

**SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP  
FOR FOOD COMPANY IN THAILAND**



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## **SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP FOR FOOD COMPANY IN THAILAND**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The sustainable leadership of the organization is played role in many business nowadays. This paper aims to understand the practice of the organization in order to analysis by utilized the Honeybee Leadership. Moreover, this paper is provided the strength of the company to strengthen in the long run and find improvement points to recover them. The research is focused on Food company named Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd. The research methodology is used in-depth interview by open-end question and observation. The finding is showed that the company complies with Honeybee leadership practice for 21 elements. This shows that the company has direction for sustainable growth in the market rather than short-term result oriented.

**KEY WORDS:** SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP/ HONEYBEE LEADERSHIP/  
FOOD COMPANY / LONG TERM PERSPECTIVE

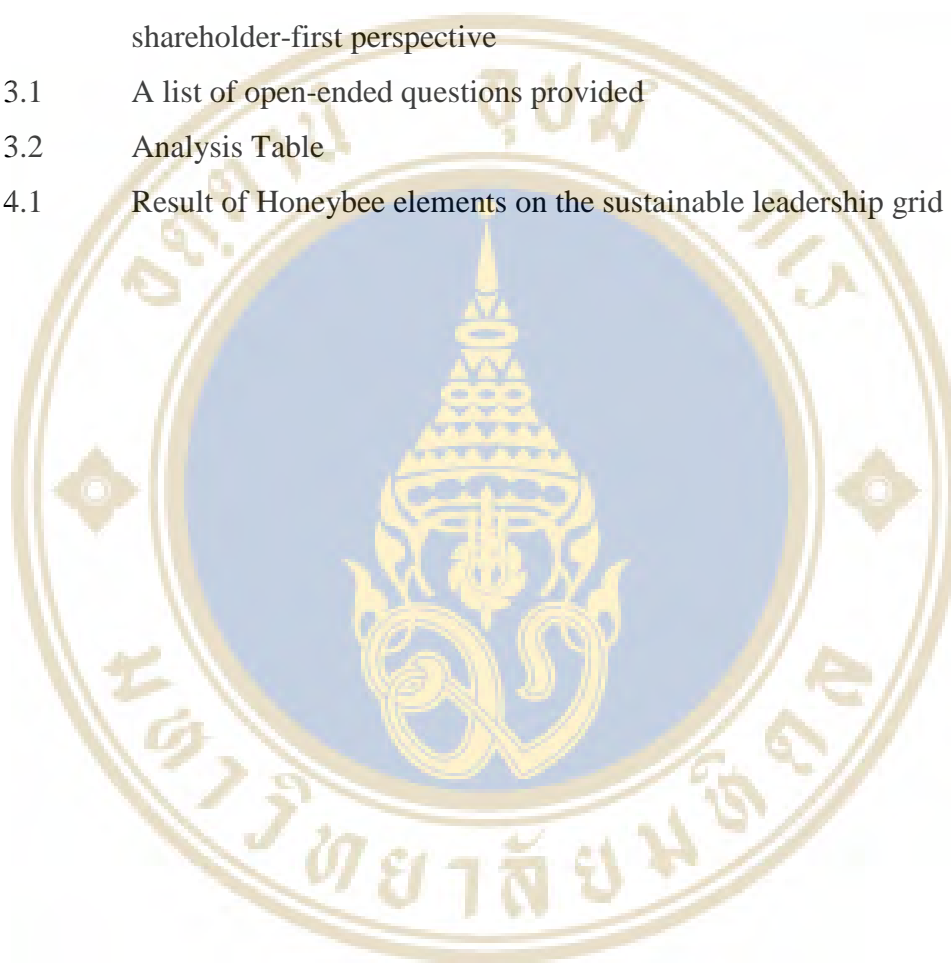
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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Corporate sustainability has been widely discussed among corporate leaders and scholars. Although it is an important issue, only a few approaches to corporate sustainability have been examined in the Thai context.

The present study therefore adopts Avery and Bergsteiner's Sustainable Leadership concept that has been supported by previous studies are a relevant approach to corporate sustainability in Thailand. The study examines business practices of Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd. to determine if there is a fit between Sustainable Leadership practices and those of the case company.

Ajinomoto Thailand is a food and feed company. It was founded in 1960. Thailand is one of the 26 countries that Ajinomoto has been operated. The company is operated under the Ajinomoto Headquarter at Japan. The main business for Ajinomoto Thailand is to produce and sell consumer food product and feed for animal nutrition, supply for industrial food ingredient and packaging. Currently, they have 7 factories and 18 companies under Ajinomoto Thailand group with 7,000 staff approximately.

To determine the fit, the literature on Sustainable Leadership in Thailand is reviewed in the Chapter 2. The methodology used to test the Sustainable Leadership concept including how to collect and analyze data is explained in Chapter 3. The finding is presented in Chapter 4. And the last Chapter 5 discusses the finds and concludes the study with practical recommendations to enhance the prospect of corporate sustainability for the case company.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

What can organizations do to develop the resilience required to withstand major global shocks? In recent decades, wars, oil crises, talent shortages and most recently the 2008-9 global financial crisis (GFC) have tested the sustainability of major enterprises. Some well-known corporations did not survive the GFC, and others had to be bailed out by their governments (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011). The broader societal concern about sustainability has grown from almost nothing in the early 1990s to a dominant theme today. Meanwhile, leaders of major corporations worldwide are increasingly facing the challenge of managing organisations that meet the expectations of a broad range of stakeholders (often themselves in conflict), while still delivering a return to shareholders. As a result, sustainability is now an essential ingredient for a company's long-term success

There are many approaches to ensure the corporate sustainability. The shareholder-first approach has received heavy criticism from a number of well-regarded management researchers (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011). In almost two decades ago, Michel Albert wrote that in its extreme form, focusing on short-term profits discourages long-term thinking, investing, and planning, profit is a threat to neoliberal capitalism itself. Charles Handy have written that the purpose of a business goes beyond making a profit to something better. Michael Raynor debunked the premises on which the shareholder-first model rests, and Michael Porter criticized the current belief that looking beyond the business is bad for business. He argues that companies should be considering other stakeholders, and so generates economic value by creating societal value.

The alternative approach to leadership is variously referred to as “sustainable”, “Rhineland” or “honeybee” leadership which is the possible approach to ensure corporate sustainability because it consider in the long-term aspects which aimed at delivering better and more sustainable returns (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011).

The objective of sustainable leadership is to keep people, profits, and the planet in balance over the life of the firm, and in so doing ensure that the business generates the social capital needed to weather downturns.

Originally, Avery (2005) proposed sustainable leadership in 19 criteria to differentiate the two approaches, each of which supports diametrically-opposed sets of self-reinforcing leadership practices. More recently the list of practices has been expanded to 23 by recasting some of the practices and adding four new elements (Kantabutra & Avery, 2013). Five performance outcomes have been specified in the update framework and the leadership approaches renamed as “Honeybee” (formerly Rehineland) leadership and “Locust” for the Anglo/US or shareholder-first approach. The expanded the lists of practices for both approaches are shown in Table 2.1 (Avery and Bergsteiner, 2011).

