TEAMWORK PERCEPTION ON WESTERN AND THAI MEMBERS WITHIN A THAI CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

Thai workforce should always be prepared for the inflow of western workforce that is gradually increasing every year. Therefore, Thai employees should understand and learn to perform in team with western workforce. With that being said, the objective of this paper is to recommend the core principals in forming a multi-national team consisting of westerners and Thais.

The framework that is used to put a scope on this research is Hofstede's cultural dimension and Tuckman's four-stages of group development. In-depth interview session with multi-national participants is the data collection method. The participants are a mixture of subordinates and middle-to-top level managers in multi-national corporates based in Thailand. The Thai teamwork's and western teamwork's cultural dimensions are then compared throughout each of the group development stages.

The result of the findings reveals that there are a few similarities in cultural dimension of Thai and western at each stage of the group development. And it is within these similarities that the Thai and western team members should set their ground rules accordingly in order to prosper as a group.

After the framework is implemented, conclusion can be drawn. During the forming stage, the group should clarify the role of each member. In the storming stage, the group should fully let each member express their own style of working. Within the norming stage, the leader should set a clear mutual goal for the group. And last, during performing stage, all members should promote friendliness among the group. Therefore, these principals are the recommendation of this paper.
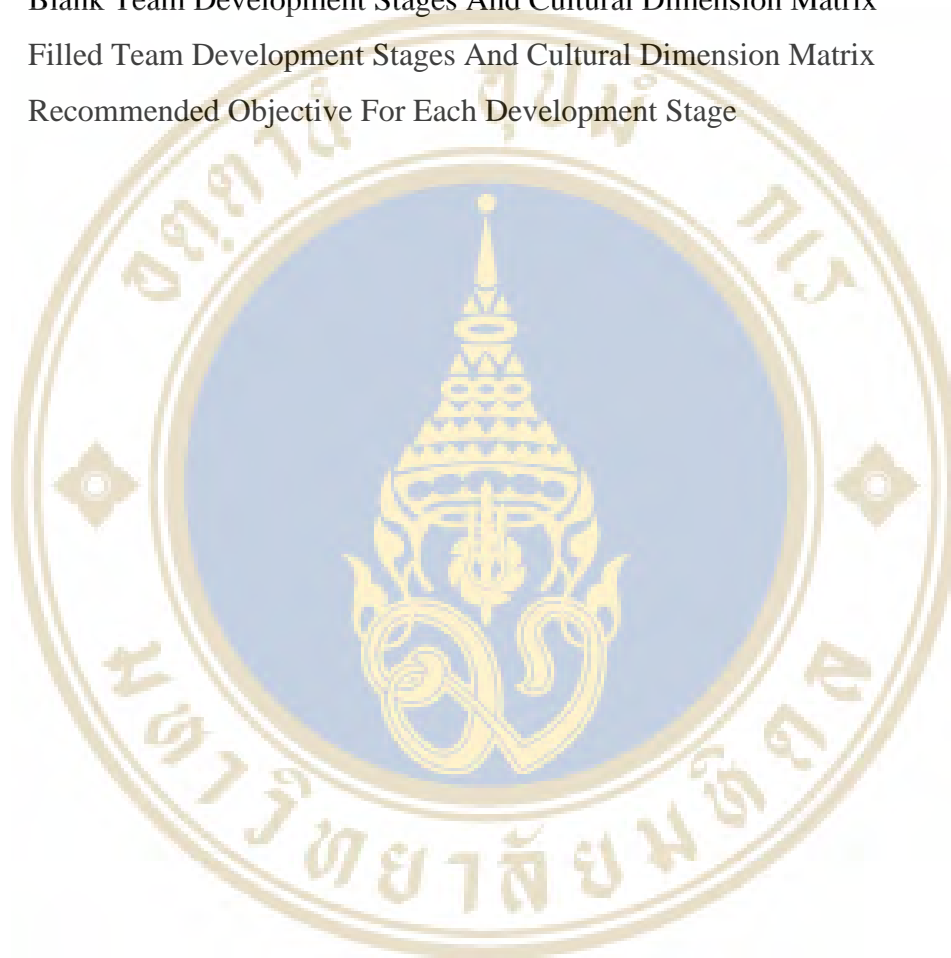
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28 pages

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An Overview

As Thailand is gradually becoming an important business hub of the world, the work-force need to adapt to fit in with different cultures. Employees with different nationalities will come in to work together, to form a team, to perform together. Different firms have different reasons for taking in multi-national employees to come to work together. For example, some local company may find it risky to only rely on local business. They may see the need to expand abroad. And in order to do that, they will need a western executive with a successful profile to represent the firm oversea. He or she can possibly lure in foreign business, in order to grow the company's business. On the other hand, the local company may also benefit from the management skill set that the westerner executive brings into the company. However, it can be a question of what are the steps that a new forming team should take in order to begin performing well as a group. And so, this paper aims to answer that question.

