

**HOW THE HIERARCHICAL ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE  
IMPACTS ON EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION**



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**A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT  
COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT  
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY  
2023**

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Thematic paper  
entitled  
**“HOW THE HIERARCHICAL ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE  
IMPACTS ON EMPLOYEES’ MOTIVATION”**

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

on  
April 29, 2023



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have supported me throughout the time of this independence study. First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Astrid Kainzbauer, for her invaluable guidance and support throughout this semester. This paper would not be completed without her advice, guidance, and unwavering encouragement which greatly assisted the research. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you for taking the time to participate in my research study. Your insights and experiences have been invaluable in helping me achieve my research purpose.

I would like to say thank you to all professors at the College of Management, Mahidol University who have dedicated their knowledge and skills to educate me for all five semesters in this institute. I would like to extend my thankfulness to my colleagues who were with me during these ups and downs. Their willingness to support and encourage me was instrumental in helping me have a good time in this institute.

Finally, I am so thankful to my family, friends, friends' family and personal advisor. There are people who love and support me all the time. Their constant love, understanding, and motivation have been my driving force throughout my academic journey since the first day. Your support and belief in me have been significant in making this study a reality.

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## **HOW THE HIERARCHICAL ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE IMPACTS ON EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This independent study aims to explore how Thai employees perceive the hierarchical structure in organizations and its impact on their motivation. To achieve this objective, a qualitative research approach was used. In-depth interviews were conducted with 10 Thai employees from different industries and hierarchical levels. The data analysis was applied to interpret the collected data in order to understand insight information. The findings illustrate how Thai employees perceive the hierarchical organization structure of their work environment. They perceive this structure as a neutral perception. However, the study found that the hierarchical structure can impact employees' motivation in both positive and negative ways. The study highlights the impact of the relationship between hierarchical organization structure and employee motivation. The findings provide insights for organizations in Thailand to improve how the organizations can address the challenges that arise from it.

**KEY WORDS:** Hierarchical Organizational Structure/ Motivation/ Job Satisfaction/ Organizational Commitment

35 pages

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLE</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Motivation	4
2.2 Job Satisfaction	4
2.3 Organizational Commitment	5
2.3.1 Normative Commitment	6
2.3.2 Continuance Commitment	6
2.3.3 Affective Commitment	6
2.4 The hierarchy in terms of organizational structure	7
2.5 How organization structure relates to employees' motivation	8
<b>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Primary Data Collection Method	9
3.2 Sample Selection	9
3.3 Open-Ended Questions	10
3.4 Develop Probing Techniques	11
3.5 Conduct the Interview	12
3.6 Research Framework	12
<b>CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Perception of Thai employees towards the hierarchical structure.	13
4.2 What are the perceived advantages of working in 'high hierarchy organizations', what are the disadvantages.	15

## **CONTENTS (cont.)**

	<b>Page</b>
4.3 What are the perceived advantages of working in ‘low hierarchy organizations’, what are the disadvantages?	18
4.4 How does working in this organization have an impact on their motivation?	21
4.5 What differentiates the people who are happy in high hierarchy organization, and the people who are not happy in high hierarchy	23
4.5.1 The personal and organization goal	24
4.5.2 Management style under hierarchical structure	24
4.5.3 Clear decision autonomy according to position levels	25
<b>CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>26</b>
5.1 Conclusion	26
5.2 Recommendation	28
5.3 Limitation of Study	30
5.4 Recommendation for Future Research	31
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>BIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>35</b>

## LIST OF TABLE

<b>Table</b>		<b>Page</b>
3.1	Interviewee list	10
3.2	Open-ended question list	11
4.1	Perception segmentation	23



## LIST OF FIGURE

<b>Figure</b>		<b>Page</b>
2.1	Hofstede's cultural dimensions index of Thailand	1
3.1	Research framework of the study	12



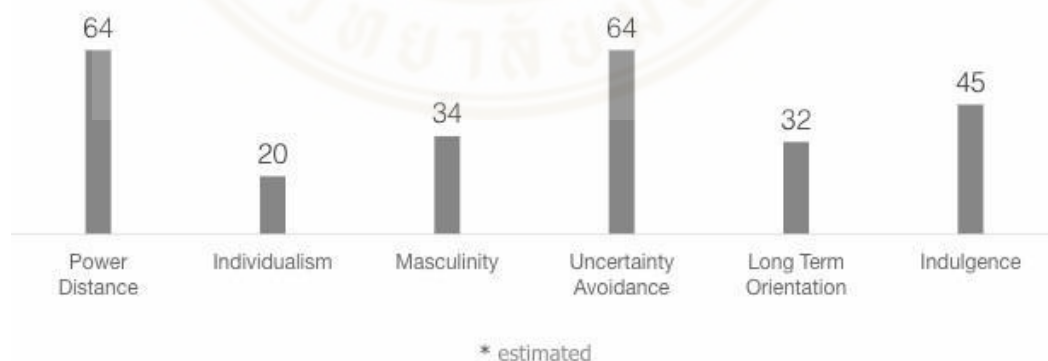


## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Thai people are grown with a traditional bureaucratic society which is organized by the hierarchy line and it defines their place and power (Hays, 2014). This social structure automatically cultivates the lower ranks' perception that they have less power and respect the elders or above line of social status. Growing up with a hierarchical culture and society since they were born, as a human, Thai people seem to automatically and naturally accept and adapt themselves with this society's perception from the social pressure, education, and principles from previous generations.

According to the Power Distance in Hofstede's Culture framework, it represents the degree of inequality in each society that we could use for organization and country culture context. This framework describes the Power Distance as it could be influenced from the attitude of the culture, referring to this following phrase “all individuals in societies are not equal, and it expresses the attitude of the culture toward these power inequalities amongst us” (Hofstede Insights, 2022). Thailand is one of the countries with a high Power Distance level with the score at 64 points.