Table 2.1 Criteria distinguishing typical sustainable leadership and shareholder-first perspectives

Leadership elements	Sustainable leadership “honeybee” philosophy Sophisticated, stakeholder, social, sharing	Shareholder-first “locust” philosophy Tough, ruthless, asocial, profit-at-any-cost
<i>Foundation practices</i>		
1. Developing people	Develops everyone continuously	Develops people selectively
2. Labor relations	Seeks cooperation	Acts antagonistically
3. Retaining staff	Values long tenure at all levels	Accepts high staff turnover
4. Succession planning	Promotes from within wherever possible	Appoints from outside wherever possible
5. Valuing staff	Is concerned about employees’ welfare	Treats people as interchangeable and a cost
6. CEO and top team	CEO works as top team member or speaker	CEO is decision maker, hero
7. Ethical behavior	“Doing-the-right thing” as an explicit core value	Ambivalent, negotiable, an assessable risk
8. Long- or short-term perspective	Prefers the long-term over the short-term	Short-term profits and growth prevail
9. Organizational change	Change is an evolving and considered process	Change is fast adjustment, volatile, can be <i>ad hoc</i>
10. Financial markets orientation	Seeks maximum independence from others	Follows its masters’ will, often slavishly
11. Responsibility for environment	Protects the environment	Is prepared to exploit the environment
12. Social responsibility (CSR)	Values people and the community	Exploits people and the community
13. Stakeholders	Everyone matters	Only shareholders matter
14. Vision’s role in the business	Shared view of future is essential strategic tool	The future does not necessarily drive the business
<i>Higher-level practices</i>		
15. Decision making	Is consensual and devolved	Is primarily manager-centered
16. Self-management	Staff are mostly self-managing	Managers manage
17. Team orientation	Teams are extensive and empowered	Teams are limited and manager-centered
18. Culture	Fosters an enabling, widely-shared culture	Culture is weak except for a focus on short-term-results that may or may not be shared
19. Knowledge sharing and retention	Spreads throughout the organization	Limits knowledge to a few “gatekeepers”
20. Trust	High trust through relationships and goodwill	Control and monitoring compensate for low trust
<i>Key performance drivers</i>		
21. Innovation	Strong, systemic, strategic innovation evident at all levels	Innovation is limited and selective; buys in expertise
22. Staff engagement	Values emotionally-committed staff and the resulting commitment	Financial rewards suffice as motivators, no emotional commitment expected
23. Quality	Is embedded in the culture	Is a matter of control

Source: Avery, G.C. and Bergsteiner, H. (2010) *Honeybees and Locusts: The Business Case for Sustainable Leadership*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, pp. 36-37

The 23 “honeybee” practices have been arranged in the form of a pyramid to serve as a guide for intervention in Figure 2.1. The practices form three groups in the pyramid which consist of foundation practices, higher-level practices, and key performance drivers. A fourth level crowning the pyramid contains performance outcomes that research shows contribute to sustainability.

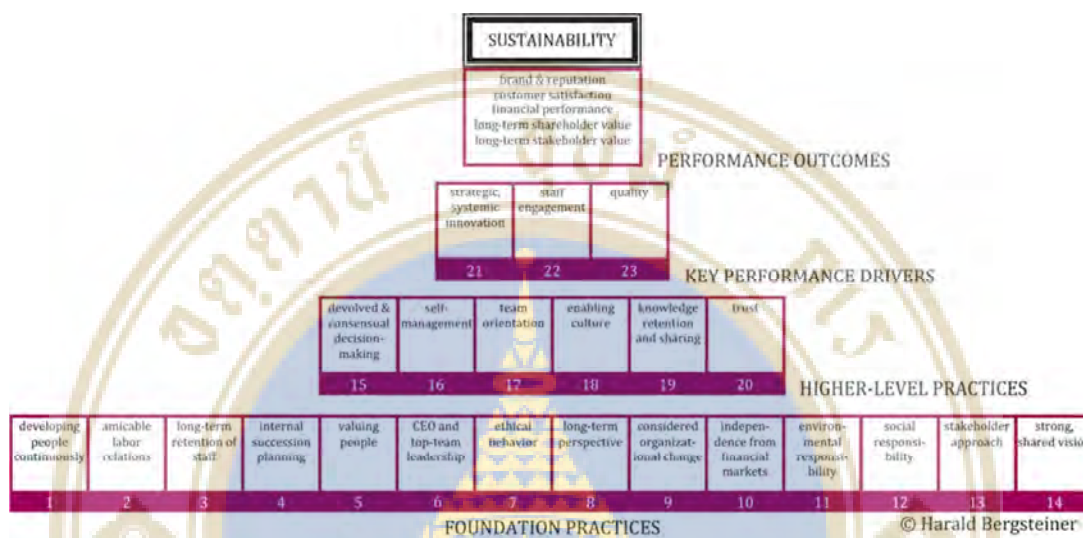


Figure 2.1 The Sustainable Leadership Pyramid from Avery and Bergsteiner

(1) **Foundation practices** at the lowest level of the pyramid, there is 14 foundation practices include programs for training and developing people, striving for amicable labor relations, staff retention, succession planning, valuing employees' experience and their contribution to customer loyalty and to innovation, CEO's role as hero or top team member, ethical behavior, promoting long-term thinking, managing organizational change sensitively, independence from the financial markets, promoting environmental and social responsibility, balancing multiple stakeholder interests, and ensuring that a shared vision drives the business.

(2) **Higher-level practices** form the second layer of the pyramid. These 6 practices cover devolved and consensual decision making, creating self-managing employees, harnessing the power of teams, developing a trusting atmosphere, forming an organizational culture that enables sustainable leadership, and sharing and retaining the firm's knowledge. The pyramid has been developed on the idea that when relevant



foundation practices are in place they facilitate and support the emergence of the higher-level practices.

**(3) Key performance drivers** create the third level. The elements of innovation, staff engagement, and quality essentially provide what end-customers experience and so drive organizational performance. The key performance drivers in turn emerge from various combinations of the foundation and higher-level practices. These practices in turn depend for their existence on various foundation elements being in place. Thus, the key performance drivers emerge from both sets of lower level practices.

**(4) Performance outcomes.** The apex of the pyramid contains five performance outcomes that create sustainable leadership. The 23 elements from the various levels in the pyramid collectively drive: Integrity of brand and reputation, Enhanced customer satisfaction, Solid operational finances (all firms have to survive financially including in the short term), Long-term shareholder value, Long-term value for multiple stakeholders.