Soon, Thailand is very likely to become a multi-national work hub, if it weren't already is. Therefore, the local workforce will need to blend in with foreign workforce more, including westerners. With this said, there may be conflict that must be managed since people from different backgrounds have different values. The entire workforce will need to work together in harmony to prosper in their careers, to stay atop of the corporate hierarchy, and importantly, to succeed as a team. Without understanding of each difference in value, team collaboration may not be effective. This paper will begin with a discussion on the theory of Hofstede's cultural dimension and Tuckman's four stages of group development as the framework. Then it will analyze collected data that the researcher has gathered. The paper will then assess the difference in team work style using earlier mentioned framework. Finally, it will

address the limitation of this study, as well as making a practical recommendation of an effective way for Thai and Western workforce to work together as a team.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

It is suggested that in order to improve intercultural communication skills one must avoid assuming that others understand what he or she implies in a communication. Also one must reflect on his communication behavior to understand his own cultural values, and to understand other values (Chaidaroon, 2005). These values account for the differences in each country's workforce, which can be assessed using Hofstede's cultural dimension.

2.1 Hofstede's Cultural Dimension

Power distance is the extent to which the power is spread throughout an organization (Dierk, 2007). A country that scores high on the power distance spectrum is likely to have more vivid inequalities among members than the country that scores lower. According to Hofstede, Thailand is a high power distance country with the score of 64. While the English's is 35 and the American's is 40. This gives a hint of why Thai people often automatically assume the role of follower rather than a superior expatriate role when working with a western person. This may spoil the western colleague to exercise their power in an inappropriate way within a Thai context (Chaidaroon, 2005). This is important for workforce to acknowledge this difference in cultural dimension because power distance has an impact on the formal hierarchy, the degree of centralization, and the quantity of participation during decision making process within an organization (Newman & Nollen, 1996). Furthermore, the power distance is critical because it can affect the performance of an employee, a manager, or a team. Newman & Nollen (1996) indicated that a manager in a high power distance country who seeks participation from others will often be seen as weak and incompetent, which is, contrasting to the term "teamwork". Also, initiatives

undertaken by the management in such country may not be effective since employees from different levels of organization in a high power distance country are not comfortable in a face-to-face group communication (Suthisai, 2001). This can lead to a further study on another cultural dimension which is "uncertainty avoidance".

Knutson (1998), mentioned that Thais believe that their life consist of uncertainty and most things happening are beyond people's control. This is a Thai value. Therefore, it may mean that Thai people think that when their team's work is not going right, it is not under their control. To this, an American may see this as a lack of responsibility. Americans believe that their action can influence the result, and they can control their own destiny (Punturaumpom, 2001). So there is a difference in value between a Thai context and a US context. High uncertainty avoidance in an organization makes the firm more hierarchical and rule-oriented (Suthisai, 2001). This is very important since a multi-national company needs to conflict-manage between various employees from different backgrounds, both vertically and horizontally within an organization. The effect of uncertainty avoidance dimension creates a mindset for a corresponding team-worker such as a manager to see uncertainty as a crisis. Thus, he or she responds to it in an extreme way, and attempts to find a resolution that creates a structure to lessen the uncertainty (Schneider & DeMeyer, 1991). Consequently, this may affect or shape the teamwork element of his or her.

Another cultural dimension is collectivism and individualism. Dierck (2007), stated that the collectivism's core element is a long-term commitment that individuals give to their families or to their extended relationships. To further explain, Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier (2002), explained that it is more accurate to say that individualism and collectivism are simply different worldviews, and not the exact opposite. They also found evidence that high individualism is associated with direct communication while high collectivism is associated with mitigated speech or face-saving speech. Collectivism versus individualism is a critical dimension because this shapes the organizational politics within a Thai context. And apparently, it is important to address the politics issue here because, politics, can generate positive outcomes such as career advancement, recognition and status, enhanced power and position, accomplishment of personal goals, getting the job done, feeling of achievement, and etc. (Chivakidakam, 2000). And given that Thailand is highly a

collectivist country (Yuet-Ha, 1996), Thai employees may profoundly play a part in creating an organizational politics within any company based in Thailand. This politics shaping has an impact on the overall team performance, and further study of this research should reveal corresponding result.

Last but not least, femininity and masculinity dimension shapes a teamwork organization culture. To assess the teamwork elements within a Thai context, this Hofstede's cultural dimension model must be applied in order to better understand the Thai values in teamwork. Punturaumpom (2001), concluded that since Thailand focuses on social harmony and interpersonal relationships so Thailand is likely to fall on the feminine side. Moreover, Thai society is not about a world to oneself and one's own life, but rather a world that consciously involves social relationship, helping each other, exhibit caring, and being considerate of others while maintaining enough room for individuality (Komin, 1990). In contrast, for example in a Western country like America, this femininity and masculinity dimension is totally different than Thailand's. Americans value honesty, ambitiousness, hard-working, and responsibility (Punturaumpom, 2001). And according to Hofstede's study, Americans are ranked on masculinity as above average. To sum this up, Randal (1993) backs this view as he stated that masculine society values promote a careful and calculated commitment, whereas a feminine society's value leads to affective commitment.

2.2 Tuckman's Four Stages of Group Development

Next, Bruce Tuckman's four stages of group development should be applied as it is one of the most widely accepted models. Riebe, Roepen, Santarelli, Marchioro (2010) stated that each stage is defined by an attempt to differentiate between group structure (the interpersonal relationships and the behavior of each group members) and group orientation to the task (the specific content of the task). His sequential theory of group development will be used as the theoretical framework to accurately assess the teamwork values within a Thai context. Tuckman (1965), came up with a model of four stages, (1) forming, that consists of orientation, testing, and dependence; (2) storming, which is characterized by conflict and resistance to

group influence; (3) norming, which demonstrates cohesiveness and freedom to express; (4) performing, which the group becomes focused on tasks and achievement.

