is happily accomplishing the second year of her assignment as the Head Project Manager. Half of her team is composed of Thai employees, and the other half are foreigners. From Conny's perspective, communication is quite fluent between management and the team, however, she feels that sometimes her Thai team does not express their opinions or they prefer to keep things for themselves. Despite this, she feels the entire team is very united.

4.1.4 David

David is a 38-year-old German man. He has no international family roots and grew up in a small village in Germany. But since he started his professional career, he has always lived abroad, as that is what he enjoys the most. He has always worked for the same corporation but in different locations. He was assigned a mission by the company in Malaysia for 4 years and enjoyed it so much that he wanted to repeat being

somewhere in South- East Asia. So he decided to look for different opportunities abroad within the company and ended up in Thailand. He has been the Product Manager in Bangkok for one year and a half now. He said the culture and principles of the company can be seen in any country of the world that he has lived in, but it is true that the people within the teams are different. For instance, in Thailand, his colleagues welcomed him from the very beginning. He mentioned it was relatively easy for him to integrate, as they do not separate too much between work and private life, so they would hang out together every day for lunch or dinner.

4.1.5 Evan

Evan is a 28-year-old German guy. With no international family roots, he only traveled in Europe, North America, and Mexico for years, and did several University exchanges across Europe and Taiwan. During his Master's studies, he did an internship in Thailand for 3 months and his supervisor asked him to come back, so after some years, he joined the company in Thailand as a full-time accountant. He has been enjoying his life in Bangkok now for 2 years. His relationship with colleagues is excellent. They usually have lunch together, and do activities after work. In general, communication in the team is fluent and efficient, he feels the management team values his work and mentioned that according to him power distance is not too remarkable within his department.

4.1.6 Frank

Frank is a 31-year-old Dutch guy. He was born in the Netherlands, and even if half of his family is from Morocco, he has only been there for traveling during the summer. He grew up in an international environment and nearly half of his friends in the Netherlands are foreigners. He has always traveled across the globe with a particular focus on Asian countries, he mentioned he has traveled absolutely all the countries in South East Asia. He also lived in China for a year, where he met his Thai girlfriend leading him to move to Thailand after several months. Today, he's an HR manager in a Thai corporation in Bangkok. According to him, the company he works in is very open, where everyone has been trained to give and receive feedback. However, he mentioned

that the management of confrontation is still a to-do task, as the staff tends to avoid it, which eventually causes bigger problems.

4.2 Cultural Intelligence Self-assessment results

As a supporting source for the analysis, the results of the participants' self-assessment will be summarized and integrated into this part. Having more than ten years of international experience, the participants of our research have given themselves relatively high scores in all the dimensions covered by the Cultural Intelligence Self-assessment. The following table shows all scores combined for Cognitive, Behavioral, and Motivational capabilities.

Table 4.1 Cultural Intelligence Self-assessment results

Questions		Anna	Bill	Conny	David	Evan	Frank
Cognitive CQ	Q1	5	5	2	2	2	4
	Q2	4	4	4	4	4	5
	Q3	5	3	4	4	3	4
	Q4	5	3	3	5	3	4
	Total	4,75	3,75	3,25	3,75	3,00	4,25
	Average	3,79					
Physical / Behavioral CQ	Q5	5	4	3	5	5	2
	Q6	5	4	3	4	5	4
	Q7	5	5	5	2	5	5
	Q8	5	5	4	5	3	4
	Total	5,00	4,50	3,75	4,00	4,50	3,75
	Average	4,25					
Emotional / Motivational CQ	Q9	4	4	3	5	4	2
	Q10	4	4	4	5	3	2
	Q11	5	4	4	5	3	3
	Q12	4	4	4	5	4	3
	Total	4,25	4,00	3,75	5,00	3,50	2,50
	Average	3,83					
TOTAL CQ SCORE		4,67	4,08	3,58	4,25	3,67	3,50
Total CQ Average		3,96					

Among the three capabilities that define Cultural Intelligence (Early and Ang, 2003), Behavioral capability reached the highest average score with 4.25 out of 5, followed by Emotional/Motivational capability, with 3.83. On average, participants gave themselves the lowest score in Cognitive capability, standing at 3.79. The average overall Cultural Intelligence score stands at 3.96 (nearly 4) out of 5, suggesting that the participants' cultural intelligence levels are relatively high in general. When comparing each participant's scores, the ranking is set as follows:

Table 4.2 Cultural Intelligence self-assessment participants' ranking

1st	Anna	4,67
2nd	David	4,25
3rd	Bill	4,08
4th	Evan	3,67
5th	Conny	3,58
6th	Frank	3,50

Anna was placed in the first position, as her reflections resulted in an outstanding 4.67 out of 5. She gave herself a perfect score for Behavioral capability. David and Bill's scores stand above 4, suggesting that, according to them, their Cultural Intelligence levels are also elevated. Evan and Conny gave themselves a score above 3.5, with 3.67 and 3.58 respectively. Finally, with a 3.5 on average, Frank was ranked last. His average score was pulled down by his 2.5 in Motivational/Emotional capability. In order to fully understand the reasons behind these results, in the following paragraphs, the participants' reflections while doing the assessment will be exposed and analyzed in detail by the three capabilities that define the concept of Cultural Intelligence: Cognition (Cognition and Metacognition), Motivation, and Behavior.