**Figure 2.1: Hofstede's cultural dimensions index of Thailand**

This score came from the Hofstede insight team, a network of organizational consultants, showing that Thailand is a country that accepts inequalities. Lower-level people need to strictly respect people who are on the upper chain of command and protocol. Different privileges are provided for each rank. The higher rank you are, the more privileges you get. Moreover, people in the lower rank need to show loyalty, respect and deference for their superiors in return for protection and guidance... Thus, the attitude towards managers is more formal, the information flow is hierarchical and controlled (Hofstede Insights, 2017). This line of hierarchy in Thai culture with the high score of power of distance is quite similar with the vertical or the pyramid-shaped organization structure like the Functional structure.

There are advantages that every employee will know their own position and responsibility, what they have to do and who they need to report with. Moreover, this hierarchy organizational culture helps ensure employees' needs for security and could easily predict their career path (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). However, there are research studies that have identified that hierarchy also provides a negative effect on employees' by decreasing motivation and effectiveness in their workplace because between motivation of employees and the process of working on tasks of organizations there are strong and direct connections (Barzani, 2020).

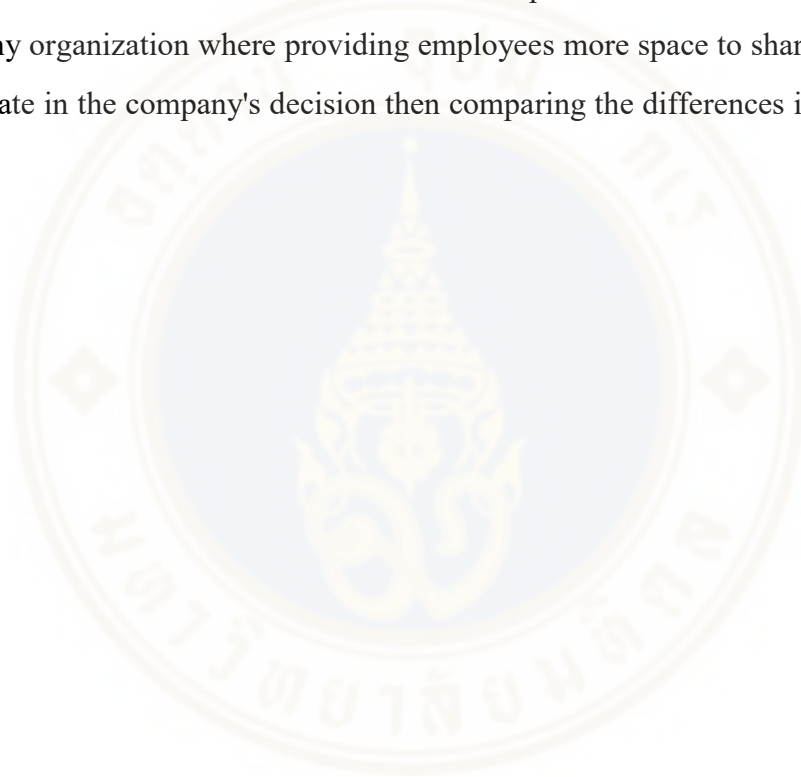
This research paper aims to focus on How Thai employees perceive the hierarchical structure in organization?. In order to scope down the desired topic, the context of this paper will focus on the effects on Thai employees who were born in hierarchical social structure and working in the hierarchical organization structure and the objective of this paper will be explained in the research questions below:

**Research Question1:** *“How do subordinates perceive the organizational structure in their organization? Which benefits and disadvantages do they recognize?”*

**Research Question2:** *“How does the organizational structure affect subordinates' motivation and job satisfaction?”*

**Research Question3:** “How does the organizational structure affect subordinates’ organizational commitment?”

In order to respond to these three questions, the qualitative method is used in this study because the author values the importance of gathering the information from the true stories and experience of the lower-level employees in Thai organizations. In order to enhance the advantages for improving the organization, this study will interview some participants who come from the high hierarchy structure organization where the command and decision come from up to down level and some from low hierarchy organization where providing employees more space to share their ideas and participate in the company's decision then comparing the differences in the conclusion part.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Motivation**

In Quratul-Ain Manzoor's research study has defined motivation as the act or process of motivating. It results in performances or procedures of presenting an intention to achieve some success. Referring to the meaning that Butkus & Green defined in 1999 that the derivation of the word motivation comes from 'motivate', which represent actions of moving, pushing or influencing in order to achieve the desired success. Farhad and his research team (2011) has described the motivation as a power that strengthens. In 2007, Chowdhury defined it as a moving and supporting progression for goal-oriented behavior. Reena et al (2009) explained motivation definition for an internal strength that impel people to accomplish individual and organizational goals (as cited in Ain Manzoor, 2012). There was research conducted by Wulandari in 2011 that explained the components of working motivation that "consist of achievement, recognition, award, career development, salary or wages, and absenteeism" (as cited in Hanafi et al., 2019). In addition, in the similar study the author also defined work motivation as the cause making employees to be willing to work to satisfy the needs of employees and affect the achievement of organizational goals (Hanafi et al., 2019). The factors that are heavily influenced by the motivation are abilities, qualities, and strengths in work performance (Nguyen et al., 2020).

#### **2.2 Job Satisfaction**

The meaning of job satisfaction was universally discussed among various researchers. In 1976, Locke gave the most popular definition that job satisfaction is

simply specified on the point of “a positive emotional state of feeling resulted from jobs, thus fulfill individuals’ value towards their jobs” (as cited in Kian et al., 2014). Job satisfaction is also mentioned as a main component of work motivation which is a basic element of employees’ behavior in an organization. Moreover, job satisfaction is also generally defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Ćulibrk et al., 2018). In 1989, Organ & Konovsky explained the further definition of the job satisfaction by dividing job satisfaction components into two categories which are the affective component that is directly related to emotional state and cognitive component that is related to appraisal. The affective component represents the individual’s actual pleasurable feeling state towards factors related to career. On the other hand, the cognitive component is linked to the expectations and comparison standards in terms of which current situations are being evaluated (Kian et al., 2014).