Stage one, "forming", Tuckman (1965), indicated that forming involves a duration in which the group is dependent upon the leader, and is testing the limits and the nature of group task. It is within this period that group members try to understand their place within the group while grasping the ground rules. Moreover, Tuckman (2008) later explained that individual behavior is shaped by the need to be accepted by other group members. At this stage, it is the time to get to know one another and to develop perception toward each other. It can be seen as the polite stage where avoiding conflict is always most accepted.

Stage two, "storming", Tuckman (1965) defined this period as the intergroup conflict. At this point, conflicts between members arise as the group struggles to come up with the best and suitable methods for managing conflict. In other words, as Noel (2006) put it, at this development stage, group conflict emerges as group members argue about their goals and tasks. It is important to address this second stage because the resolution from this stage can define who plays which role within a group. The aftermath of the storming stage leads to next stage.

Stage three, "norming", Tuckman (1965) stated that at this point the group is trying to establish ground rules, norms, roles, tasks, and appropriate behavior. In his review, Tuckman found that this stage is when the evidence of group cohesion is most articulated, even though cohesion in the rest of the other stages is evident as well.

Stage four, "performing", Tuckman (1965) explained that this is when the group understands the goals and tasks as a group and become highly productive, thus start producing results. At this developmental stage, members of the group become more resourceful and might have successfully established a high level of communication in order to move toward group's goals. Scalan and Boyd (1989) described that it is not the team that has the best athletes that wins, but rather the athletes that play together as a team best. It is at this Tuckman's last stage that this logic becomes true. It is important to assess this stage as it is when winning matters.

Murray and Moses (2005) said that teams are the key ingredients of organizational learning since they provide synergies through the collective understanding of a group. Therefore, it is critical to understand Bruce Tuckman's

model in order to precisely assess the values integrated into any group's teamwork. After understanding the two frameworks, Hofstede's cultural dimension and values, and Tuckman's four stages of group development model, one can precisely put into place the values toward teamwork of different cultures within a Thai context. This study is to come up with a valid and practical recommendation for anyone who will have to work in a multi-culture work space.

2.3 Framework

The frameworks that will be used to put a scope on this research consist of two theories which are Hofstede's cultural dimension and Tuckman's four stages of group development. They will be adopted as the framework to collect and analyze the data. The following table shows the framework in which the Thai and Western teamwork styles will be compared and discussed upon:

Table 2.1: Blank Team Development Stages and Cultural Dimension Matrix

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Rationale

This study aims to discuss the differences between two working cultures, Thai and Western, when working as a team. And then finally recommend the core principal for setting up a successful multi-national team that performs well together as a group. Therefore, the researcher must necessarily identify attitude, logic, perception, and interpretation of "team" from a group of participants. Usually, these factors may not be able to get extracted within a short given time. So, in order to gain knowledge and insight on this topic, a better qualitative methodology should be used instead. Moreover, a qualitative study tool like "probing question" should be used to apply since "a rapport between the researcher and participants could be established and candid information could be elicited through probing during the in-depth interviews in qualitative research (Chaidaroon, 2005). However, participant may not be willing to disclose detailed information if the trust between researcher and participant is not established. As Hendrix (2002) stated, qualitative researchers must "secure participants' trust so that they will relax during the interview and provide honest and forthright answers". Therefore, by setting up a friendly and relaxed interview session is one of the methods for the researcher to use in this case.

So, in order to effectively answer the research question, it is necessary for the researcher to conduct a qualitative study which includes in-depth interview and participated observation. These study techniques are adopted as the data collection approaches because the perception of a culture is best experienced and collected in-person. In-depth interview will allow researcher to ask a variety of open-ended questions. This type of questioning technique can open up fields of information in which the researcher can pick one to study on further with the participant. Moreover, this way, the researcher is able to response to the answer immediately in order to

extract critical information from the participant right away, in case it is not said. Any unclear answer can be assessed and clarified on the spot by using probing question technique. This can help gain participant's insight at a deeper level, which will assist the researcher during the data analysis phase. Therefore, a personal in-depth interview session with participants should be carried out.

Moreover, in this study, the wider age groups vary the better the study becomes. This is because younger professional may perceive teamwork differently from older and more experienced professionals. Younger professionals are usually more energetic compared to their older peers. However, they may lack of experience and still does not have the turbulent-resistance. When working in team, the younger professional may output more idea, but they may not be as concrete as the more experienced professionals. Younger professionals may lack direction. Therefore, the variation in how these two groups view teamwork may vary drastically. That is why, in this case, the wider the age group being interviewed the more insight the researcher will likely gain.

3.2 Sample of Population

Since this paper's study is based on a working-age group, the researcher must obtain data from relevant age groups. Those that are working full-time should be assessed using this framework. The target age may range between 22 – 60 years old, both male and female. The twenty-two year-old is the minimum limit since it is the standard age that the student first graduates from college and university. 60 is the upper limit since it is an official age when professional retires.

The professional candidates selected to be interviewed consist of 3 males and 2 females. These professionals are willing to participate in this research. The first candidate is the 50 year-old American CEO of a company who has working in Thailand for over 20 years. He is chosen because he has vast direct experience in working with both American and Thai. Through an interview with him, the researcher will likely be able to gain lots of useful insights, knowledge, and information.