4.3 Cognition

The purpose of this section is to understand the participants' cognitive levels of Cultural Intelligence. In other words, to observe what cultural differences between their home countries and Thailand participants can identify and understand. Thus, this section will first, be devoted to the main cultural differences between the participants' home countries and Thailand, and their experiences on dealing with Thai people at work. As several similarities could be found in the participants' responses, the differences identified by them were grouped by the following cultural dimensions: Collectivism, Hierarchy, Relationship with time, and Communication. In order to fully understand their perspectives on their levels of cognition, the second part of this section will concern the analysis of the respondents' reflections on their self-assessment scores.

4.3.1 Collectivism

Several cultural differences identified by the participants suggest that Thailand is a significantly collectivistic country compared to Europe. Bill exposed that, as a teacher, he has found it very challenging to involve Thai students in class activities. According to him, they are taught "not to stand out" at home, which is exactly the opposite they teach in the UK. He expresses he misses some reflexive questions he would receive from students in the UK "they are way too quiet here". He added that his challenge as a teacher in the UK is to "keep them quiet and make them listen" and in Thailand is to "make them speak and ask questions". He mentioned that he feels that Thai people prefer belonging to a group and would not seek to stand out in the class as they would do in the UK. He added that in the UK, the people are very individualistic and this is why this cultural difference in the Thai character was very hard to understand for him at the beginning.

When Frank was asked about the cultural differences, he answered "Thai people are way more welcoming and open than Dutch, they let you in their community". He said Dutch people are "rigid and self-centered" and "Thais are kinder and are always willing to help and make you feel welcome wherever you go", they put themselves in your shoes more than Dutch people "Dutch people are more individualistic". He mentioned that when he was a newcomer in the company, he felt part of the team from the first day, and many teammates even introduced him to their friends outside of the

company, with the purpose of helping him not feel lonely in Bangkok. He mentioned that Thai people love to spend time with other people and they would ask you to go for dinner and “if you visit them at home, they already cooked dinner for you”. In the workplace, Conny also affirms her team is very supportive in Thailand “They are very easy-going and like to cooperate for the company and have a strong team spirit and like to check with other team members when they have questions. They like to solve tasks together”. Evan also agreed with Frank, he mentioned that his integration into the team is very easy and the relationship with his colleagues is much nicer than in Germany. He enjoys working in Thailand with Thai colleagues, as the teammates are kind, open, and “make you feel part of their team”.

4.3.2 Hierarchy

A very interesting topic that came out in the interviews was power distance and the importance given to hierarchy in Thailand in the corporate environment. According to David, leading a Thai team is “effortless” compared to leading a team in Germany, as they are more adaptable to new procedures. He gave the example of when he first arrived and introduced the “Team Board”, a new monitoring tool. He said the team only asked a few questions about instructions and were very happy to start using it. Then, he added that in Germany, he would have spent an entire hour answering questions to explain why he made the decision to change the tool such as “why do we need to change? what is the point? or why waste time with this?”. David noticed an interesting difference between the two teams. In Thailand, they adapt easily and fast, but they do not seek to improve by themselves unless they receive extra instructions. He mentioned they are “very obedient and like to follow instructions” but they do not think too much about what could be changed. In Germany, leading the team to the initial adaptation may be more challenging, but once they adapted, they will feel the need to explore the tool and try to develop it further. For Thai people, adaptation is not the problem, but adapting and developing further. It is relatively easy to motivate them to go in a certain direction, in Germany it is not, but once they are convinced, they will focus their energy on improving it “I feel the teams have two opposite personalities”.

Aligned with David’s perspective, Conny shared an experience while doing a workshop with her team “Once, we did a workshop with the Product Manager about

how to create our "Smart work" conditions. Our Manager, who is German, would make a proposal and everyone would assume we all had to follow it, even if he asked multiple times the people to suggest other options. They would rather praise and focus on the positive when asked to give feedback rather than finding other ways". Conny added that after the workshop, they were commenting about different options that did not come out during the workshop, and when she told a team member that his observation was useful and that he should have mentioned it, he replied "Conny you don't know, this workshop was meant for the boss not for us" which was completely shocking for her "It feels as if they assumed we need to do what the boss says while he clearly said he wanted other opinions and he is very open with the team. He does not like power distance, and the team knows that very well". She believed in Spain people would have spoken up if they did not agree or have a helpful proposition to make regardless of the hierarchy "As long as you are respectful, your opinion should always be welcomed".

4.3.3 Relationship with time

All Conny, David, and Evan expressed their strong concern about the lack of environmental awareness in Thailand. For them, this global warming issue is not properly tackled in most Asian countries, as in Europe since Primary School, children are educated to take care of the environment and reduce pollution when possible. During their interviews, David and Evan expressed their concerns about plastic waste and pollution in Thailand. According to David, this lack of environmental awareness may be due to the relationship Thai people have with the time "Europeans worry about their future, and the environmental protection measures implemented in Europe seek to postpone or prevent global warming levels that have not been reached yet and will negatively impact all the world's citizens' lives". Throughout his reflection, he said that this might be explained by the fact that Thai society is more concerned about the present, rather than future issues "In Europe, especially in Germany, we are known for being long-term planners".