The pyramid is intended to be dynamic in all directions. Interactions between the elements not only flow bottom-up and top-down, practices on the same level also influence each other. Furthermore, how the 23 practices are actually implemented leaves enormous scope for variation, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

### **Summary of the finding of previous study**

Since Rhineland and Honeybee leadership overlap, there are the many previous studies on Rhineland and Honeybee leadership in Thailand.

The small firm like Sa Paper Preservation House exhibits 14 of Avery's 19 elements characterizing Rhineland enterprises (Kantabutra & Suriyankietkaew, 2013). The company has strongly established good stakeholder relationships with suppliers, customers, employees, and community as its future business wellbeing depends on positive embracement. They prioritize on people by emphasis nurturing happiness

among employees by investing in them because happy employees are keys to producing innovative products. They adopt a very long-term perspective with a very strong culture deeply rooted in the founder's values. The organization culture is strong with employee sharing vision, values and beliefs, enabled by its on layoff practice and low employee turnover rate. They encourage employee to think innovatively in term of product development and behave ethically. The CEO appears to be the heroic leader who gives the strategic direction and final approvals. Most notable are the social and environment responsibility and ethical behaviors deep in the enterprise's culture. Knowledge sharing occurs within organization and local industry. They also concern on the product with high-quality as evidenced by its many awards for product excellence.

The Thailand's oldest university practices closely fit the Honeybee criteria on 21 of the 23 elements (Kantabutra & Saratun, 2013). The components of long-term perspective found at the university include development of shared strategic directions, involvement and collaboration in decision making, and a set of core values developed and shared by management teams. One of the important initiatives that the university management team in 2007 focused on is developing shared strategic directions among various group of the university. Staff development is considered as critical in effectively responding to environmental changes. Training and development is also available to enable management at different levels to develop managerial skills. The development of senior management includes an evaluation by using the actual seven core value of the university, which have been translated into expected behaviors and competencies. The result helps individuals to determine their own professional development plan that brings about required leadership behaviors. The university management team believes that developing these core values into a culture will ensure that the university continues to provide top-quality and grow in a sustainable way. The innovation of the university is to stay at the cutting edge of its various disciplines and continuously find solutions for the society, another priority for the university is to research for excellence and to create new knowledge. Social responsibility is strong core value for the university as shown relating to social contribution since starting unit nowadays. Ethics have been an importance element in the core values of the university that provides highest education services to Thailand and beyond. Moreover, finding

indicates that the less sustainable concept of heroic leader is still evident at the Thai oldest university.

Leading Asian industrial conglomerate, the conglomerate's management appears to meet all three criteria for 23 Honeybee criteria (Kantabutra & Avery, 2013). They display a long-term perspective by first, long-term sustainable development forms part of its vision and second, the company challenges its investors to take a long-term perspective by paying stable dividends while maintaining its share price. They consider employee its most important assets, and demonstrated this in various ways such as investing heavily in its people's development with the objective of improving its employee's health, knowledge and competencies. They refer to promote from within. They also encourage self-governing teams and decision making, both of which rely on well-developed staff. The strong organizational culture, shared vision and values seen integral to enabling the company to weather economic and social crises. The innovation theme embraces the Honeybee elements of people development, valuing and trusting staff, taking a long-term orientation, promoting social and environment responsibility, seeking high quality in processes, services and goods, as well as finding ways of managing knowledge by engaging staff with the organization. The company's ethical principles and focus on social responsibility are strongly evident in many aspects of the business, along with their concern for other stakeholders beyond shareholders. The one notably deviant element, appear to be highly respected "Heroic" leaders, may be cultural given the high power distance valued by Thai society.

True Corporation's result shows that most evidently (22/23) of Honeybee Leadership are consistent, except for the element of labor relations, since True Corporation does not have a union (Kantabutra, 2012). They have formulated long-term strategies and plans that are not greatly affected by short-term decisions and events and look beyond the maximization of short-term profits. Long-term strategies and plans often involve investments for future growth and competitiveness. Clearly, uncertainty and change are also considered and managed in the fast-moving industry. Continuous people development at all level is one of the key elements that help them proper in the fast-growing telecommunication industry. True Corporation invests in developing its staff by attempting to develop its general workforce and grow its own

managers, despite the challenge of retaining trained employees in highly competitive industry. It is clear that making people a priority is one of the company's core values. They have a strong corporate culture, with its members sharing these core attributes, or four Cs: caring, creative, credible, and courageous. These four Cs reflect what their people do, say, and think when they deal with stakeholders. Knowledge and innovation are fostered in every unit of the organization in order to retain its competitive advantage and increase its market share. With multiple platforms, staff knowledge and expertise, and technical and managerial support, they can clearly differentiate from competitors. With Ethic and Social responsibility as the company's core values are to pursue not only its own interests, but also those of stakeholders at large.

Overall findings of Bathroom Design Company were matched to Rhineland research framework and found to encompass many sustainable leadership elements (Kantabutra, 2012). They maintain an informed long-term perspective that commit to being adaptive and innovative. Its three main missions are to maintain sufficient incomes and profits for sustainable growth, always return added values and benefits to all stakeholders, and debut new products with innovative design and function every six months. The company heavily invests in many aspects for long-term gains while carefully expanding its business. People are given priority at Bathroom Design, and it is reflected in the fact that staff retention rate is very high. They prefer to promote from within. The organizational culture is deeply rooted in shared values and vision. The company has made many major innovations within its field, extending the benefits to stakeholders, and simultaneously enhancing product quality while managing knowledge, uncertainty, and change. Innovation here also includes small, continuous improvement in organization processes, as suggested by employees. The company conducts business with the philosophy that the company must demonstrate a keen sense of responsibility toward the best interest of its stakeholders.

Overall, SCG's management practices mirror 18 of the 19 Rhineland criteria that Avery (2005) identified, 16 of them being strongly evident (Kantabutra & Avery, 2011). The long-term strategies and plan are often involved with investments for future growth and competitiveness, such as business restructuring, innovation and R&D, knowledge management and employee development. Clearly, uncertainty and

change are also considered and managed. SCG also has been running as a team-based system with internal succession planning, as opposite to relying on a few heroic leaders. The organizational culture is deeply rooted in shared values and vision. The company's current vision effectively places it in 2015 as well recognized as an innovative workplace of choice, a role model in corporate governance and sustainable development, a regional market leader, having world-class business practices, contributing to its communities and creating value for its stakeholder. SCG also boosts exchanging and sharing knowledge among employees to create mutual relationships, and to enable networking of knowledge and professionalism for the benefit of business. The strong organizational culture- characterized by ethics, diligence, perseverance, and innovation. The company conducts business believing that they must demonstrate a keen sense of responsibility towards the interests of its stakeholders. Simultaneously, a cement company must be actually aware of environment consideration and the wellbeing of society and the nation as a whole. The deviant element is that both current and past CEOs appear to be heroic leaders, despite a considerable amount of team-based leadership at the top. However, it is conceivable that Thai cultures so respects senior people that it would be difficult for the firm to run on a democratic top team basis and this element in the Rhineland model maybe an exception for Thailand. Evidence for two variables, consensual decision making and self-governing teams, was only moderately evident. Again, this may reflect a Thai expectation that senior people make decisions.