Another candidate is an English IT manager who oversees IT operation of a company for over 10 years. He is currently working with Western people and has two Thai direct subordinates. He has not been living in Thailand for long, only 5 years. Therefore, it will be critical to study his perspective on a Thai working culture compared to his homeland's working culture.

The third candidate is a middle-aged British female human resource director, who has just come to Thailand and been living in Bangkok for less than a year. She will be an important source of knowledge since she has never worked in Thailand before. She also had very little experience in working with Thai people as a team. So her view on working with Thai people will likely be very authentic and without bias.

The last sample of a candidate is a Thai human resource officer who is working under the human resource director team, but she does not report directly to the director. She only reports to the human resource manager who is not interviewed here. She's in her late twenties. The female Thai professional has very little experience working with an international team, so she has to adapt to the Western working style. This candidate's interview results will also be interesting as her point of view on teamwork will likely be different from the western professionals. It is important to compare her values and perspectives against others because they each have totally different background.

3.3 Tools

A list of open-ended questions is developed because it is critical that the researcher obtains as much information as possible, and the information must at the same time be accurate and honest answer from the participant. So, the interview questions below will be deployed as lead questions once the researcher can successfully secure trust from participants. Once the lead questions are asked, after that, the researcher will ask into detail of each answer in order to extract information related to the framework that has been set. Samples of these open-ended questions are provided below:

- What is the most common problem that usually occurs among a team that consists of only Thai members, or only Westerners, or a mixture of both?
- Have you noticed the difference in communication style between groups?
- Please tell me a time when you find it difficult to work in team with others? Who are the team members and why is it tough to work with them?
- Please tell me a time when you take lead in forming a team? What strategy do you use to form a new team?
- How do you usually adapt to a new team?
- How long did it take your new team to start performing with one another?
- Do you discuss a lot working in team? How so?
- When working as a group, which style of teamwork are you most comfortable with?
- Please describe your "dream-team".

During the interview, reflective note-taking will be used to record observed data. Also, a sound recording will be applied when the participants allow. The reflective note-taking will be the main reference. However, in case some missing information is left unnoticed, the sound recording will be used as a backup reference. It is possible that note-taking will not cover all necessary pieces of information, so the recording is used for the purpose of in-depth investigation. Taken notes and data are the evidence of knowledge and insight gained from participants.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

4.1 Data Analysis

By interviewing these professionals, pieces of information have been collected through audio recording and reflective note-taking. The detail of their opinion and perspectives are shown in this chapter, and are put into the framework aforementioned in the chapter before. By asking open-ended questions, the researcher was able to choose to emphasize on certain issues that are related to the cultural dimensions and four-stages of group development. At the same time, it is necessary to avoid asking the participants directly on the subject of cultural dimension and four stages of group development as they might not be familiar with these theories. Therefore, the linkage between their answer and the framework must be created only by the researcher after the information is collected through interview session.

During forming of a team, one professional indicates that there is no difference in the approach to try to blend-in with other group members. She acts in a similar manner when getting together in a team consisting of both Westerners and Thais. However, for Thai members, she may need to be a little softening during the get-to-know period. Also, she cares about the face-saving dogma, which is contradictory by the fact that Thai people gossip a lot more than westerners. So she needs to refrain from expressing her true opinion quite a bit. As for the westerner team member, they tend to be more open, straightforward, and formal during the introduction period.

At a few points in time, consistently, many professionals mentioned about gossiping and chit-chat among Thai groups. They said that it happens a lot more in a group consisting of Thai people than in a group of western professionals. This also happens after meeting. Thai teamwork encourages face-saving, which is also true when they get together for a meeting. On the surface, no one would mention or

discuss, let alone argue, on the table. However, only at a later time, after the meeting, the members start discussing on the issue. Furthermore, they exchange their true opinion within their peers and may be a little more soften when speaking to their direct supervisors. Thai teamwork values the fact that everyone conforms to the facilitator in the meeting.

In contrast, western professionals, be it English, American, European tend to bring up any issue on the table right in the meeting. They discuss more straightforwardly and are more open for differing opinion from others. If something is not right then they are more willing to challenge it more openly. One participant said that they treat discussion as just "talking" rather than "arguing". This nature of westerners is obviously different than Thai professionals which tend to compromise for a face-saving gesture. It is a bit of individualism that encourages this behavior in the work place. Unlike collectivism that plays a big part in Thai working culture, which stimulates the face-saving behavior.

One Thai participant who has two years of experience working abroad in Dubai for a western firm explained that discussion among team members is quite normal and productive for western group members. During the period where issues and problems arise, the discussion and exchange of information are necessary to pull the team through. So, everyone plays a part in that solution. Unlike many Thai members who are willing to do anything that is told to them, however, they usually take minimal responsibility of the big-picture objectives. He further described the attitude of these Thai members that they would put the result of the team to the leader of the group. If they succeed as a group, the leader receives praise. However, if they fail, the official leader takes full responsibility. It is not every member who has that kind of attitude. However, this attitude is more obvious and common in a Thai working culture. The participant went on to give an example of one incident. This was when he was working in Dubai for a western firm as the junior IT support. His immediate boss was a western IT manager. He was assigned a task to present his idea on renovating his firm's IT infrastructure, and to present to the board of directors. So he prepared all the presentation material and took on the presentation himself. He mentioned that if he was in Thailand, the presenting task would have been done by his immediate boss given that it was such an important job. However, in Dubai, his

western boss told him to present to the board by himself and that he took full responsibility. The presentation was a success and the board of directors approved the renovation. His immediate boss did not feel intimidated by the success of his subordinate and was actually proud. He said that if this were a Thai company, his boss would have taken the praise for the work that was done by him.