According to one of our participants, punctuality is not given the same relevance in Thailand as it is in Germany. Evan mentioned that for Germans, it is a priority to "always be on time", as for them, it shows education and respect. He justified this by adding that occasionally, he would get frustrated when meeting with people and

they are arrive late “for me, no matter the plan, either a meeting for work or an informal dinner with friends, it is not okay not to be on time”. He said in Germany, being late is never contemplated, as it is disrespectful for the ones who wait. He added that now that he has been in Thailand for a while, he knows it is a cultural matter, as he has been able to observe and see that Thai people live their lives very slowly and rarely get stressed out to arrive on time to any meetings. He added that at the beginning he considered arriving late a lack of seriousness, but now he has started to see the bright side of it and has learned to enjoy the “unplanned” although it was extremely tough at first.

4.3.4 Communication

In terms of Communication, two of our interviewees highlighted that occasionally, they miss reflections from the people during their stay in Thailand. They mentioned that Europeans question about absolutely every aspect compared to Thai people, who tend to accept the situation as it is. Both Anna and Bill added that they feel that in Thailand, they do not give too much relevance to reflection or to “why” things happen. Bill, as a teacher, said that he feels that “they take things as they are without reflecting too much, they want processes to go smoothly the way they are told is the correct one”. As mentioned previously, he often misses more reflexive questions from the students’ side. Anna, as a customer, would expect many times to be given a reason why any service could not be procured. She argues that anytime she would not get what she wants, she always needs to ask why, whereas, in France, they would explain to you without asking. She gave the example of once, when she ordered online and when she went to the shop to pick up her order, the Thai staff mentioned they did not have the item in stock, and she had to ask multiple times for an explanation. David added to this that it is true that Thai people are more flexible and tolerant than in Germany, but also less reflexive in general. They have a bigger capacity to accept things and accept the actual situation. As a Manager, he feels it is easier having a Thai team as they like to follow instructions without asking unnecessary questions. He said, on the one hand, this was positive because the adaptation process was smoother. But on the other hand, it would not help progress because they will not question by themselves how the situation can be improved. For instance, he explained that in the company plant, the tissue of the

chairs in the office is worn, but no one in the team will complain as long as they can still sit on them “they accept the situation as it is”.

In addition to this, David argued that Thai people tend to be less direct with feedback, especially when giving negative comments. He said he felt praised every day by his subordinates “I am 100% sure that I am not as brilliant as they say I am”. Conny’s example of the workshop previously exposed can also illustrate David’s perspective, as they do seem to struggle to give feedback compared to Europeans. On Evan’s side, he currently belongs to a younger Thai team, composed of less experienced members than in Germany, and feels that in Europe, communication is more efficient and direct. He has encountered some situations in Thailand in which he has been waiting for an accomplished task for a long period and he was forced to ask every day whether it was completed, and he would always receive the same response “soon”. He expressed that he would prefer having more accuracy and transparency from the side of colleagues sometimes “If it cannot be done yet, it is fine, just let me know and I can focus on something else. It just feels that sometimes they are scared to say no, which is something completely normal for us. Especially if the task is to be accomplished by a team, communication among the members should be efficient”.

Another main difference in communication highlighted by Conny was physical contact and emotional expression. She is used to giving two kisses on the cheeks when meeting new people regardless of their sex “In Spain, we hug friends very often, and it is okay to get emotional in front of other people. I like to tell my family and friends that I love them, it makes me happy” But she feels in Thailand is it a slightly different, people do not tend to express their feelings and their body language signs reflect that they are not feeling comfortable “They always seem to be smiling and happy, no worries”.

4.3.5 The analysis of Cognitive Cultural Intelligence

Table 4.3 Cognitive CQ Self-assessment results

Questions	Anna	Bill	Conny	David	Evan	Frank
Q1	5	5	2	2	2	4
Q2	4	4	4	4	4	5
Q3	5	3	4	4	3	4
Q4	5	3	3	5	3	4
Total	4,75	3,75	3,25	3,75	3,00	4,25
Average	3,79					

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the level of Cognition can be assessed by the capacity to observe, identify and understand cultural differences of an individual. Previously, several cultural differences identified by the participants were analyzed and grouped by common cultural dimensions. The following paragraphs will aim to fully understand the participants' perspectives on their levels of cognition by analyzing their reflections on their self-assessment scores.

According to Ana, she deserves 4.75 out of 5 because she is not only aware of many differences compared to when she first arrived 2 years ago, but she considers she understands Thai people's minds much better today. In order to justify her score, she named several differences in culture and character giving specific examples of situations she has encountered. For instance, the opposing views of Customer Service of both countries, and explaining the importance of the justification upon the customer in France. She explained in her home country, people need to understand why things do not go well, and ask for compensation if the expected service was not procured. She also mentioned that Thai people tend to be more tolerant in that aspect than in France, "if the service is not available, they can look for something else" She feels in Thailand, the people are happier due to that reason because they do not focus on the issues as much as Europeans do. Besides, she mentioned she strongly misses the European mindset, as she feels in Thailand, certain topics concerning society, for instance, are not frequently discussed by Thai people. And she added that it might be for the same reason, because they do not want to think about any issues "They would rather accept the situation, and not spend too much time worrying about that stuff, just live their lives as happy as they

can". In addition to this, Anna recently began to learn the Thai language and showed a strong willingness to connect with locals and gain deeper knowledge about their customs from a local point of view as well. She proudly said she learns new cultural aspects nearly every day which means she is progressively approaching her goal of immersing in the culture of her family roots. In terms of preparation, she mentioned traveling in the Kingdom with her family was extremely useful to obtain an overview of the culture. Then, she purely focused her research on the paperwork to settle in the country such as legal requirements, accommodation prices, daily facilities and visa. Internet (blogs, articles, etc.) was her unique source of information.