### **2.3 Organizational commitment**

There is a wide acceptance about the definition from Greenberg and Baron in 2008 who define “organizational commitment as the degree of employees identifying themselves with the organization, how much employees are willing to engage in the organization in contrast, how they are ready to quit their career” (as cited in Ćulibrk et al., 2018). Organization commitment is also defined in terms of a psychological state characterized as the attitude of the commitment between the relationship of employees to the organization and affects a decision to continue their career (Radosavljevic et al., 2017). The organizational commitment is closely linked to job satisfaction. There are still arguments about how organizational commitment links to job satisfaction. Some researchers indicated that job satisfaction leads to the degree of organizational commitment. In contrast, some studies argued that employees need to feel committed with the organization before satisfied with their job (Herrera & De Las Heras-Rosas, 2021).

### **2.3.1 Normative Commitment**

Normative Commitment defines a sense of responsibility for staying with the organization due to the obligation and ethical standard factors. Employees with a strong normative commitment, who decide to stay with the organization, pay attention to the two factors more than their job satisfaction and benefits (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Meyer and Allen explained the definition of normative commitment as a state of sense of commitment with less commitment, but focus more on a societal expectation. Providing compensation will remain loyal to the employer (as cited in AL-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019)

### **2.3.2 Continuance Commitment**

In 1960 Becker has studied about the organizational commitment and described the continuance commitment as a person who has awareness of the costs and benefits which associate with quitting the organization. A strong continuance commitment employees will decide to stay with the organization because they need to be so (as cited in Nguyen et al., 2020) Moreover, the continuance commitment could be increased by investing with the organization. That means if they do not continuously take action, it could make them lost. Allen and Meyer provided a simple explanation for the continuance commitment that it is the commitment feeling from the employee economic reasons ( as cited in AL-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019).

### **2.3.3 Affective Commitment**

This level of commitment was stated as a feeling when an employee attaches himself or herself to being a part of the organization. A strong affective employee will commit to stay with the organization due to the affection (Nguyen et al., 2020). Meyer and Allen indicated various factors that influence the affective commitment in the Organizational Commitment model (the OC model) in 1997 that included individual job challenges, clear job distribution by the organization, clear straightforward of goals and a degree of difficulty management to achieving goals, managements opened-mind to receptive feedback, colleagues, virtuousness of

opportunity and compensation, recognize individual value and importance, and prompt and clear feedback (as cited in AL-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019)

## **2.4 The hierarchy in terms of organizational structure**

Joseph T. Breslin has defined the hierarchical organization in his study that from the historically to this current day, the hierarchical organization is the distinctive structure used by groups in society and workplace. In the workplace, a hierarchical model orders subordinates the direction from the upper-levels. His study gave the cases about the effect of hierarchical management and social structure in both positive and negative ways that hierarchical structure contributes to clear task position and security measurement for all employees. In contrast, the heavy responsibilities of working in the order of others significantly destruct human potentials. It makes lifelong work only meant to survive, not to fulfill an individual's ultimate abilities (as cited in Breslin, 2020). For example, African employees in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) also face the struggle from the hierarchy in their organization because all of the decision makers are people who are on the top management level and the lower level employees just have to get their tasks done from the command and this lead to the decrease and restrain employees motivation to improve performance, growth, and effectiveness which are a direct negative effect to the organization (Ain Manzoor, 2012). Another support from the Korean companies case, where the Power Distance gets a high score, also realize the harmful effects of hierarchical culture and they notice that hierarchical culture could hamper employees participation and limit the scope of their learning. Therefore, they try to find the solutions to prevent the negative effects which are caused by hierarchical organizational culture (Kim et al., 2019). Moreover, there was a study that defined the relationship of commitment and the hierarchical level. It said that different hierarchical positions contribute to an essential base for self-categorization which different in the values, expectations and interests affiliated by workers. (Horton et al., 2014). In addition, Cole and Bruch study in 2006, these two researchers also defined about the the relationship of commitment and the

hierarchical level in each stages of an organizational hierarchy could cause different degree of commitment on the turnover intentions (as cited in Horton et al., 2014)

## **2.5 How organization structure relates to employees' motivation**

There were various researches (Hanafi et al., 2019; Barzani & Sindi, 2020) that studied this topic and defined the relationship between organization structure effect to the employees' motivation. The result from the past studies identified that the organization structure is a crucial root encouraging motivation. It is an important factor to improve employee performance and build a strong foundation for organizations to overcome high competition. In the current, companies need to face many challenges and pressure to compete in this great competitive environment. Building a strong relationship between employees to properly do the tasks and take responsibilities is crucial for a company's foundation which starts from the organization's structures and strategies. Companies could successfully achieve the goals if they could motivate their employees' performance to the ultimate level. However, every employee values different needs for what they want to achieve in their working life.

Consequently, the organization structure can impact employees on both negative and positive results, the negative effects without no motivation are work assignment, lean policy, low performance, dissatisfaction and high cost, without efficiency of work and effectiveness. The positive effects with motivation are doing work on time, strong policy, high performance, satisfaction of work and low cost of work and time with high efficiency and effectiveness (Barzani & Sindi, 2020). There was a research conducted at SMK SMTI in Indonesia with 183 employees as participants showing the organizational structure is the most impactful variable that influences work motivation (Hanafi et al., 2019). In the same research study also found that the work motivation relates to positive significant influence on employee performance.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

In order to find out this paper objective which aims to study Thai employees who work in hierarchical organizations in Thailand perception, the author decided to collect the primary data by in-depth interview with probing technique with 10 participants who came from different companies and various positions. These selected participants are Thai employees working at a middle and lower level who still need to receive orders and command from the upper levels. Although all of them work in hierarchical organizations, they have their own experiences differently therefore, this research study could explore Thai employees' perceptions of this kind of organization structure in various perspectives.