Moreover, the same participant went on to share his point of view that Thai people play while they work. It is something which his western boss had to come to term with. He said that it was hard in the beginning for the boss because he took it that none of his Thai subordinates really worked. It was at a later time that he found out that having fun at work is one of Thai value at work. During this acceptance period, the boss relaxed more and began to accept the norm. He also noticed the fact that Thai group members tend to interact informally with each other a lot more than western group members. They were also joking around with one another constantly. He expressed his view for his boss. Collectively as group, the obvious hierarchy of a Thai corporate ladders usually allow rooms for friendly gesture, if the gap between is not too great. However, underneath this friendly interaction occurs a high-turnover rate at the firm that an English participant is working for.

One participant who is an English executive revealed that she has never seen such a high turnover rate of a firm before she came to Thailand. Usually in England, people do not switch job that more often. English employees tend to hold on to their jobs much longer than Thais. This is also because when hired, the employer expects high amount of work rate from their employees. The firm will expect them to always perform. In addition to that, the participant also expressed her view on loyalty created between the employer and employee. It appears that Thais are less loyal to their employer than English professional. The high turnover rate reflects the fact that employees do not feel the sense of connection to their employer. The participant believed that Thai workers come to work to finish their assigned task without considering being responsible for the bigger goal that company is targeting. They work without aligning themselves with bigger company's objectives, thus some employees simply complete their task on a daily basis so that they can get by each day. It means that Thai people may measure their success by the completion-of-daily-job rate rather how their firm performs as one. She indicated that can one of the

differences. Thais tend to be less caring about the firm's goal than westerners. So, the most important thing for Thais is to complete a job without triggering any problem or confrontation. That is a kind of attitude the English executive feels toward working culture in Thailand.

4.2 Data Discussion

The data gathered in this research has been collected from an international group of participants who work in 3 different companies. And it is an original set of information collected directly from the participants. In order to put a scope on this study, a framework has been created as shown in Table 1 in chapter II. After a summarization of all data, the result is input in Table 1 as follows:

Table 4.2: Filled Team Development Stages and Cultural Dimension Matrix

		Cultural Dimension			
		Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Collectivism / Individualism	Femininity / Masculinity
Team Development Stages	Forming	High	Low	Collectivist	Feminine
		High	High	Individualist	Masculine
	Storming	High	N/A	Collectivist	Masculine
		Low	N/A	Individualist	Masculine
	Norming	Low	High	Collectivist	Feminine
		High	High	Individualist	Masculine
	Performing	Low	Low	Collectivist	N/A
		Low	High	Collectivist	N/A

Thai	
Western	

Forming

The first stage of group development is the "forming" stage. At this stage the power distance appears to be high in both Thai and Western culture. However, although similar, but they are different in an aspect. Western working culture has hierarchy even though it is not view as significant as in Thai working culture. That is because as indicated by the participant that it is a form of knowing who is responsible for which job. And western professionals seem to understand the concept well more than Thai employees who simply act with respect to their superior. Western culture pays respect to the superior because the person is actually in-charge of the team, not

because he or she is simply "the boss". Therefore, the power distance is seen as high in both Thai and western working culture during the forming of a team.

Forming	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Collectivism / Individualism	Femininity / Masculinity
	High	Low	Collectivist	Feminine
	High	High	Individualist	Masculine

Figure 4.1: Cultural Dimension Matrix for Forming Stage

Also, during formation, Thai working culture seems to tolerate uncertainty during forming of the team more than western professionals, which usually require knowing exactly where their team is headed. One western participant indicated that it is best for the team leader to set vivid goals and objectives so that team members know their own roles within the team. This is different from Thai employees who pay less attention to the overall performance of the firm or the employer; therefore they sometimes get their tasks done just to get by. So, this value between Thai and Western is different from one another.

Next, the degree of collectivism and individualism is also different in Thai and western. Thailand is no-doubt a collectivist country as indicated by many studies, while western culture is more of an individualist country. So during forming of a team, as mentioned by a Thai participant, she will need to act especially more friendly to a Thai member than a westerner which requires less harmony during the introduction phase. This is also confirmed by her about femininity which Thai working society seems more familiar with than extreme masculinity.

One of the Thai female participants explained that she must act in a very soft manner with her new team members or her new boss. It is not hard to win an acceptance from a Thai group, as long as she doesn't insert too much influence into the team or display strong personality toward the team. It is understandable when referring to one of the common traits of Thai culture which involve rumor and gossiping. It is logical to think that collectivism plays a part in influencing Thai society to be feminine. Thai people appreciate harmony within their society, so they expect everyone to behave and conform to the group. And if someone turns into an outcast he or she also turns into a gossip target, because everyone in the team belongs in the group except for the person. This is characterized by the influence of the earlier

mentioned collectivism. This is different from western working values as indicated by an English-born Thai participant. He mentioned that during the forming westerners seem to approach and learn about each other more formally than a Thai group. The introduction phase usually includes self-introduction, introduction meeting, or even a presentation about his or her working style, which is not commonly done in a Thai working culture. So, the collectivism is rather what makes a different in the level of femininity and masculinity within a Thai and Western team.