Bill gave himself a low 3.75 in Cognitive capability because although he considers this capability to be essential for his job in Thailand, but he admits Cognition has been the hardest to develop for him so far "differences between the UK and Thailand are infinite, I have been a teacher for 12 years now and devoted 2 years of my professional experience to teaching in Thailand. Yet, I see behaviors every day I still cannot explain, I consider more research is needed from my side". Although according to him, Cognitive seems to be his weakest capability, Bill showed all along the interview that during his stay in Thailand, he has been able to observe and identify cultural differences and reflect on them. Education since childhood is crucial in the development of the personality and the values and principles the individual will preach in adulthood. He explained that as a passionate teacher, his main job is to understand how students are raised and taught at home in order to teach them effectively in class. During his interview, he gave multiple details about the cultural differences between the UK and Thailand. As exposed previously, he put the emphasis on Thai people's difficulty to say "no" compared to the UK and the challenges of being a teacher in Thailand coming from the UK, as the way children are educated and raised at home completely differs from his home country. He mentioned it was really hard to understand the students' behavior in class, and he began to slightly comprehend their manners with time, by observing the Thai society. Before coming, his method was similar to Anna's. He traveled across the country several times, and the rest of the research was concentrated on the paperwork procedures such as visa, accommodation, job opportunities, etc. His sources of information were mainly reliable online sites such as government websites, well-known

job portals or documented YouTube videos on Expats experiences. He planned to obtain a deeper understanding of the Thai culture after spending some months in Thailand.

Conny's weakest Cultural Intelligence capability is also Cognitive. From her perspective, she has understood the reasons behind some reactions from Thai people, but she still has a lot to learn, so she gave herself a 3.25 out of 5. She showed excitement when she stated "Even if I stayed in Thailand forever, I would still get lost in certain situations, both European and Thai societies are so different which is exactly what makes cross-cultural experiences so exciting". Yet, she referred to multiple cultural differences between Thailand and Spain in the interview, and she admitted that "Some of those differences may have a cultural or historical explanation, but some others, I could never find a reason, I guess it is because of my European mindset". First, she particularly accentuated physical contact when meeting new people or simply when seeing family or close friends. She also mentioned Thai shyness and their unwillingness to express both their positive and negative emotions. After asking a Thai friend about this topic, she said it was only normal to open up or be loving with your partner, and in private. Her friend also mentioned it was a cultural trait, that she could not explain why "My friend said 'it just does not come out naturally from us', which is hard for me to understand". In addition, Conny showed concern about their environmental awareness compared to Europeans, illustrating her vision of the excessive use of plastic. She added that she feels that Thai society prefers not to focus on the future, but on living the present happily. When it comes to preparation, the company she works in did most of the job "They facilitated everything I needed to know. They told me I would not have a problem integrating into their society, as they are very open-minded with foreigners. They also and that the atmosphere in the office was optimal for newcomers from Western countries, as the team was very kind and open. They would also help me request the visa and give me accommodation" She admitted that her company was crucial for the initial adaptation and a reliable provider of cultural information.

David gave himself a 3.75 for Cognitive capability. He explained that as a Manager in a cross-cultural atmosphere, he needs to carefully observe his team and reflect what are the most efficient ways to guide toward the desired outcome. According to him, culture plays a major role, as some cultural dimensions are more developed in Asian countries than in Europe. For instance, power distance is extremely encouraged

in Asia, but not as much in Europe. This means he needs to apply specific leadership techniques if he wants his team to feel confident to open up to him, for instance, he explains that once a month, he holds a workshop to discuss the weak points and asks for opinions and “points to be improved”. He invites his team for lunch afterward. He added that communication in both continents also differs significantly, so he needs to be extremely careful when giving negative feedback, criticizing someone’s work, or calling for an improvement. Among other cultural differences between Germany and Thailand, David pointed out several interesting ones. He briefly mentioned that the family bond in Thailand is stronger than in Germany. He considers that in a collectivistic country, marriage and building a family are requirements for happiness, and somehow society pushes you towards that direction, “You are given much more freedom in Europe when it comes to marriage or any other personal decision, and usually, your parents do not get involved as much as they do here”. According to David, tolerance and flexibility are also the main differences between Thai and European characters. These personality traits can both be seen on a daily basis in Thailand, as Thai people know how to deal with acceptance and resignation much better than in Europe. He gave the example mentioned above of the chairs in the company plant to illustrate this cultural difference. David also added that Thai people are extremely good and fast at following instructions and implementing new tools, and emphasized that they are not so proactive in finding solutions or making improvements compared to Germans. In terms of preparation, David relied on the company. His situation was similar to Conny’s, but he also mentioned that he received a one-day online workshop concerning “everything you need to know before joining the Thai adventure”. In that workshop, he was given several insights regarding Thai culture and customs.