#### **3.1 Primary Data Collection Method**

To answer the research questions, an in-depth interview technique is adopted as the data collection approach because to deeply and truly understand what the participants have experienced in their organization. The in-depth interview will be conducted to collect the primary data in this research paper, representing in-depth information from interactive communication as questions and answer sessions. The method of the interview is as follow:

#### **3.2 Sample selection**

This in-depth interview for this research paper was conducted with 10 Thai employees. The interviewees are selected based on their experiences of working under the hierarchical organizational structure from several organizations which the

are currently on the middle and operational level, not the top management. For the purpose of the study that the author would like to explore in many perspectives about this topic, the participants are chosen from the high hierarchy structure organization where the command and decision come from top to bottom and some from low hierarchy organization where top management still offers employees some space to share and participate in the company.

**Table 3.1 Interviewee list**

Code	Position	Nationality	Experience	Gender	Level of hierarchy
A	Assistant Marketing Manager	Thai	4 Years	Male	Low
B	Social Manager	Thai	4 Years	Female	High
C	Merchandise Planning	Thai	5 Years	Female	Low
D	Engineering Support and BOI	Thai	2 Years	Female	High
E	Communications Analyst	Thai	3 Years	Female	Low
F	Business Development	Thai	6 Months	Male	High
G	Senior Export Sale	Thai	3 Years	Male	High
H	Senior Seller Education	Thai	5 Years	Female	High
I	Marketing Director	Thai	3 Months	Male	High
J	International Market Place Division Manager	Thai	6 Years	Male	Low

### 3.3 Open-Ended Questions

For the purpose of finding out the real perceptions of Thai employees with the hierarchical organizational structure. A list of open-ended questions is formed in order to understand both positive and negative effects on motivation due to the hierarchical organizational structure as shown in table 3.2. During the interview the questions will be rearranged for the effective and smooth interview flow in order to encourage and make the interviewees feel comfortable.

**Table 3.2 Open-ended question list**

<b>Finding Factor</b>	<b>Interview Question</b>
Organizational Structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Could you please tell me about your career and your organization?</li> <li>2. Can you describe the management style in your organization?</li> <li>3. Can you describe how much your organization lets you be involved in a project like sharing ideas or making any decisions? Please give an example?</li> <li>4. What is your organization's criteria to choose people involved in each project?</li> <li>5. How are decisions made and who has autonomy to make and finalize the decisions?</li> <li>6. How long does it take for the decision making process?</li> <li>7. How do you think the current structure of your organization matches your working style? And why?</li> <li>8. Does your current organizational structure motivate or demotivate you in terms of your performance and job satisfaction?</li> <li>9. How do you think this working style provides any benefits or advantages for self improvement?</li> <li>10. How do you see yourself in the future in this organization?</li> </ol>

### **3.4 Develop Probing Techniques**

Probing techniques will be applied in the interviewing techniques to ensure the validity of the data and seek more information from respondents. In order to be able to use this technique, semi-structured interviews are used in the interviews. As DiCiccio-Bloom and Crabtree explained that during the interview, the goal of the interviewer is to encourage the interviewee comfortably sharing their experiences and information as much as possible in his or her own words ( as cited in DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The interview will start with the interview questions list referred to table 3.2 then apply probing techniques to find further information and look for the rooted reasons. It allows

the interviewer to deeply understand what respondents perceive and experience by asking these open-ended questions.

### 3.5 Conduct the Interview

The interviews are conducted by a face-to-face conversation between interviewer and interviewee in order to have appropriate and effective conversation and deeply understand information. The interviewees are Thai employees who work in hierarchical organizational structure. The venue of interview in relaxed atmosphere places like cafes, restaurants, and their place which support interviewees' courage and comfort to share their experiences. Some interviews are operated via the video call for some interviewees. These two types of interview offer the interviewer able to observe verbal and non-verbal language such as gesture and facial expression. Each interview is conducted approximately 40-60 minutes, including introducing and probing each question. The answers from 10 interviews and the secondary data in the literature review chapter will be analyzed and concluded in the conclusion chapter.

### 3.6 Research Framework

The research framework will explain the data which was collected from in-depth interviews with 19 respondents and the secondary data in the literature review chapter, the information will be combined and summarized about the effects of the hierarchical organizational structure as shown in the research framework in figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1: Research framework of the study**

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

As part of the qualitative research to collect the primary data by interviewing 10 Thai employees about their experience in hierarchical organization. According to their degree of how much organizations allow employees to participate in, the author could group the interviewee A,C,E, and J as participants who are working in the low hierarchy organization. And interviewee B,D,F,G,H, and I as participants who are working in the high hierarchy organization. And the information from these 10 sample interviews will be summarized in this chapter to clarify the different impacts of hierarchical organizational structure to Thai employees.

#### **4.1 Perception of Thai employees towards the hierarchical structure.**

Referring to the given information from 10 interviewees, the author found that there are 5 interviewees who have affective commitment with their organizations under the hierarchical structure because their organization do not let the structure hamper their employees' motivation to work and the employees are satisfied, accept and understand the authorities they have got, 3 interviewees who slightly struggle working with the hierarchical process but they still satisfied and motivated from the free space for their decision authority, and 2 interviewees who quite struggle from working with the highly hierarchical organization and it affects to their motivation and job satisfaction. However, all participants seem commonly accepted that the hierarchical organizational structure normally happens in every company, especially a big organization because in one company there are many people who have different backgrounds and attitudes therefore, the hierarchical structure will frame every employee to follow the way of organization. This acceptance is not only for employees who are satisfied with their current career but employees who are struggling with their career also accept the existing structure. Referring to the interviewees A and B' words

said in the exactly similar way that “Being a big corporation not that a start-up so it is normally to have a hierarchy level in the organization”.

Seven of the interviewees perceive that hierarchical structure is for specifying authority for decision process, report process and make the management systematic. But there is only one interviewee who mentioned the relationship between this structure and career path security. However, he pointed out that it only happened with him due to his special relationship with the top level so they offer proper career path to him compared with his colleagues who are insecure with their career path because the company never provides a clear career path to them. Referring to the interviewee G said that “Except me, other colleagues are not secure in their career path in this company but I am close with the EVP so, he offered me the clear position in my future career path”. For participants in this research study who perceive the hierarchical structure that relates to authority in decision making. To illustrate, they perceive that the higher level they got, the more decision power they will have. Moreover, this structure that relates to the authority of decision making could be the shield for the subordinates in the middle to lower levels from making mistakes because this structure made every project need to be approved by many people from the higher levels and it could reduce the errors and mistakes before the project launch. And if any unexpected situations happened, the subordinates could refer to all approval to protect them. In addition, they also link the hierarchy structure with the levels of benefits. It could motivate employees about the promotion for the higher levels so they will gain more benefits. Although they seem to be prepared to work with the hierarchical structure in the organization and understand some reasons for it, there are still some different impacts between the employees who work in low and high hierarchy organizations. The different style of management, the clear authority in decision making and the attitude of the people in the top level also provide different effects on employees’ perception.