Storming

As mentioned earlier, high power distance is the same in both Thai and western working culture, but they are displayed differently. However, contrary to that, the power distance inserted in the storming phase is different in Thai and Western. In Thai culture, during this phase where the team members discusses and begin to notice the differences in each other, the power distance plays a big part. One of the participants commented that it is arguably easier to win the acceptance from the subordinates if he is the boss in a Thai company. Thai employees usually do not try to compete head-on with their bosses, only in some rare case. Therefore, the power distance still runs high within a Thai context during this storming phase. Contrastingly, Western boss may need to portray capability a lot more to win the acceptance from his or her subordinates, as indicated by a participant. Since the acceptance must be earned, so the person in-charge must earn it. This makes a different between Thai and western at this stage.

As for the uncertainty avoidance, it is rather ambiguous at this stage whether or not Thai and western have something in common at the storming stage. This is a phase where it involves politics within the body of an organization because the roles and positions must be understood as the whole context by every member of the group, be it Thai and western. None of the participants is able to give a clear level of uncertainty avoidance as it varies from time to time depending on given situation, despite the fact that it may be similar for both Thai and western. Therefore, the result remains unclear.

The degree of collectivism within this phase remains the same for both Thai and Western. This phase is the time where rumors and gossips are created because of the disagreement or dissimilarity among group members. So, it is likely that the Thai employees tend to gossip and spread rumor more than western employees due to being a heavily collectivist society. Despite that fact, there is not a significant difference between the degree of this cultural dimension between Thai and western group members at this stage. Thus, this remains the same as the previous stage (forming).

On the other hand, during this storming period, a Thai team can lean toward being more masculine than during the forming stage. One participant who is a director of sales and marketing of an international firm said that once his team members are familiar with one another they begin to challenge each logic and rationale of the team. They will also likely to approach problems in a more rational way than being emotional about them. However, at this point, Thai employees tend to mix up the emotional part with the rational part indistinctively, whereas westerners can distinguish between emotions and rationale more clearly. As indicated by a participant, the way Thai team members approach a challenge is more of a rationale that supports an emotional feeling rather than the other way around. However, depending on problems, Thai employees can oppose something strongly if he or she does not agree with it. Thus, Thai members can be masculine during this storming phase which tends to involve organization's politics.

	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Collectivism / Individualism	Femininity / Masculinity
Storming	High	N/A	Collectivist	Masculine
	Low	N/A	Individualist	Masculine

Figure 4.2: Cultural Dimension Matrix for Storming Stage

Norming

At this stage the effect of the aftermath of the storming phase becomes interesting and more pronounced when mostly everyone starts to accept the ground rules and norms established by the group. Interestingly enough, at this pre-performing

stage, Thai employees will soften the strong leadership in the storming phase as the post-conflict stage begins to evolve. They will begin to harmonize and synchronize altogether. This is based on a real experience by a participant, which revealed that his former Thai team's hierarchy flattened after the politics during the storming stage faded out. In other words, the members became more comfortable and friendlier with each other, including the management. On the other hand, at this stage, the English executive mentioned that, in her point of view, the hierarchy within a team becomes more pronounced within the team in the aftermath of the storming period. Her western subordinates and team members will trust her and know what she is capable of, thus starts to listen to her more seriously. So with this said, western team will bounce from being a low power distance team to a high power distance team again at this norming stage.

As for the uncertainty avoidance in a Thai team, it is the opposite of the last stage where uncertainty avoidance is quite ambiguous. At this stage, explained by both a Thai participant and a western participant that their subordinates and teammates will need a clear direction and goal in order to keep moving onto the next performing stage. They said that roles, positions, ground rules, and norms should have already been understood and felt by the group, and it is not good to leave anyone with no direction to work toward. Therefore, this is a very important stage that will set the direction for the group. At this point, being either a Thai or western does not make a different. Both Thai members and western members will be ready to perform at the highest level once a direction is set, since everyone is integrated into one working team.

	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Collectivism / Individualism	Femininity / Masculinity
Norming	Low	High	Collectivist	Feminine
	High	High	Individualist	Masculine

Figure 4.3: Cultural Dimension Matrix for Norming Stage

The intensity of collectivism and individualism at this norming stage remains the same as the previous stage (storming). Both Thai and western members fall into their places within a group. For the Thai members, this may mean a group of friends in the work place is formed. And they may remain friends even after the work

day is finished. For western members, this may mean a period where they get less distraction from being uncomfortable with one another and a period where they are happy to start producing results, both individually and as a team. Therefore, the degree of collectivism and individualism remain unchanged from the previous stage.

The femininity and masculinity both influence the team quite equally. This is a phase where the whole members of a team have already gained acquaintance with one another. Therefore, for Thai members, they will usually display Thai values such as caring, emotional, respecting elder, and kreng-jai when interacting with other members of the group, whether Thai or western. As for the westerner, they will considerably be more straightforward verbally and less on the face-saving manner like their peer Thai members. Therefore, at this stage Thai employees become a bit toward the feminine side like usual and the western employees become a bit more masculine like they are used to. After the norming has settled, the team usually goes into another stage which is the "performing stage", where everyone performs.