Evan gave himself a 3 out of 5 for Cognitive capability. He justified his score saying he does not feel 100% confident when dealing with Thai people. Aligned with Anna’s perspective, he mentioned that Thai people usually do not talk about society-related topics and that they would rather focus on the present and on living their own lives, suggesting that Thai people do not worry much about future issues. Occasionally, he enjoys discussing politics, economics... and his Thai friends do not seem to be interested in these issues “My life in Germany was full of discussion about interesting topics like these, I feel the need of asking questions about certain topics, and

I hold back because I do not want to create any awkward moment”. He gave himself a 3 because he also regrets that he did not take Thai lessons “I regret it so much, I could have got much more out of this experience with local people”. He believes learning the local language would have contributed to feeling more comfortable and understanding Thai people's mindsets. Before coming to Thailand, Evan did not prepare excessively, he only carried out some general research on the internet regarding certain cultural aspects was enough for him. He also watched YouTube videos about German Expats in Thailand.

Frank based his outstanding 4.25 in Cognitive Cultural Intelligence capacity on the fact that he loves meeting people from different cultural backgrounds and he insists substantially on getting to know and understanding the local culture. From the interview, it can be seen that he has a positive point of view of Thai culture, as he focused all alone on the positive traits of Thai people's personality “open and welcoming, always willing to help and share dinner with you”. He also mentioned that they are not straightforward and direct because they are too kind and do not want to hurt other people's feelings. He gave himself 4.25 because, in the past, he has always had excellent relationships with people from all over the world, and he considers himself an open-minded person who enjoys human exchanges and learning from other people's mindsets in cross-cultural encounters. Frank also prepared for his new life in Thailand by traveling within the country a few months before moving. Besides, during his stay in China, he met his Thai girlfriend, who, according to him, gave him essential cultural information when they began to get to know each other.

4.4 Motivation

This section seeks to analyze the participants' motivational Cultural Intelligence levels. In other words, to observe the strength of the force that drives them towards full cross-cultural adaptation. The following table shows the participants' Cultural Intelligence scores on the capacity of Motivation:

Table 4.4 Motivational CQ Self-assessment results

Questions		Anna	Bill	Conny	David	Evan	Frank
Emotional / Motivational CQ	Q9	4	4	3	5	4	2
	Q10	4	4	4	5	3	2
	Q11	5	4	4	5	3	3
	Q12	4	4	4	5	4	3
	Total	4,25	4,00	3,75	5,00	3,50	2,50
	Average	3,83					

According to Anna, her strong motivation and her focus on Thailand's features have been the perfect combination to allow her to live the Thai experience to the fullest. As being partially Thai, although she is not close to her Thai family, she has always been curious about Thai culture. In addition, she seeks to enrich herself with cross-cultural experience from her stay in Thailand, both professional and personal, and she said she was ready to face challenges if needed. Among Thailand's highlighted features, she stated "politically, you're so left-alone, not integrated into any political issues, not drained by any political movement, it is really a happy life for us. So, it is very hard for me to feel homesick. I am relaxed, no stress". Anna mentioned she has never experienced a strong feeling of homesickness since her arrival in the country, and again, insisted on the positive side of the Kingdom to justify her 4.25 in the self-assessment "You get cheap trips to the beach, cheap clothes, and cheap food, what else do you need?"

Bill's motivational Cultural Intelligence level is probably a key factor of his success in Thailand, as he mentioned multiple times in the interview "I love my job here, I love teaching Thai students". He explained his high score in motivation was mainly due to his passion for teaching in a different cultural environment, he said he wakes up motivated and happy to go to work every day in Thailand, as he enjoys the challenges he faces every day at work "Teaching Thai kids have become my passion, I can do that every day. The experience is completely different from schools in England". He mentioned that another factor was the multiple advantages of Thailand and the flaws of the UK. For instance, he mentioned the weather as a heavy reason to stay in Thailand, as he referred to his "mild weather-related depression" from which he was suffering when he was living in England. Moreover, as well as Anna, he gave prominence to the

financial advantages from which he benefits here, comparing it to a hypothetical poorer condition in the UK.

According to Conny, her motivational Cultural Intelligence level stands at 3.75 out of 5. She explained that besides the cultural differences, she is strongly motivated by meeting new people from different places of the world and connecting with them “I just enjoy human connections and hearing stories from people coming from a different cultural background”, and she considers “now” to be the perfect time to travel the world, gain international experience and make international friends. Optimizing her CV and enriching her professional career are also driving her to accomplish her assignment in Thailand. However, she admitted that after six months she had a mental breakdown “the lack of affection hit me at some point, by then, I urgently needed a break from Thailand”. She is very close to her family and friends and being far from them was challenging “My birthday was very hard for me, I got emotional, it was very different from how I usually celebrate at home, I only needed my family to be with me and hug them”. She needed to request a week off and flew back to Spain to refill her emotional energy “It was a necessary trip, I came back from Spain ready to get back on track”.

David gave himself a perfect score for motivational Cultural Intelligence, arguing that he feels so comfortable in the country that he never experienced a mental breakdown or a strong need to return to Europe in this year and a half. Bill is strongly motivated by his job and traveling across the country. He mentioned in the interview that he was extremely grateful that the company gave him the opportunity to lead a Thai team, as he can now experience different situations at work every day, which, as a dynamic person, is really exciting for him.

Evan has not experienced any severe homesickness episodes during his two years in Thailand. He decided to give himself 3.5 for Motivational Cultural Intelligence and explained his motivation is not strong because he occasionally imagines himself happily being at home, living in a “more peaceful and less chaotic city”, which is why he would like to return home in a year or two. Anyway, he seems to enjoy his life here, and meeting new people with different cultural backgrounds motivates him to stay a bit longer “I am sure when I go back to Germany, I will get bored very fast”.