## 4.2 What are the perceived advantages of working in ‘high hierarchy organizations’, what are the disadvantages.

Refer to the information from the in-depth interview with the six interviewees, B,D,F,G,H, and I who work in the high hierarchy organizations, they mentioned both advantages and disadvantages points that they have experienced in the high hierarchy organization as follows.

In terms of the advantage points they have got from working under the hierarchical structure, the interviewees in this research study have mentioned about three main points. Firstly, a clear reporting line - each position in high hierarchical organizations dictates who to report to, which leads to keeping things organized. According to the information the author got from the interviewee B and D said that “This structure lets employees easily know who they need to report to” and “The big organization needs the hierarchy to organize working structure”. Secondly, the working process in the high hierarchy model increases employees' ability to improve detail oriented skill refer to the two participants who agree in a similar way. Interviewees B and H have the same experience about the improvement of detail oriented that when they need to send work to many people for approval and risk being rejected, this makes them be a person who is more detail oriented. The last advantage is having a close or good relationship with the decision maker is useful. Interviewee G mentioned that the relationship with the top levels is a crucial factor because this good relationship with the high level people made him work easier than other colleagues. He said that “When the decision power in my company comes from one man and if I have a close relationship with him it makes everything easier compared to my colleagues who are not close with the EVP”.

On the other hand, there is information about **the disadvantages** of high hierarchy organization. The author could divide the disadvantages into four main points which are demotivation, long process, centralized decision power, and complicated communication. These negative effects will be explained in the following paragraphs.

For **the demotivation factor**, it was affected from being discouraged to participate in projects and kept being refused their new ideas and needing to follow the top levels' decision. For example, the interviewees B said that "I used to work with one boss who assigned work without encouraging the team to input ideas which I need to follow. It demotivated and decreased my job satisfaction a lot. It caused a small conflict to me and I almost resigned". Interviewee H said that "my current position is not easy but not challenged as well, it does not make me feel like I want to find new knowledge for my improvement". In addition, interviewee G also similarly mentioned with the interviewee I that when projects were rejected more often, it demotivated them to create new ideas. Just working day by day. The interviewee I said that "When I have to present my ideas to people above level, they always question and reject my ideas without telling the reason even if it was something that we had agreed on the direction already but in the next meeting, they just disagree. It made me doubt whether they truly trust me or not like every time they said. Moreover, it discourages my decision making".

Four of the employees who work in high hierarchy organizations point to a similar topic is **longer work process**. Due to the specified clear line of command how many people do they need to report strictly therefore, there is no flexibility or shortcut. This could affect the decrease in job satisfaction because employees will perceive that the long process is wasting time and unnecessary in some cases compared to the need for immediate action and project impact. As the interviewee B said "I was not satisfied with the long process that needed to be reviewed and approved by many people which was a waste of time which obstructed the next step that needed immediate actions". And she also said that "There were no shortcuts in my company. If a project was rejected, no matter what, I need to send it again from the first step and if anyone in top level takes leave, my project will be paused waiting for one person to approve and my project will take a long lead time". Interviewee D said that "my company has an internal memorandum that needs to be approved by many people then a project could be processed as the next step". Moreover, Interview F also agrees that the hierarchy makes the process take too much time for approval or feedback, especially when top levels were not available to approve. The interviewee F also supports this perception by his own experience that he said when he will come back to office just for asking his



signage for the project approval”. In addition, the interviewee H said sometimes this long process is unnecessary because the impact of some project was very short compared to a very long process of feedback.

**Centralized decision power** in a high hierarchy organization is another disadvantage. Actually, this is the big point that could link to many negative effects in the employees’ perception which are demotivation and reducing self-confidence. There are 4 of the participants who have faced quite similar experiences and they perceived it in the same way. The interview F,G, H, and I also mentioned one similar difficulty of deprivation of authority from working under one-man control companies which demotivate them and reduce self-confidence. Due to the information from all four employees, they said that their ideas have always been rejected by the decision maker because they have different perceptions and beliefs and they seem hard to trust their employees' decisions. And three of them said this situation made them question why these companies need them if they do not provide any spaces for my participation. Interviewee F said that “Sometimes I feel like I'm being too controlled”. And interviewee I and H also point out another negative effect of one man control that sometimes when the decision comes from the top only, the personal emotions or the strong beliefs of the decision maker could affect the project direction.

Even though there is only one interviewee mentioned about **the complicated communication**, for the author it is an interesting point that needs to be made aware because it could cause difficulty especially when the messages were transmitted by speech. Interviewee H said that “In my current company if I want to consult with anyone in high levels, I need to pass this to my direct manager only. This makes everything delayed and more complicated because I cannot know the final message I have got how much it has been distorted”.

### 4.3 What are the perceived advantages of working in ‘low hierarchy organizations’, what are the disadvantages?

In this research study, the author has interviewed 4 participants who are employees in the low hierarchy organizations, interviewee A, C, E, and J. They shared their own experiences that could reflect the advantages and disadvantages points under the hierarchy. In terms of the advantages of working in the low hierarchy organizations, it could be separated into three main points which affect their motivation.