Performing

From this point on, it is just a matter of working style that sets the team toward the goal. Indicated by a Thai employee who said that she likes being in a moment when everyone is doing their tasks and acting out their roles, all for one common goal that is shared among the group. At this point, she said, there is usually minimal hierarchy awareness, or sometimes none at all. She compared this synergy to a football team when every member competes to be the winner, and when the team wins everyone wins. This description of synergy is similar to what another English participant indicated. She mentioned that she used to be in a very effective team which there was no free rider, and that every group member was out to play best their parts. The leader was more like a senior member who knew how to get things done rather than being a pure boss. He displayed a management role that solved issues and conflicts, as well as putting out the fire for his team to continue their work. This shared, result-oriented synergy, are the same for both Thai and western. Therefore, the power distance at this stage is low for both Thai and westerner. And this is an important knowledge to gain in order to build an effective teamwork.

	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Collectivism / Individualism	Femininity / Masculinity
Performing	Low	Low	Collectivist	N/A
	Low	High	Collectivist	N/A

Figure 4.4: Cultural Dimension Matrix for Performing Stage

On the other hand, the degree of uncertainty avoidance in Thai teamwork is different than westerner's at this stage because it is a cultural matter. By looking back at the very first stage, forming, Thai culture is considerably a low-uncertainty avoidance country, while western culture's is high. So at this stage of performing, it is reasonable to think that both Thai and western behave the way their culture influences them. So the level of uncertainty avoidance of both cultures is similar to the "forming" stage. That is, "low" for the Thai and "high" for the westerner.

Moving forward, one management participant indicated that once the team has established and things are going well, he feels that the team members will have got closer to one another already. At this point, his team will have a set of effective communication tools to use including e-mail, verbal conversation, mobile phone application, text message or voice message. All members will communicate with each other in one or many ways. This is true for both Thai and westerner, that individualism will be lessening at this stage automatically. This cultural dimension here is just a symbolic label of the entire culture of a country, but it does not quite apply to the teamwork culture. One participant indicates that once synergy is established between multi-national team members, the results and goals are more easily to attain. Here at this stage, both Thai and western usually turn their collectivist side to their peers. This enables them to productively collaborate and work together in team, in a multi-national environment.

On the other hand, at the stage, it is unclear whether there is any difference in the femininity and masculinity attribute between Thai and Western team members. None of the participant was able to suggest whether team members are definitely more feminine or masculine during the performing of a team. It seems like there is a mixture of both. Also, it may not be appropriate to judge a team characteristic as being "feminine" or "masculine", but one should rather judge them by the degree of being "emotional" or "logical" at this performing stage. Some team maybe more logical than others, not because the members are more masculine, but

because they are more rational, and do things that are righteous. However, some team may be more considerate of member's feelings, and is therefore said to be a more emotional team. Thus, femininity and masculinity attributes should rather be replaced by "emotionality" and "logicality".

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

5.1 Limitation

The data collected in this paper is derived from the interviewees that are or were working for multi-national firms that are based in Bangkok, Thailand. The nature of multi-national firms in Thailand is such that the management is westerner and the subordinate is Thai. With this kind of environment, the westerners being interviewed are in the top management position, and the Thais are their subordinates. So the corporate hierarchy model is simply westerner over Thai in all of the interviews, as shown in figure 5.
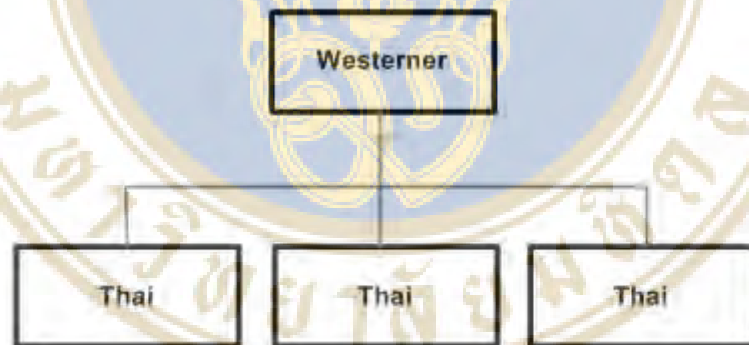
Figure 5.1: Common Western and Thai Corporate Hierarchy

Within the context of this corporate hierarchy model, the view that the westerners portrayed throughout the interview sessions are only based on the fact that they are managers and Thai people are subordinates. So, they tended to answer more toward the topic of how to manage Thai subordinates, but not the other way around. They could not give concrete information, let alone definitive answer, of how to work for a

Thai boss with them being the subordinates. Had the context been "Thai over westerner" there might be some variation in the result of the proposed framework.

Moreover, the interviews were only gathered from a few multi-national companies in Thailand, it cannot be assumed that this proposed recommendation will work in other different multi-national environments. If this study shall give recommendation to any multi-national firm in Europe, a local research shall be conducted since the context of the corporate environment is likely to be different. The same applies for other regions around the globe such as Africa or South America. It is clear that one of the limitations of this research is that the proposed recommendation is likely to only work for multi-national companies that are based in Thailand, and have the westerner-over-Thai corporate hierarchy. This is the only scope of context that this research tends to make recommendation within.