Theptarin Hospital exhibits 15 of Avery's 19 elements characterizing Rhineland enterprises, but to varying degree (Kantabutra, 2011). According to a top management team member, it avoided listing on the Thai Stock Exchange because of possible pressure to make short-term profits or decisions. The evident covers the independence from the financial markets, although it was less evident in other elements, such as the most evident elements of long-term perspective, uncertainly and change, and retaining staff. The hospital gives its people priority by promoting and developing employee right across the enterprise. Although private, Theptanin reflects a university teaching hospital culture, characterized by research and continuous improvement. It was observed that physicians, nurses and other medical professionals are referred to as "ajarn" in Thai or "professor" This culture is deeply rooted in the



hospital's history given that the founder was a university professor. Highly coherent, the strong culture helped the hospital survive the 1997 Asian economic crisis during by reducing salaries of top and mid-level managers to save the hospital, demonstrating a very strong teamwork culture, and trust and respect for lower-level. With research as its core, the hospital has been a pioneer in Thai healthcare. Theptanin introduced several wound care techniques and other technology diabetes care, along with new treatment procedures and diabetes professions. Social responsibility is one of the hospital's core values. Though private, it serves the broader community by sharing its knowledge with other healthcare institutions, and for clients and their families. The goal is not only to provide best service to clients, but also to be the model for other institutions for raising the standard of diabetes care nationally. Ethical behavior is a strong theme in its own right at Theptanin. As the hospital was founded by the present owner and CEO, the CEO appears to be the heroic leader who gives the strategic directs and final approval.

Since Sustainable Leadership has gained support in Thailand as an approach to ensure corporate sustainability and no study has been conducted into food company which in the fast-moving consumer goods industry, the present study adapts the Honeybee Leadership as a framework to explore business practices if they are consist with the Honeybee leadership. Methodology used for the present study is discussed in the next chapter. The recommendations to improve the business practices so that the business can be more sustainable will be provided.

### CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY

To answer the research question, in-depth interview and participant observation techniques are adopted as the data collection approaches because individual depth interview is advantage to eliminate the group pressure, so the respondent reveals more honest feeling, not necessarily those considered most acceptable among peers (McDaniel & Gates, 2013). And a singular viewpoint can be obtained from a respondent without influence from others. This interview allows detailed exploration of a single respondent's reactions without contamination. Another benefit is the longer time devoted to individual respondents encourage the revelation of new information. It allows greater flexibility to explore casual remarks and tangential issues, which may provide critical insights into the main issue. If the topic is highly sensitive or highly personal, in-depth interview is indicated. Moreover, the interview can provide convenience as it can be conducted anywhere.

The participant observation involves the researcher's involvement in a variety of activities over an extended period of time that enable him/her to observe the cultural members in their daily lives and to participate in their activities to facilitate a better understanding of those behaviors and activities. Participant observation also allows researchers to check definitions of terms that participants use in interviews, observe events that informants may be unable or unwilling to share when doing so would be impolitic, impolite, or insensitive, and observe situations informants have described in interviews, thereby making them aware of distortions or inaccuracies in description provided by those informants. Participant observation is used as a mainstay in field work in a variety of disciplines, and, as such, has proven to be a beneficial tool for producing studies that provide accurate representation of a culture (Kawulich, 2005).

Open-ended questions are used because open-ended responses have the advantage of providing the researcher with a rich array of information. The

respondent's answer are based on his or her personal frame of reference and described in real-world terminology rather than laboratory or marketing jargon (McDaniel & Gates, 2013). It can help to get factual information. When there is a wide range of answers expected to provide individual factual information, an open-ended structure can address the problem of having a list of more response choices than it is practical to include in a questionnaire. Factual information may be a request for a verbatim or for a numeric response. Open-ended question can expand a list to get additional information. It can deepen the understanding of the response to a preceding question by obtaining additional details on the reason for the answer choice. The respondents can define a key word in a question documents their level of understanding. It can also inform the variation in the meanings of words used among the respondents who gave an answer. The open-ended question helps to explore new topics. The questionnaire can be an opportunity to get suggestions for future survey topics that are especially salient to the respondent (Ballou, 2008). This paper the list of questions are shown in Table 3.1.

*Table 3.1 A lists of open-ended questions provided*

Leadership element		CEO	HR manager	Employee	Other	Evidence/ observation
Foundation practices						
1	Developing people  (continue training for everyone)		- What is the policy for human development?  - Can you share plan for human development?	- How do you feel about training in company?  - What is the training plan for you every year?		- Training record  - Training budget
2	Labor relations					
3	Retaining staff  (values long tenure at all level)		- Do you have plan for retaining staff? How?	- What make you still working here? - Do you think the company is support employee to work for long term? Why?		- Turnover rate

Table 3.1 A lists of open-ended questions provided (Continued)

Leadership element		CEO	HR manager	Employee	Other	Evidence/ observation
4	Succession planning (Promote from within)		- How does the company policy to promote within?	- Please share your and anyone experience for promote within?		
5	Valuing staff	- How importance of the staff in the company?	- How importance of staff in the company? - What do you think about working environment?	- What do you think of company welfare? - What do you think of working environment?		- Observe working environment - Scholarship for employee's kid - Cooperative
6	CEO and top team			- How do you feel about CEO in company?		- CEO joins project as a team member?
7	Ethical behavior	-What is the CEO policy on ethical management ?	- Does the company concern on ethic? How?	- How do you feel about company in term of ethic? Please give me an example.	<b>Customer :</b> - How do you feel about product & service and How does company treat you?	- BCC (Business Code Conduct)
8	Long- or short-term perspective	- What is the policy for investment on long term; Machine, R&D, HR?	<b>R&amp;D manager :</b> - How do you plan for R&D? <b>MKT manager:</b> - How do you allocate resource for long term : capacity, R&D, HR - What is your target and what happen if you cannot achieve quarterly?			- Investment ratio in Machine, R&D , HR
9	Organizational change	- The world is changing, how do you prepare for?			<b>R&amp;D :</b> - How do you plan for new product?	
10	Financial markets orientation					
11	Responsibility for environment	- What is the policy on environment responsibility?		- What activity had you ever join which relate to environmental responsibility?		- Activity : Smile Earth - Environmental awards and certificate

Table 3.1 A lists of open-ended questions provided (Continued)