Regarding **the flexibility and more approachable**, it helps the working process take time shorter for some projects that need immediate or just in time action and making the work hour more make sense with the project importance. Interviewee A said that “Some small projects that need a huge amount of budget, my boss will let me split the quotation into two so he could approve these budgets with his existing authority. If I do not split the quotation into two and use the original quotation with the bigger budget, otherwise I need to ask the approval from someone above my boss level and it will take a longer process”. He also added that “Some projects that the president had already approved the plan, when the project was closed to launch and timeline was urgent, the president just assigned my boss who was easier to be approached, to be the decision maker, no need to send him for approval”. Interviewee C said that “In my company, it is easy to approach the leader and subordinates and vice versa”. Furthermore, she said that her CEO always visits every branch and finalizes the plan by himself so, he will meet every menegers and operation teams in every branch because having hierarchy in my company is mean people in the top level, he need to know everything and it means he need to inspect front stores by himself. Interviewee C also mentioned about the flexibility in her company in case of the urgent cases that “Actually there are manuals for every practice but in an urgent case, the front store manager or high level employee could decide solution and action promptly after that just report the above level. However, if the case is not that urgent, they just call to inform the solution to the above level, not ask for a solution because everyone is trained to solve problems on their own”. Interviewee E said that “We want

to break a silo, sometimes I need only inform my top levels, no need to ask for any approval. If the top levels have some comment, I will listen but if I consider it could not change then I will stay with the same way". Interviewee E told me that it is normal that not every campaign I will get full authority. But at the beginning of the project, my leader will clarify the authority if he considers I can handle this project or the timeline is close, he will let me lead the project. On the other hand, if it is a big project, I might ask for his feedback before launching". Interviewee J said that "My department also uses a top-down management style, same as the other organization, but we also apply a bottom-up management style as well. This means that not only the manager gives feedback to the subordinates, but the subordinates also have a chance to speak their mind out as well".

The organization should provide a high **level of authority of participation and decision making** according to the positions in which the clear level tasks and responsibility. Interviewee A said that "If one project equals 100 percent participation, my company provides space for employee thinking beyond 120 percent. My company does not limit employees' ideas. Even my president is also open minded to share and discuss with." The interviewee A also said that "When my company keeps assigning challenging projects to me, it automatically affects my motivation to keep improving myself without any forces". He also said that there is no day that he goes to work and does not feel like working. Interviewee C said that "My company provides quite full authority to action and make decisions if it follows the company's culture and in the job grade responsibilities" and she also added that "As a employee who has worked as a subordinate and a leader, I did not feel the different of the freedom to share my opinions but the important is we need to have evidences and supporting reasons". The interviewee C also added that "This gives employees lessons and learnt opportunities even if at the end, the result fails but we will let it be our learning point that we can learn from this mistake together". Interviewee E also mentioned about the benefits of getting high authority of participation and decision making from her organization. "First, getting high authority from this company can improve my strategic decision making and I try to make decisions on behalf of my organization. It makes me grow up If one day I become in a position of greater responsibilities. Secondly, it makes me a more clear decision maker."

For the interviewee J, who experiences a lot of autonomy and his superior is willing to listen to his idea, said that “Since I don’t like being watched all the time. I need a certain level of autonomy to get the job done as well as the ability to make decisions”. And he also added that “My company Almost always lets employees be involved in a project. Ideas need to be generated from many people so we have more ideas, and if the idea is good enough and feasible then it will be accepted”. In order to increase motivation in the company of interviewee J, the company always assigns their employees to new projects or tasks which he said that “This working style keeps pushing myself forward. There is no one to train me specifically about tasks. Thus, in order to keep up with the expectation, I need to keep improving myself somehow. There is always a new challenge for me to overcome and prove myself”.

After the companies accept the employee to be a part of their organizations and trust in people they recruited, it could increase the employees’ **self-confidence, self-value and motivation**. Moreover, the company should recognise and value employees' devotion because these actions could increase the employees' self- confidence and willingness to dedicate and improve more for the organization. Referring to the interviewee A said that “When my company always lets me participate, it makes me feel my own value and want to find new ideas for my organization and I want to improve myself everyday”. He also said that “In every sales conference, my marketing director always lets the marketing team speak on stage themselves because he also told the team that we know about the campaign and insight best, he never takes the credit for himself. This makes my team and I appreciated and proud of my successful project”. Interviewee C said “my company wants to increase both company and employee growth therefore everyone has rights to drive the company. This makes me feel like I am valuable for this company”. She also expressed that working in this company made her realize that a small person could create a big impact for an organization. Interviewee and E said that “How my organization works could increase my self-fulfillment and also motivate me because my organization always needs new and fresh ideas” and “My organization is an organization that contributes to the society and this point makes me appreciate and feel like my self value is increasing”.

**The disadvantages** from working in low hierarchy organizations is caused from getting the high decision power leading them to face **firstly, the pressure of carrying the decision power**. This pressure leads to the hesitation and insecurity of making decisions because they are concerned about making any mistakes or issues to the organization. According to the information from the interviewees as follows. Interviewee A said that “My company has a low hierarchy, sometimes when I send my work to ask for feedback or suggestions and they said it is up to you and it makes it difficult for me to make a decision”. Interviewee C mentioned about the pressure from getting high authority from her organization. When her company provides her quite full authority in a project and if one day she could not handle a project not good enough or fail, it could decrease or destroy her confidence. And interviewee J also said that “Even though I can make decisions easier and faster, it can also affect the validity of the results”. Secondly, gaining decision-making power can be a double-edged sword, **the obscure scope of decision responsibility** as the interviewee E told about her experiences that when her company allows her quite high authorities of decision making and taking actions to manage her projects but sometimes she doubts about the responsibilities she takes that it should be someone in a higher level take action or not?

#### **4.4 How does working in this organization have an impact on their motivation?**

After the author analyzes the collected information from ten interviewees about the perception of motivation, the results could represent the different effect between the employees who work in the low and hierarchy.