Frank gave himself a poor 2.5 in the capacity of Motivation. In the interview, Frank admitted he experienced homesickness often, and had thoughts of returning home a couple of times. Due to work constraints, he can only visit home once a year, during Christmas time. Added to this, he has pressure from his family, who want him to be back home permanently. Even if his girlfriend is Thai, they live in two different cities, thus, he's in Bangkok all alone. At a certain point, he starts wondering whether it is worth it to stay in Thailand feeling this lonely and missing his family. When he feels nostalgic, he opens YouTube and watches some videos about his neighborhood, and he gets all his memories back again “It comforts me to see when I used to play football when I was a child” and he also calls his parents. As reflected in the ranking for this capacity, his motivational level is relatively low compared to the rest of the participants. He mentioned he does not feel strongly motivated anymore to justify his score, and that he mainly moved to Thailand in order to be physically close to his girlfriend, and currently, they do not even live in the same city. He said he is not unhappy to be in Thailand, but he could be really happy in Europe, closer to his family. Now, his girlfriend is actively looking for a job in Bangkok so that they can move together, but what Frank really wants is to return to Europe in approximately a-year time.

4.5 Behavior

This section aims to analyze the participants' behavioral levels of Cultural Intelligence when encountering challenging cross-cultural situations. In other words, to observe their physical signs, changes in manner, behavior, or habits that the individual has made with the purpose of fitting in a new environment. The following table shows the participants' Cultural Intelligence scores on the capacity of Behavior:

Table 4.5 Behavioral CQ Self-assessment results

Questions		Anna	Bill	Conny	David	Evan	Frank
Physical / Behavioral CQ	Q5	5	4	3	5	5	2
	Q6	5	4	3	4	5	4
	Q7	5	5	5	2	5	5
	Q8	5	5	4	5	3	4
	Total	5,00	4,50	3,75	4,00	4,50	3,75
	Average	4,25					

Anna gave herself a perfect score on Behavioral capability. She explained how Thailand has helped her develop her tolerance and to relativize daily issues. She has observed the way Thai people react to problems “it seems like they don’t affect them, that’s why they are so happy” and learned from them and apply it to her life “Since I arrived in Thailand, it is harder to get me mad”. She proudly said that these slight modifications in her character reveal that she’s progressively approaching a Thai personality. Anna mentioned that due to the language barrier, she occasionally needs to rephrase her sentences to make them simple and speak slower. She added that after a few months she learned to keep calm and not get annoyed when she needs to ask the same question multiple times. She also said that she smiles at everyone since her arrival. Because of all these reasons, she decided to give herself a 5 out of 5 for behavioral capability, as she feels she has by far learned to change her expression manners, and physical signs.

Bill gave himself a satisfactory 4.5 out of 5. He argues he adapted to the cultural differences, especially in covid expectations and management. He explained that he happily teaches students without wearing a mask, but he is told by the management to please wear it when meetings with the parents are held. He always chooses to wear it, because even if he knows he does not need to and it makes him uncomfortable, he knows that wearing masks is appreciated by many Thai people. He mentioned this example to prove that he has a strong Behavioral capability, as he can change his behavior when a cultural encounter requires it.

For Conny, her Physical level is as satisfactory as her Motivational. She justified her score by explaining that she is willing to adapt her manners to any cultural

situation if required even if they can be disadvantageous for her. During the interview, she exposed that on multiple occasions, she modifies her English sentences to make them simpler by using incorrect grammar to be understood on the streets. She highlighted that she has discovered throughout her stay in Thailand that speaking slowly with simple sentences facilitates communication with Thai people “I feel my English skills have gone worse since I arrive, sometimes, especially if I am dealing with people on the street instead of saying ‘Excuse me, could you show me where the exit is?’ I would say ‘exit, please’ It feels like I am not using proper English grammar anymore. But at least, I get what I want”. In addition, like most of the participants, Conny still wears the mask regardless of the Covid restrictions’ official lifting. She mentioned that she feels forced to use masks in the office “Everyone wears masks, so I guess I should do the same”.

David decided to give himself a 4 out of 5. He said his physical adaptation is led by changes in his straightforwardness, which is sometimes challenging for him. He is managing a Thai team, and as a leader, he is constantly giving feedback. David explains that he has progressively learned how to formulate any critical issue and how to transmit effectively the need for a change to his team. He admitted that he has never stopped learning how to deal with different people since his arrival in Thailand “that’s the beautiful part of my job”. As for David, he tries every day to be less straightforward when giving negative feedback to his team “I think I have improved in this sense, as I think before speaking more often than I do in Germany. In Thailand, I know I can unintentionally hurt feelings”.

With a 4.5 out of 5 in Behavioral Cultural Intelligence capability, Evan is confident that he has, by far, learned to adapt his physical signs in order to fit into Thai culture. In the interview, he put emphasis on how he has modified the tone and volume of his speech, especially at the workplace in order not to disturb his teammates. He argues that he has adapted his behavior as well, especially when he is at the office. At the workplace, he has modified his tone when dealing with Thai teammates to make it softer and tries not to speak as loud as he would in Germany in order not to stand out. After doing his internship here, he went back and realized he was speaking much lower than before “My family would ask me to speak louder every time, which was very funny for me”. In addition, he agreed with David and Conny on how devastating it is to see

the lack of environmental awareness within the country, and the unnecessary plastic waste occurring on a daily basis. He acknowledged that seeing so much plastic waste was harder at the beginning, but now, he is used to this Thai habit and orders food online on a regular basis.