Leadership element		CEO	HR manager	Employee	Other	Evidence/ observation
12	Social responsibility (CSR)	- What is the policy on CSR?		- What activity had you ever join which relate to CSR?  - How was it?	<b>Corporate communication Department:</b> - What is the short term & long term policy for CSR?	- Scholarship - Build school - Community activity (neighbor) - News
13	Stakeholders	- Concern about others : look at 11&12				
14	Vision's role in the business			- What is company's vision? - What do you feel about company vision enroll in the future?		- Observe the source of vision sharing
Higher-level practices						
15	Decision making			- What is making decision process? - If working as a team, How to make decision for an importance project?		
16	Self-management			- Have you ever got assignment to handle your own project? - How do you manage your own project? - What is the result from self-management?	<b>MKT manager:</b> - What do you plan for project allocation to your subordinate? - How do your subordinate working on their project? - Can they manage by themselves?	
17	Team orientation			- Normally, are there many members from different parties join in one project? - How each of you play role?	<b>MKT manager:</b> - Why do you assign cross function in a team? - What do you think of cross function in a team?	- Combine skill - Horizontal organization

Table 3.1 A lists of open-ended questions provided (Continued)

Leadership element		CEO	HR manager	Employee	Other	Evidence/ observation
18	Culture		- What is the core value for company?	- What do you think about company culture?		- Observe employee
19	Knowledge sharing and retention			- How do you get the knowledge? - How do you retain knowledge for next PIC?	<b>R&amp;D manager:</b> - How do you share knowledge in organization? - In the long term, How to retain knowledge in the company?	- Intranet sharing
20	Trust			- How would you and your team associates relate to work together?		
Key performance drivers						
21	Innovation	- What is the CEO vision on innovation?		- Have you ever develop or know the person who develops innovation (improvement idea) in company? (patent) - How do you/they get support/reward?	<b>R&amp;D manager:</b> - What is your plan on the R&D future? - What do you think about in-house technology and patent?	- Number of patents - Number of improvement projects
22	Staff engagement			- What do you think about doing something for company without getting paid? - From you point of view, is that normal in your company?		- Employees do something beyond responsibility and without asking for more money?
23	Quality			- How do you concern on the quality? - Tell me about today work, do you main concern on quantity or quality? Why?	<b>Customer:</b> - How do you feel about product's quality? <b>QA manager:</b> - How do you concern on the quality?	- Quality improvement project - Quality control procedure



To ensure validity of the data, the probing technique is adopted. Probing means that the interviewer encourages the respondent to elaborate or continue the discussion. Powerful probes will advance a discussion quickly away from top-of-mind responses and seat-of-the –pants answers – and access deeper information, allowing insight into the baseline thinking that drives behavior. (McDaniel & Gates, 2013)

Reflective note taking is also used to record observed data because it provides evidence of reflective thinking and can also be a valuable tool for helping to formulate and clarify evolving thinking as it develops. In an academic context, reflective writing usually involves: Looking back at something (often an event, i.e. something that happened, but it could also be an idea or object). It can help for documenting personal analysis of the event or idea (thinking in depth and from different perspectives). Generally reflective writing often involves ‘revealing’ anxieties, errors and weaknesses for prevention or improvement, as well as strengths and successes for maintenance or strengthen. It is often useful to ‘reflect forward’ to the future as well as ‘reflecting back’ on the past. (Syed and Scoular et al., 2012)

The sample is convenient as interviewees are 3 managers and 6 employees. Another data is gained from CEO’s interview and top management policy sharing.

Following the previous studied (Avery & Bergstieiner, 2011 , Kantabutra, 2012, Kantabutra & Avery, 2013 and Kantabutra & Saratun, 2013), Honeybee leadership is adopted as the framework to collect and analyze data as in the Table 3.2.

The following table is the analysis table which applied to assess the company for each element of Honeybee leadership grid. The criteria for analysis has 3 levels; (1) Most Evident means exactly like Honeybee, (2) Moderately Evident means somewhat like Honeybee and (3) Least Evident means somewhat like Locust. And it will be used Does not conform when exactly like Locust.

Table 3.2 Analysis Table

Honeybee Elements on the Sustainable Leadership Grid		Typical Thai Firm	Extent to conform		
			Least Evident	Moderately Evident	Most Evident
1	Developing people : grow their own				
2	Labor relations : cooperation				
3	Retaining staff : strong				
4	Succession planning : strong				
5	Valuing staff : strong				
6	CEO and top team : top team speaker				
7	Ethical behavior : an explicit value				
8	Long-or short-term perspective : long term				
9	Organizational change : considered process				
10	Financial markets orientation : challenge				
11	Responsibility for environment : strong				
12	Social responsibility (CSR) : strong				
13	Stakeholders : broad focus				
14	Vision's role in the business : share future				
15	Decision making : consensual				
16	Self-management : strong				
17	Team orientation : strong self-governing				
18	Culture : strong				
19	Knowledge sharing and retention : strong				
20	Trust : strong				
21	Innovation : strong				
22	Staff engagement : strong				
23	Quality : high is a given				
Total elements in conformity					
Legend: ✓ = conforms, - = does not conform, ? = not known					



### **About Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd.**

Ajinomoto is a food and chemical company. It was founded in Japan since 1907. The first product was Umami taste seasoning named Monosodium Glutamate which discovered from seaweed by the owner. The literal translation of *Aji no Moto* is “Essence of Taste,” used as a trademark. The Ajinomoto Group has established a presence in 26 countries and regions throughout the world in order to expand its business operations in food products, amino acids, pharmaceuticals, and other fields. At present our products are sold in over 130 countries and regions, and we have plans to both expand to new markets and further broaden our product lineups. Following is an introduction to the Ajinomoto Group's description of our products. Their employee is around 27,518 people as of 2013. The various employee of Ajinomoto Group develop the business stemming from each local culture. They have 105 factories in 17 countries and areas around the world. Its yearly revenue in the fiscal year of 2013 is at around US\$12 billion.

The Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd. was founded 1960. They produce seasoning, instant noodle, beverage, processed food, food service, frozen food, industrial food ingredients and enzyme, animal nutrition, organic chemical fertilizer, packaging and rubber lining service. Currently, they have 7 factories and 18 companies under Ajinomoto Thailand group with 7,000 staff approximately. As they grow the business over 50 years, there can show the ability to endure difficult social, economic situation and disaster crisis. And also they have ability to maintain a leadership position as many brand of the company are the market leader such as Ajinomoto (MSG), Birdy canned coffee and Rosdee seasoning powder.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDING

From interviewing the manager and employee and searching for supportive information, the overall result and finding are shown in Table 4.1

*Table 4.1 Result of Honeybee elements on the sustainable leadership grid*

Honeybee Elements on the Sustainable Leadership Grid		The Observed Conglome rate	Extent to conform		
			Least Evident	Moderately Evident	Most Evident
1	Developing people : grow their own	✓			
2	Labor relations : cooperation	N/A			
3	Retaining staff : strong	✓			
4	Succession planning : strong	✓			
5	Valuing staff : strong	✓			
6	CEO and top team : top team speaker	✓			
7	Ethical behavior : an explicit value	✓			
8	Long-or short-term perspective : long term	✓			
9	Organizational change : considered process	✓			
10	Financial markets orientation : challenge	N/A			
11	Responsibility for environment : strong	✓			
12	Social responsibility (CSR) : strong	✓			
13	Stakeholders : broad focus	✓			
14	Vision's role in the business : share future	✓			
15	Decision making : consensual	✓			
16	Self-management : strong	✓			
17	Team orientation : strong self-governing	✓			
18	Culture : strong	✓			