For the employees who work in the low hierarchy, the information that the author has analyzed shows that they have higher motivation compared with employees in high hierarchy organizations. Firstly, the company policy is to improve their employees' motivation by constantly assigning challenging projects, giving spaces for sharing ideas, and decision making authority. These actions could increase the ownership with their project and it could lead to the internal positive effect in employees. After they get opportunities and trust from their companies, they are

motivated to prove themselves by showing their better performance, then they will keep improving their abilities and skills, not improve only to commit their KPIs. However, the high authority of decision making could lead to some negative effects on the employees as well. The high decision making authority could create the pressure that makes it unsecure for employees. Moreover, having too much decision power authority especially, in an important or big project, might cause doubt about the scope of responsibility, feel overwhelmed and start to question if this big responsibility is suited to their position. In terms of the employees who work in high hierarchy organizations, they have quite low motivation from the low challenged assignment and less opportunities to show their ideas and performances. These two are some effects components from the centralized decision power that every employee needs to follow the command from the highest level. In addition, the complicated and difficult working processes also impact the employees' motivation as well. However, there are few of them who still have motivation to improve themselves, firstly, due to their own personality that likes to show the best performance but working in the high hierarchy can gradually demotivate this personality. They could become employees who will work in order by continuously being rejected ideas or being deprived of the authority they should have.

#### 4.5 What differentiates the people who are happy in high hierarchy organization, and the people who are not happy in high hierarchy

**Table 4.1 Perception segmentation**

Code	Position	Nationality	Experience	Gender	Level of hierarchy
A	Assistant Marketing Manager	Thai	4 Years	Male	Low
B	Social Manager	Thai	4 Years	Female	High
C	Merchandise Planning	Thai	5 Years	Female	Low
D	Engineering Support and BOI	Thai	2 Years	Female	High
E	Communications Analyst	Thai	3 Years	Female	Low
F	Business Development	Thai	6 Months	Male	High
G	Senior Export Sale	Thai	3 Years	Male	High
H	Senior Seller Education	Thai	5 Years	Female	High
I	Marketing Director	Thai	3 Months	Male	High
J	International Market Place Division Manager	Thai	6 Years	Male	Low

The perception segmentation table as above, it divided participants into three different groups by three colors to differentiate the level of happy to unhappy with their organizations. Green represents most happiness, yellow represents moderate happiness, and orange represents low happiness. In accordance with the in-depth interview with all 10 interviewees, it could be noticed that there are some detailed factors that lead to the different results with the same organizational structure which could be divided into three main factors: the employees' personal goal, the management style under the hierarchical structure, and the clearly decision that fluctuates with the job levels.

#### 4.5.1 The personal and organization goal

Every employee has different individual goals. If their personal goals match with the organization goals or the organization goals could support the employee's goal, it could reflect in the employees' motivation and self improvement. To illustrate, some interviewees who are not challenged and motivated by their company but their goal match with the organization. Interviewee D said that "In this position, there are not many challenges to motivate myself but sincerely, I think my company is so cool! Even though it is a big and successful company, it still keeps developing and expanding the businesses so this point made me satisfied with my current career". The interviewee H said that "Personally, I do not like the hierarchy because it makes the working process taking time longer and working in this organizational structure demotivate me but currently, my personal goal is having work life balance so, I do not mind to work in this company"

Most employees in this study have personal goals for their work life that are about self-improvement, being accepted, and successful therefore if the hierarchical structure makes them struggle and keep them far from their goals, it could lead to the decrease of job satisfaction.

#### 4.5.2 Management style under hierarchical structure

Working in a similar organizational structure but different in management style also affects the employees' perceptions toward the organization. If the organization **prioritizes employees' personal value**, it is capable of providing positive effects such as increasing motivation, job satisfaction and employees' commitment. According to the interviews, there is higher motivation among the employees who work in the low hierarchy organizations. This type of organization encourages subordinates to participate by sharing ideas, making some decisions by themselves, and taking charge. At the same time, the organizations should set an attitude, culture and environment that people in high levels should be open minded to listen to their subordinates and know how to give effective feedback and show appreciation in order to enhance their subordinates' personal values. Contrasting with the employees' motivation in the high hierarchy organization, the management of high level people is rather not open for adaptation and change from the subordinates or new generations



opinions and adhere to what the organization has always done which relates to the decision maker's vision.

#### **4.5.3 Clear decision autonomy according to position levels**

The hierarchical structure commonly brought employees face with the limitation on their decision making and the participants showed that they do not mind with this limitation if the organization had clearly clarified the decision making policy at each level and provided them full authority that they deserve in their position. If the organization provides decision making authority equal or more than employees' expectation, it could avoid decreasing employees' motivation and job satisfaction. On the other hand, when the employees have been deprived of authority that should belong to their job level, it could decrease their confidence in making decisions and question their values in the organization.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

By collecting primary data from in-depth interviews with 10 respondents, the author could identify that the Thai employees accept and understand the reason why hierarchical structure needs to exist in the organization. Participants in this research study relate the hierarchical structure with the clear task position and decision making authority. But employees do not perceive that this structure makes them secure in career path which is against one of the definitions in the literature review chapter that said the hierarchy organizational culture helps ensure employees' needs for security and could easily predict their career path (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). Only the hierarchical structure itself cannot be implied in exact negative or positive terms, the effects of the hierarchical organization structure to employees need to be analyzed from the other factors which are the personal and organization goal, management style under hierarchical structure, and clear decision autonomy according to position levels to differentiate the impact on employees.

After the interview, the author separated the interviewees into two groups which are employees who work in high hierarchy organizations and employees who work in low hierarchy organizations. These two groups experience both benefits and disadvantages differently. According to the group from a high hierarchy organization, they found a clear reporting line, developing detail orientation skill, and good relationship with the decision maker are the advantages when working in their organizations. Meanwhile demotivation, longer work process, centralized decision power, and the complicated communication are disadvantages of high hierarchy organizations. Employees in low hierarchy perceive benefits which are the flexibility, approachable, high level of authority of participation and decision making, self-confidence, self-value and motivation. On the other hand, they realize that the pressure of carrying the decision power and the obscure scope of decision

responsibilities are disadvantageous factors of working in a low hierarchy.