Frank gave himself a 4.25 out of 5. He argues that he can perfectly change his manners or even modify his daily behavior to adapt to any cultural situation. For instance, he keeps wearing masks in public places not to stand out among the people, even when they were already lifted by the Thai government. In addition, he acknowledged he had to learn how to find a balance when making jokes “ I am a sort of a clown and I enjoy making people laugh wherever I go, but once I messed it up in the company. There were a boy and a girl in the office that liked each other, and every time the girl showed up I would tease the guy saying ‘there's your future girlfriend’ . At some point, he did not like it and went to our boss to snitch and my boss told me off and asked me not to make personal jokes” Since then, he decided he was no longer going to make jokes concerning personal topics. This way, he could be completely sure he will not offend anyone.

4.6 The impact of Cultural Intelligence in the management of Culture Shock

Previously, the three capabilities defining the concept of Cultural intelligence were analyzed for each participant. The analysis was based on their explanations regarding the self-assessed scores, together with their cross-cultural experiences in Thailand retrieved from the interviews. The following paragraph will summarize the main observations from the analysis.

On the one hand, Anna, Bill, David, and Evan gave themselves the highest scores and were placed at the top of our participants’ Cultural Intelligence ranking. They seem to have struggled and missed home and family substantially, but never reached the point of having a strong need to return to Europe. From their answers, it can be seen that they have managed to adapt to Thai culture by mainly focusing on the positive aspects of the country, the multiple advantages they benefit from, and how their quality of life has improved since they moved to Thailand. In addition, they all insist on having a

strong motivation to stay in the country and live this once-in-a-lifetime experience. On the other hand, both Conny and Frank, who gave themselves the lowest scores on Cultural Intelligence, expressed to have experienced a mental breakdown due to Culture Shock. Conny explained that she had to return home for a week after spending half a year in Thailand and admitted she was strongly attached to her family and needed more affection. She mentioned she only needed a short break from Thailand because she is actually motivated to live the experience and boost her CV, but misses her family and culture significantly. She only needed to feel the support from her family physically and recharge her emotional energy. On Frank's side, he mentioned that he still suffers from nostalgia on a regular basis and has considered returning to the Netherlands several times. However, he tries to motivate himself every day by focusing on his professional career and the fact that he is currently closer to his girlfriend than if he were in Europe. Another source of motivation was focusing on his future plans such as living with his girlfriend soon and moving to Europe together in the upcoming years so that he can finally be closer to his family. He also mentioned that when he feels nostalgic, watching videos about his neighborhood in the Netherlands would help him recover, as good childhood memories are brought to his mind. The analysis of each participant's Cultural intelligence capabilities reveals that besides cognition and the proper understanding of the culture, having a strong motivation can make a difference in your capacity to adapt to a new cultural environment easier and faster.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study seeks to explore the impact of the level of Cultural Intelligence on the management of the Culture Shock and cross-cultural experiences of Europeans living in Thailand. For this purpose, six Europeans currently living in Thailand for one year and a half to two years participated in an in-depth interview and completed a Cultural Intelligence self-assessment. By analyzing the Cultural Intelligence levels suggested by their self-assessment results, together with their statements on the cross-cultural situations and Culture Shock experiences, we were able to explore the impact of cultural Intelligence levels on the management of our participants' Culture Shock. The Theory of Cultural Intelligence was used to understand this impact.

Our research allowed us to observe the impact of Cultural Intelligence in the management of culture shock and challenging cross-cultural situations of six Europeans living in Thailand. On the one hand, Anna, David, Bill, and Evan gave themselves high scores in the Cultural Intelligence self-assessment and have shown throughout their interviews that they barely struggled to adapt to Thai society and culture. They mentioned they miss home occasionally, but according to them, they have managed to successfully adapt and find ways to make Thailand their temporary home. Conny and Frank gave themselves a lower score in their Cultural Intelligence self-assessments. Although they have not made the decision to return home permanently yet, their lower motivational levels can be reflected in the experiences shared during the interviews and they both gave themselves low scores in the capacity of Motivation compared to the rest of the participants. In fact, Conny mentioned that she had to return to Spain for a week because she could not stand being in such a different cultural environment for so long. Frank acknowledged that he would like to return to Europe permanently as soon as his girlfriend is willing to move with him. Yet, overall, they both have decided to stay in the country for a year minimum. In the end, their diverse answers including positive and

negative cultural aspects, and physical expression during the interviews suggest that they have both learned to find ways to cope with their homesickness and have adapted relatively well to the cross-cultural situations encountered in Thailand.

To sum up, the self-assessed Cultural Intelligence level of all of the participants, coupled with their reflections and experiences shared in their interviews allowed us to explore their capacity to adapt to a different culture. In fact, the overall data collected suggest that all of them seem to have the capabilities to adapt to situations in a different culture, as they gave specific examples of daily issues encountered in Thailand and how they overcame them progressively. During their Culture Shock period, Anna, Bill, David, and Evan seem to have had a low stress level, while Conny and Frank's stress levels seem to be higher. Both Conny and Frank mentioned that they had a mental breakdown and a desperate feeling of needing to go home, which particularly justify their self-assessed low scores in Motivational Cultural Intelligence capacity. Yet, they mentioned that they have now relatively recovered and feel they can stay in the kingdom for a couple of years longer.