5.2 Further Research Suggestion

Taking aforementioned limitation into consideration, a few suggestions can be made to improve a further research and study. First of all, the researcher should study a company in Thailand where there is a Thai management who is having a western team working for him or her. Or at least, find and interview a team that consists of westerners and Thais who are in the same rank and interview them. Another option would be finding a team that is a mixture of both westerners and Thais, regardless of the firm being multi-national or not. It can be a Thai firm that has specialized westerners as employees or team leaders. This shall give a wider perspective that is likely to be different than what is being concluded in this paper.

Another suggestion for further research is to interview Thai employees or workers who are working in foreign western countries. It could be a student working in an internship position in an American or English firm. Moreover, it can be any Thai people who are living and working abroad for a western company or a multi-national company. There are a good amount of Thai people working and living abroad, so this is an opportunity to conduct further study on the perspective of Thai people working in foreign western countries. Different views, details, and perspectives can then be
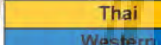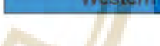
obtained to construct a more customized recommendation for relevant and interested parties in the future.

5.3 Theory & Recommendation

After assessing the participants' teamwork style with the given framework, the results yield a few similarities in cultural dimension between Thai and westerner as shown in figure 6.

Figure 5.2: Similarity Matrix

With these similarities between the Thai and westerner, a theory can be created and recommended. The theory is to help form and guide any new team that consists of Thai subordinates and western managers. Furthermore, it must only be used within the context of multi-national company in Thailand because of the limitation that is described in section 5.1. By following each of Tuckman's stages, the core ground rule for the team at each stage should reinforce and emphasize the similar cultural dimension that Thai and western both have in common. Description of each ground rule is explained below.

First of all, during the "forming" stage, since the power distance dimension indicates a "high" for both Thai and western, the manager and the team must agree upon the established authority. The team leader must be clearly identified and the person who can authorize decision must be accepted by all group members.

Since Thai and westerner both have a tendency to respect the power distance at this stage, therefore power and authority must be emphasized and well understood across the forming team. Even though the perspective toward power distance in the Thai and the western is slightly different than one another, overall the power distance is felt by both Thai and western during this forming stage. Therefore, a ground rule should be set on the idea of utilizing the power distance.

Second of all, during "storming" stage, since Thai and western are both masculine in this cultural dimension, the ground rule being established should utilize this similar cultural dimension. For example, given that at this storming stage, team members will likely to argue and exchange idea or opinion, as well as learning in-depth about each other, it is best to be open to all ideas and never take them personal. Being in a masculine mode means that people will be less emotional and more rational. Thus, team members must realize that it is normal to argue about ideas for the best of the team, while accepting others as they are. So the ground rule set for this stage should be on the basis of not taking things personal and be logical about one another. Since both Thai and western have masculinity in common at this storming stage, it is likely that both can adapt throughout this stage and move forward to the next stage as a team successfully.

Thirdly, during the norming stage, Thai and westerner both score a "high" on the uncertainty avoidance cultural dimension. That means that at this stage, both need to have a clear vision and direction of where the team is headed. None of them will likely to perform well at this stage without a clear direction. At this stage, it is not a matter of being a Thai or a westerner, both will avoid uncertainty altogether. Therefore, it is important for the team to come up with a direction and a shared vision that is agreed upon group members. If the goal is clearly set, it is very likely that the team will be able to go through this stage and start performing well on the next stage. Therefore, the core idea that will help guide the team through this stage is the minimization of uncertainty.

Lastly, during this performing stage, the power distance dimension has turned "low" for both Thai and western as the gap in the team hierarchy is almost diminished. This is the time when everyone in the team is likely to be comfortable with each other already regardless of being a Thai or westerner. Moreover, during

performing, both Thai and western are both collectivists according to this research. Therefore, the ground rule established for the team shall reinforce these qualities. The ground rule should reinforce and promote friendliness among the manager and the subordinates, because of the minimized power distance. This can only be done at this performing stage since it is when the power distance becomes low. Additionally, by doing this, the ground rule will automatically promote the collectivism in both parties. As indicated in this study, Thai and western will both become collectivist at this stage. Therefore, setting a ground rule that promotes friendliness and friendly communication among the group during this performing stage will likely yield a good team performance and sustains it in a long-run.

5.4 Application

According to the above proposed theory, a principal model in forming a Thai and western team is created as shown below in table 3.

Table 5.3: Recommended Objective for Each Group Development Stage

Forming	Clearly identify roles
Storming	Clearly express identity
Norming	Clearly identify goals
Performing	Clearly promote friendliness

It is recommended that this model be applied to any situation in which a firm needs to deploy a team consisting of Thais and westerners. This model can also be used in any multi-national companies based in Thailand. It can also be used in other multi-national team's environment such as a sports team or a business start-up team.

5.5 Recommendation

Although this paper assesses the differences in Thai and western value to suggest a model that promotes the success of forming a team, it should not be utilized to the extent that it diminishes the individual characteristics of any person. Other words, the team leader must assess his or her team members individually, on a case-by-case basis. The team leader must not rely solely on this model to judge an individual by race or culture. Persons are subject to some variation depending on each person's background. Therefore, with this being said, any team should deploy this model while taking into account the individual differences regardless of race and culture in order to form and perform successfully as a team.

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