Due to the advantages and disadvantages from the paragraph above, they affect the employees' motivation and result that employees who work in the low hierarchy organization tend to have more motivation than the employees who experience the high hierarchy in their organization. This result is in line with the definition in the literature review that is mentioned as a main component of work motivation which is a basic element of employees' behavior in an organization because people who are motivated seem to have more job satisfaction in their career compared to another group of interviewees. However, there are few participants who said that they are low motivated but they are still satisfied in their current career because their personal's goal match with their organization's goals and the organizations could serve their personal conditions. From the motivation that leads to job satisfaction, these two effects also link the level of organization commitment as well; normative commitment, continuance commitment, and affective commitment. To illustrate, the author will provide the information which divides the employees into three groups according to their perception toward their hierarchical organization.

According to the two interviewees, F and I, who have **low motivation** due to the struggle from the heavy hierarchy in their organization where only one man controls and finalizes most decisions in the company. The results obviously show that the hierarchy decreases their willingness of improvement and effectiveness which **reduces their job satisfaction**. These two interviewees seem to have significantly **low commitment or normative commitment** with the organization. If there is any new better opportunity, they will not hesitate to take that chance.

Compared with the interviewees B, G, and H in the yellow group who also **face the difficulty and are slightly motivated** from the hierarchy in organizations in terms of complexity and long working process but they are **still satisfied** with. Firstly, there are some spaces for employees to show their performance from sharing ideas and taking responsibility in projects. In addition, interviewees in this group are having personal conditions that their organization could meet which means that staying with the current company will give them more conveniences. Therefore, this group could be analyzed as **the continuance commitment** with their organization.

Lastly, the interviewees in the green group, interviewee A, C, D, E, and J, are employees who are **satisfied** with their organization. They do not perceive that the hierarchical structure in their organization obstructs them from their personal goals and still **get motivated** for improvement because of the provided free spaces from the organization to share, discuss, and take responsibility which create pride, self-esteem, and social acceptance. According to the information from the interviews, these employees have rather similar actions by acting as a part of the organization and tend to act beyond what their organization expected. And this kind action could be defined as the **affective commitment**.

## **5.2 Recommendation**

Based on the information that was summarized in the conclusion part, it illustrates the different effect of hierarchical structure on the Thai employees. The information in the conclusion part could be useful lessons and learned from the advantages and disadvantages. The recommendations in this research study aim to offer some useful suggestions for organizations to use the hierarchy power more effectively. These benefits can ultimately lead to improved business performance and success such as improving retention rate, increase organization productivity, and better performance. The result will return to the organizations that receive and achieve the goals.

### **5.2.1 Clearly define roles and responsibilities**

It is crucial to define each position's roles, responsibilities and decision authority within the organization. This will help to ensure that everyone knows what they are accountable for and it will help to minimize confusion and conflicts.

### **5.2.2 Clear lines of communication**

Establishing clear lines of communication is crucial for effective hierarchy. Employees should know who to report to and how to escalate issues when necessary. This will help to prevent misunderstandings and ensure that tasks are completed efficiently

### **5.2.3 Participation and decision authority**

Creating an environment where employees feel comfortable expressing their ideas and concerns in projects which can lead to more efficient, productive decision-making, motivation of self improvement, and self-confidence. Encourage open communication by providing opportunities for feedback and suggestions, and actively listening to what your employees have to say. This could affect the higher commitment in employees. In addition, providing employees participation and making decisions could empower employees' ownership of their work and organization need to support by offering resources they need to succeed.

### **5.2.4 Recognize employees' contributions**

A positive work environment can improve productivity, employee retention, and also job satisfaction. A positive work culture could be encouraged by recognizing and rewarding employees for their hard work. Appreciating every employee's devotion could level up positive emotions that result from the high contribution and achieve common goals.

### **5.2.5 Shorten work process**

According to the information from interviewees, the long work process from the centralized decision power should be resolved to level up the efficiency of the work process.

#### **5.2.5.1 Delegation**

The top levels should delegate decision-making authority to lower-level managers or teams. Therefore, decisions can be made more quickly and at the point of need especially, handling an on-the-fly event or a project with a short timeline.

#### **5.2.5.2 Technology**

Adapting and applying technologies into the organization to support and shorten the work process more efficiently. Such as a program that makes employees be able to contact teams from only one click and data analytics tools collecting insight data in order to facilitate the decision making.

### **5.2.6 Training-development programs and guideline**

Aim to reduce the overwhelming and pressure feeling from gaining too much authority and responsibilities. Companies can provide training and development programs to help employees develop and learn the necessary skills and knowledge to handle the authority and responsibilities they are given. The training programs could include the decision making techniques, problem solving techniques, and critical thinking to make the employees get ready for the delegation. Beyond the training and development programs, companies could offer the guideline for their position responsibilities and authorities. This can include setting more clearer boundaries and providing feedback to help employees improve when they face difficulty.

## **5.3 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY**

While this research study could achieve the author's purpose about learning the impact of the hierarchical structure on the Thai employees' motivation. However, there are some limitations to limit this study effectiveness which are described in the following paragraph.

### **5.3.1 Small sample size**

This study was conducted with only ten Thai employees which may not be able to be representative of the entire Thai employees who are working in the hierarchical structure organization. This limitation might affect the founding effectiveness.

### **5.3.2 Interviewee schedule**

The author intended to conduct the in-depth interview face-to-face with the participants due to the time constraint some participants conveniently interviewed by the video calls according to their personal schedule. Therefore, apart from their own experience information, during the interview the author could observe non-verbal language from the facial expression.

### **5.3.3 Internet connection interruption**

For those interviewees who prefer making the video call interview, some of them face the internet interruption during the interview which might cause the poor interview flow such as the voice delayed, hearing ability, and connection lost.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

In order to improve the effectiveness of research finding and improve some areas in the future research studies, the author would like to identify the recommendations as below.

### **5.4.1 Qualitative and quantitative methodologies are required**

Applying both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in the research because the author would like to find the degree or level of the employees' perception to indicate and support the finding from the qualitative methodology.

### **5.4.2 The bigger sample size**

The bigger sample size allows the author to study different and varied information from the employees' experiences which may provide the perspective of a wider and more valuable insight and comprehensive perspective of this topic than only ten participants' experiences

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