Therefore, even if some of them really struggled at some point, eventually, from their statements, it seems that today, they have all managed to adapt successfully to living in Thailand. The following table summarizes the study's main observations:

Table 4.6 The participants' CQ global score and stress level during Culture Shock

Position	Participant	CQ score	Culture Shock Stress level
1st	Anna	4,67	Low
2nd	David	4,25	Low
3rd	Bill	4,08	Low
4th	Evan	3,67	Low
5th	Conny	3,58	Medium-High
6th	Frank	3,50	Medium-High

5.2 Advice for Expats

As internationally experienced people, our interviews gave helpful advice to future Expats in Thailand. Anna, Conny, David, and Frank focused on the mindset. Being open-minded, tolerant, and curious. In fact, having an interest in learning new things every day, asking locals for perspective and advice, and observing local customs can help you see differences as advantages. Anna insisted that focusing on the positive has been extremely helpful for her, she said Thailand's pain points are balanced by far by its multiple assets. Evan and Bill advised Expats to travel to Thailand first, as it would help them to have an overview of the country and to meet Thai people with whom they can keep in touch for future references about paperwork, for instance. Evan mentioned he regrets he did not learn Thai, as he did not know he would stay this long. Apparently, it is common for foreigners to stay longer than planned. Frank supported Evan's statement, advising every Expat to begin learning Thai because it will facilitate their lives significantly in the Kingdom.

In case of homesickness hits, participants suggested several tips. Visiting Western supermarkets to buy groceries regularly or going to Western restaurants can be an option, as well as watching Western movies or YouTube videos from your home, as Frank would do. Anna mentioned traveling to the sea would help her disconnect from the world's stress and connect with herself, and Thailand is the perfect country to do so. So, she definitely recommends traveling across the wide wild beaches of the country. Conny suggested massages. She goes there on a weekly basis and it helps her appreciate being in Thailand, as she could not benefit from them in Europe for such an attractive price. Evan and David advised future Expats to make International friends, as they can be a support when nostalgia hits because they will perfectly understand your feelings. Moreover, having international and local friends will allow Expats to hang out, enjoy and explore the city, which might positively contribute to the individual's emotional recovery.

5.3 Limitations of the Research

Concerning limitations, the study has allowed us to explore the impact of Cultural Intelligence in the adaptation period of European Expats in Thailand. However, the Theory proposed by Early and Ang exclusively focuses on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral capabilities to assess whether the individual can adapt successfully. Our study suggests that many other factors can also impact how individuals manage their culture shock crisis during the adaptation period such as the previous international experience or the international education received. Concerning the participants' background, having international or one-country family roots, or even being raised in a small town or a big city may affect their emotional management when they adapt to living in another culture. Another aspect to be considered is whether the individual has a strong family bond in their homes, as being far away from them may aggravate their nostalgic periods or even be the trigger factor of a severe mental breakdown.

Secondly, the sample size and time constraints. Our observations would be richer if the sample was wider and more diverse such as interviewing people from all European countries. The time set for the interviews and the completion of the Cultural Intelligence self-assessment can also be considered a constraint, as responses and reflections would have been more complete if participants had more time.

Lastly, participants complete the Cultural Intelligence self-assessment by themselves. This means that the final score is based on the personal experiences that individuals are able to recall when filling up the self-assessment. Although the scores are set subjectively, the results obtained were considered logical and well-justified by the participants, therefore, the CQ self-assessment was considered a reliable source of data for the study.

REFERENCES

- Bangkok Post Public Company Limited. (2022). *Thailand in top 10 for expats*. Retrieved from : <https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/2345878/thailand-in-top-10-for-expats>
- Earley, C. P. & Ang, S. (2003). *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions Across Cultures*. Stanford University Press
- Earley, P. C., & Mosakowski, E. (2004b). Toward culture intelligence: Turning cultural differences into a workplace advantage. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 18(3), 151–157.
- Earley, P. C. & Mosakowski, S. (2004). Cultural Intelligence. *Harvard Business Review*, 83.1, 139-146.
- Jampaklay, Penboon & Lucktong. (2022). Internationalization of higher education in Thailand: Promises and reality. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 43, 183-193.
- Oberg K. (1960). Cultural Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environments. *Practical Anthropology*, 7(4), 177–182.
- Thailand Migration Report 2019. (2019). *IOM (International Organization for Migration)*. Retrieved from: https://thailand.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11371/files/documents/Thailand%20Report%202019_22012019_HiRes.pdf
- TRADING ECONOMICS. (s. f.). *Thailand Employed Persons - 2022 Data - 2023 Forecast - 1998-2021 Historical - Chart*. Retrieved from: <https://tradingeconomics.com/thailand/employed-persons>
- Weaver, G.R., (1994). Culture, communication and conflict: Readings in intercultural relations. *Understanding and coping with cross-cultural adjustment stress*, 169–189.

REFERENCES (cont.)

Yong, E. L. (2019). Understanding divergence of living standards between Asia and Europe: a proposition of regionally dominant cultural effects. *Asian Journal of German and European Studies*, 4(1).

19 Reasons for Thailand Study Abroad in 2019. (s. f.). GoAbroad.com. Retrieved from: <https://www.goabroad.com/articles/study-abroad/reasons-to-study-abroad-in-thailand>