*Table 4.1 Result of Honeybee elements on the sustainable leadership grid (Continued)*

Honeybee Elements on the Sustainable Leadership Grid		The Observed Conglomerate rate	Extent to conform		
			Least Evident	Least Evident	Least Evident
19	Knowledge sharing and retention : strong	✓			
20	Trust : strong	✓			
21	Innovation : strong	✓			
22	Staff engagement : strong	✓			
23	Quality : high is a given	✓			
Total elements in conformity		21			
Legend: ✓ = conforms, - = does not conform, ? = not known					

### **Developing people**

The company continues developing the employee every level consistency. The training and development program have been set to provide employees the appropriate and sufficiency knowledge, skills and how to utilize its to undertake the tasks to achieve individual and organization objectives. “We truly believe the continuous potential development of employees is always the key component to bring about success for both employee and the company’s business. Employees, either experienced employee or newcomers, need development to enhance and strengthen their knowledge, skills, as well as the optimistic attitude to perform their daily work more efficiency.” (HR manager) “I satisfy with training courses that company providing. Every year, I and my superior will discuss about my training courses which include my basic training from company providing and the training course that match with my interest and my task.” (Employee)

The company also set up the concrete plan and budget allocation for training program. There are consisting of main 3 training program; core training program, specific training program and external training program. The core training is annually designed to provide employees for constructive development programs matching to their roles. The specific training program is tailor-made training courses which fulfill the specific competency gaps of each function. And the external training

program will be provided for supplementing an individual potentials and capabilities of employee in each department. From the above information, Ajinomoto is shown most evident in the developing people.

### **Retaining staff**

The company is really pay attention on retaining staff by providing the appropriate welfare and salary. They had the salary structure improvement project to improve the salary for employee at all levels. The result was shown that the turnover rate was reduced from the previous at more than 10% to be lower than 10%. “The salary structure improvement project was really effective to retain our members from monitoring the result around 5 years. However, we still continue consider to improve more to reduce the turnover rate in order to maintain our valued employee.”(HR manager)

Beside the benefit that company providing, the interviewing data is shown that most of the employee feel proud and satisfy to work with the company because they value their staffs. “I think the company value me and provide me an opportunity for self-improvement. And I’m so glad to be a part of the company.” “One of the reasons for continue working here is the challenge of the job. My boss always provides me an opportunity to do the challenge job to improve my skill.” (Employees)

Moreover, the company has provided the Long-term service reward for retaining staff whose are the regular employees with service years reach 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> years in order to create good morale and pride of employee and create the loyalty of employees to the company. “We have policy to retain our staff by provide long-term service rewards. We create a big ceremony and try to improve the welfare on the reward periodically.” (HR manager) From the data above, the company has retaining staff at the moderately level of Honeybee leadership.

### **Succession planning**

The company believes that they can be success together with employee success. For some working unit, they create the career path development procedure for each employee to develop individual career path to match with their interest and future goal. This plan is shared among employee and his/her superior in order to prepare and

develop the career path together. “I feel glad to develop my career goal with the company so, I know where to go in the organization.”(Employee) HR manager said “We have a professional development program so employee can see a path ahead for career advancement.” Employee also gave a comment that “I know many of managers who have been working since he/she graduated. I heard that they are trust by company to develop to be manager.” Even though the company prefers to grow their own managers and staffs but there is some exception to recruit employee from external for some special skills and non-internal candidate. The data is shown that the company pays attention on promoting from within but there is still not yet fully implement the career path development procedure throughout all organization. So, the succession planning is shown moderately evident.

### **Valuing staff**

Value the employee is one of the cooperate value which set and announce for the Ajinomoto’s policy. As the CEO gave the interview that “we promote quality of work life which contributes to happiness and pride of our employees. We provide opportunity for employment, development and career advancement as well as good working environment. We respect the diversity and individuality of employees. We will treat our employees equally without discrimination.” The company also set value people as a Ajinomoto’s group way by respect the humanity of all the people involved in the Ajinomoto Group’s businesses, and be an organization in which they can grow and display their abilities to the fullest extent.

The company has created a compensation and reward system that can compete with those of other leading companies in the labor market and is always fair in its treatment of all employees so they will have incentive to produce their best quality work, develop themselves and raise their work standards. “We want to be sure that everyone who works with us has a happy and fulfill working life.” (HR manager) “I’m working in the environment that is open, lively, creative, and warm like a family, an environment in which we feel safe, healthy, comfortable and happy.” The employee mentioned with smile (Employee). The Ajinomoto is valuing staff with the most evident for Honeybee leadership.



## **CEO and top team**

The decision making in the company has a process which related to many parties before finalize. There will be the meeting to discuss from the information and share opinion among team members before conclude in the meeting. CEO will be the person who approve and authorize the conclusion that we have in the meeting. He sometimes has some questions to make the decision more clear or suggestion to further improvement.

However, since Ajinomoto is an originated Asian company, the hierarchy can be observed in each organization. Most of the employees always pay respect to their superior and boss. That sometimes effects on decision making in some project. The boss may take a main role for that part. But every decision making is based on the evidence and data which gain from discussion in the meeting. And everyone needs to agree on that before concluding. “We have a lot of meeting. Normally everybody will have a chance to share their opinion in the meeting before we conclude on anything. Our boss also joins in many meeting we have and he acts like to team member.” (Employee) The CEO and top team is at moderately evident. There is cause from culture influence of the hierarchy.

## **Ethical behavior**

The company has set up the concrete plan for ethical issue by establishment the project for ethical behavior named Business Code of Conduct (BCC). This project is a global policy for Ajinomoto and each affiliate of Ajinomoto Group Company shall adopt, but it may make additions or modifications to some of the content, as necessary. There are consist of 7 concerning items which are customer, society, global environment, employee, shareholder and investors, fair and transparent transactions and protection and management of company assets and information. The main objective is to promote awareness and build behavior of ethic internal organization. They set the roadmap and plan of BCC since first stage to promote understanding and raise awareness of employee, the second stage to build trust on BCC and encourage internal compliance with BCC and for the long term to create partnership with suppliers in complying with BCC and put it into sustainable behavior. One of the employee gave the interview that “I notice that the company cares for the

ethical issue for employee. As I can see many activities of BCC to promote awareness, understanding and encourage employee to join.” When interviewing a customer, she said that “I ever called to the company to ask about safety of product information. And I got reliable information so I trust and satisfy with Ajinomoto’s product.”

The company put value on business partners about fairness and shareholders in term of trustworthiness. As the CEO gave the interview that “We exercise all fairness in comparing, evaluating and determining terms when selecting suppliers, contractors or distributors. We prohibit unfair restrictive business conducts. We will disclose the substantial information in a timely and proper manner and deal fairly and honestly with shareholders.” All above evidence show that the company should get the most evident for ethical behavior.

### **Long-or short-term perspective**

The investment on long term aspect is planned from top management. The proactive plan is set to allocate resource for production improvement, research and development, technology innovation and human development.

From the interviewing R&D manager, the evidence is shown that the company put budget for research and development around 1-2% depend on product to strengthen core business in term of quality improvement, cost management, capacity expansion and production process stabilization. They also develop on the future growth driver by developing the products to expand the customer base and expand to new category. Moreover, they have strategy for research and development leadership by maximizing the knowledge from research of Ajinomoto Headquarter, developing Ajinomoto Thailand’s key technology and having the open link for future innovation with external such as university and partner company. All of the activities focus on customer value and customer satisfaction. The company also allocates the resource for human development as mention in Developing people and Valuing staff elements. The most evident in Long term perspective is observed in Ajinomoto Thailand.

### **Organizational change**

The policy from the Top is stated very clear to all the employee that “Ajinomoto Thailand is the one of the biggest affiliates of the mother company and

also as business expansion base to Asian countries like Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. Thus, the thinking of “Change” must be taken into account. Once we stop doing means we are going backward. It is not so important for the company with few people, but here for Thai Ajinomoto group with 7,000 staffs. System change is then quite important especially of people matter. People should be motivated with new job, new position to get new ideas. One key mission as the leader is to build future leaders of the company so I encourage all staffs to expose their potential and always learn the new things.” (CEO’s speech).

The strategy of some product has been revised to support surrounding countries. And there is a new organization that had been established to support business for emerging country expansion. R&D manager said that “We just built the new organization to support product development for emerging countries such as India and Bangladesh which separated from R&D for domestic’s product a few years ago because we see the high market opportunity over there.” That evidence is shown that the company has most evident for organizational change.

### **Responsibility for environment and social**

After interviewed manager of Corporate Communications Department, the policy for social responsibility is very obvious in term of plan and action. They have policy 5 path ways which are (1) Food & Nutrition that consist of Mea Baan Thi Rak Recipe cook book, Cooking club, Thailand Umami Culinary Challenge (Cooking competition), Food and nutrition educational activities to educate about food and nutrition. (2) Education which consist of Ajinomoto Foundation that support for building construction for needy schools and giving the scholarships for graduate student for study aboard, needy university student and children of staff of Ajinomoto Group. (3) Environment by promoting sustainable society by developing environment friendly technologies and products. (4) Community that have the Blood donation project, activities to support handicapped people and natural disaster victims, winter coats and blankets donation for needy students and villagers. (5) Human Resource Development which main focus on social contribution mindset such as Aji Volunteers project, smile earth project, “Mottainai : waste not want not” activity and “Eco-action” activity.



One of the cooperate value is value to communities - (Responsibility). The company's policy from top management is shared that "We are responsible to our communities in which we live and work as well as to the world. As a good corporate citizen, we strive for a healthy society by contributing to the economic, social, cultural, educational and environmental development." The company has set thorough measures to protect, control, and monitor environmental variables in strict compliance with related laws and regulations. From observation, the company has got several environmental awards and certifications continuously. There is a procedure to ensure the effect of company's activity to environment by conducting Environmental Assessment for each for the project before implementation. The company will not take any action that will harm the environment of the communities in which we do business, nor to harm the environment. And also at each factory, they promote activities and develop technology to support for environmental friendly.

Not only strong environmental responsibility but also social responsibility as it starts from core value of business, planning & strategy and action. The company strives to instill a sense of environmental and social responsibility in all its employees through campaigns and training as well as joining in activities with other companies and governmental agencies. So, the Environment, Social responsibility and stakeholders of Honeybee leadership elements show the most evident of Honeybee leadership practice.

### **Vision's role in the business**

The vision of the company is "To be a global company by contributing to the better lives of people through our food and health and other related products". The vision of the company is shared among all members many ways. From observation, the vision can be visualized on the board of each department. And the employee also told that they know the vision from the announcement from manager and internet which is the internal network for information sharing. One of the employee that was interviewed said that "I can understand the vision clearly and agree that the current vision will play important role in the business because as a food company, we should contribute the good products to grow sustainable with the society." The evidence is show most evident in Honeybee Leadership element for Vision's role in the business.

## **Decision making**

The company has a procedure to make decision at each level. Most of the conclusions mainly come from consensual among team members. “Once we have to decide the further direction or solution, we must get agreement from all the team members. It is very importance the team work.” “I can share my concerning and solution when meeting with the team even though I’m just a junior staff.”(Employee) However, there are some comment from one employee that was interviewed said that “Most of the meeting, I feel that we try to make consensual among team. But in some meeting I feel that the sales manager is very dominate the conclusion in the meeting because he is in the very top position. I think he makes some decision from his top position.”

The decision making for the company is moderately evident as the result show that most of the decision making is consensual among team members but there is some comment that faced the issue with manager decision making.

## **Self-management**

From interview employee, the working environment creates the self-management because normally, person-in-charge will get assignment to handle their own project. As they have a yearly plan, the manager will allocate all the task to each employee. The employee has to set up their own schedule and plan to achieve the target. Moreover, the superior same time get to opportunity to improve their management skill by advice and suggest their own subordinate. “I always handle my own project and if I have any problem or want to get some advice, I will ask for support from my superior directly. But I still have to report and ask for approval from my boss.” (Employee) “The company has many projects yearly, so I have to allocate the work to myself and my subordinate base on their experience and knowledge. I think it good for them to improve their ability by apply their knowledge to the task. And of course I will support other project anytime they want me.” (Marketing Manager). At the end of the year, all employee including manager will be evaluated their performance based on performance evaluation system for Ajinomoto Group’s employee in Thailand. This system means for getting better results from individuals and establish a culture for development of all employee. It provides employee with the

clear goal for each project in order to let employee manage the project by themselves to achieve the goal. And at the end, the employee will be reward based on their performance.

However, as an Asian culture of hierarchy, the employee still cannot fully manage everything by themselves. They still need to discuss and get approval from the line management. From the evidence, the company has a moderately evident for self-management.

### **Team orientation**

As a product providing based company, there are many parties related in one project. In the one particular project such as new product, capacity expansion or improvement project, the team member is required to form up from difference parties because the difference knowledge and experience will be useful and share among team members. Most of the time, the power for decision making would go to related parties. However, the organization structure is rather tall than horizontal. So, there are many layers in the management team for decision making.

“I was join in many projects. Most of the project must have at least 2 parties to cooperate. The big project I joined was around 9 parties. Each of us had our own responsibility to achieve the same goal. I really gained a lot of knowledge from different background of team members. But sometime I feel that I cannot make my own decision because I have to base on the higher level management.” (Employee)

The team orientation in Honeybee Leadership is shown a moderately evident from the above information.

### **Culture**

The company put effort on the core value development for all employees by creating Ajinomoto Group Way and having cooperate value sharing in order to build the positive culture in the organization. “The Ajinomoto group way is a fundamental think and attitude that we want to share throughout the group in order to create the Ajinomoto’s culture. We put highlight on create new value, pioneer spirit, social contribution and value people.” (HR manager) From interviewing R&D employee, she said that her department continuously creates value with the new ideas

and innovation by utilizing facilities, technology and know-how. “We have monthly meeting to share our new ideas and innovation that we have create the new value for our company.” (R&D employee) “Our marketing teams have strong cooperation with sales teams to survey and expand the sales area to the opportunity market all over Thailand.” (Marketing manager) For the social contribution and value people aspect are already mentioned in the Honeybee element of Social responsibility and valuing staff. So, the element of culture for Ajinomoto has got the most evident.

### **Knowledge sharing and retention**

The core knowledge and technology for Ajinomoto Thailand has transferred from Ajinomoto Headquarter at Japan. But there is some knowledge that has been developed in Thailand such as coffee know-how. So, there is a lot of knowledge and technology in Ajinomoto Thailand that need to be sharing and retention. The main unit that has to handle a lot of knowledge and technology are R&D unit. From the interview of R&D manager about knowledge management said that they have a training procedure to train the new comer or new assigned person in charge of each project. The training is considered the necessity of knowledge and technology that they should know. “We give a lot of time on training the know-how and technology to our new comer and also existing employee.” (R&D manager)

The knowledge is also shared among R&D members in the monthly meeting in order to exchange and retain the knowledge in the organization. They also have the documentation system to issue the technical report as an output for each project as I can observe from their procedure for documentation in their unit. When interview the new employee from marketing she said that “I get the knowledge of marketing from the guide books that every marketer must get to be the guideline for working since enters the company and we must return when we resign.” The data is shown that Ajinomoto has most evident for knowledge sharing and retention in the organization.

### **Trust**

The organization has strong team association. Most of the employee trusts in the team members from interview data. “I feel comfortable to work with my team

even though we might ever face the conflict among member but at the end we still can rely on each other and continue the working together as a team.” “I can trust my colleague to do important things for me such as keep my travelling allowance money or tell my computer password when I’m out of office but they need to assess my computer.” “I open and trust my superior to share the conflict issue of me and my colleague. She always helps and tries to find solutions for me.” (Employees) From observation during walking tour the office, most of the employee put their personal belonging such as mobile phone and some money on their desk even though they are away from their desk. That shows that they are trust in their colleague. The trust of Honeybee Leadership is shown most evident in the company.

### **Innovation**

Innovation is play important role in the business. From the CEO shared vision that “For Thailand, he aims to double the current business size of 30,000 million Baht by understanding customers’ needs and creating the innovations for new products.” In the company, there is 2 main units who take main responsibility for innovation of the company which are Research & Development and Technology and Engineering Center.

Research & Development Department has action plan for innovation development of product and production process. The innovation takes place for the new product development and product and process improvement. They have established the strategy for know-how development and patent registration to strengthen Ajinomoto Thailand innovation position. Last year and this year they had registered 2 patents and next year they plan to register 5 patents. Technology and Engineering takes responsible for developing productive technology and providing technical and engineering support for all manufacturing factories of Ajinomoto Group of Companies in Thailand. So, the innovation is shown strong evident for Ajinomoto.

### **Staff engagement**

From interview and observation, many staffs have been working for company as they have the value for take responsibility for their task. Some of them work late after working hour or come to work in holiday to get their task done



following the plan and schedule. “I always work with full effort to get the jobs done following schedule.” “I don’t mind to come to work at weekend if my job is not yet done.” “I’m willing to do the additional job that over my responsibility.” (Employees) The observation also found that after 5 pm which is the end of working hour, there is still a lot of employees continue working even though some of them such as supervisor and above position are not paid unless they work until 9 pm. The staff engagement is shown most evident in Honeybee Leadership.

## Quality

The Ajinomoto has the quality management policy to pay attention on customers, and provide products and services meeting with their satisfaction. The Quality Assurance department as a main party to conduct Quality assessment meeting following the supported procedure among each project members to ensure product quality, safety and applicable laws and regulation of every new products and revised products. For production process, they always deliver products and services of uniform quality as they have quality control at every steps of production to ensure the consistence quality.

The quality control top manager from all of the factories and quality assurance department have a quality meeting every month to update anything which related to quality and safety such as customer complaint, supplier complaint, trouble in production process that cause effect to product quality. This meeting aims to share and help each other to find solution about quality issue.

They actively provide appropriate information to the customer and continue to improve our trustworthiness as they have a Customer Information Center to answer all the call from customers. The data is kept for further improvement. The High-quality products and services are also important for employee at all levels, from research and development to production, distribution, sales and services. “I always check the product appearance before delivering in order to ensure that I will deliver the high quality product to customers.” (Sales staff) From the above information, the quality is shown most evident in Honeybee leadership for Ajinomoto Thailand.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

When comparing the finding of Ajinomoto Thailand evidence with the previous studies that they have practice closely fit the Honeybee Leadership criteria. There is found the common and different points to be discussed as follow.

Ajinomoto Thailand has most evident in *Developing people* and *Valuing staff* element as same as University (Kantabutra & Saratun, 2013), the conglomerate (Kantabutra & Avery, 2013) and SCG (Kantabutra & Avery, 2011). They consider employees as the most important assets and priority to their people by demonstration in various ways such as investing heavily in their people development with the objective of improving employee's health, knowledge and competencies.

The *Retaining staff* and *Succession planning* element are shown the moderately evident while SCG (Kantabutra & Avery, 2011) is shown most evident. Ajinomoto Thailand has many ways to retaining their staff such as concern on employee welfare and salary, value their staffs and provide proper rewards. They also prefer to grow their own managers and develop their own staff rather than bring in outsiders except when special skills are needed or internal candidates are unavailable. SCG clearly shows the running as a team-based system with internal succession planning. So, the employee can notice their career development path. For Ajinomoto Thailand, even they have the system for career path development but still need to improve to implement throughout the company.

When comparing Ajinomoto Thailand with Theptarin Hospital (Kantabutra, 2011), even though they are both a big firm, but the evident for *CEO and top team* element is shown difference. Ajinomoto Thailand shows moderately evident as they have process and working team for each decision making steps from the team members before finalize with CEO while Theptarin Hospital shows none conform to Honeybee Leadership as they show that CEO appears to be the heroic leader. The reason may cause from the hospital was founded by the present owner and CEO so, all

of the strategic direction and final approval come from CEO. This may reflect a Thai cultural respect for senior people, and the fact that the CEO is the successful entrepreneur behind the firm.

Most of the previous studies and Ajinomoto Thailand show most evident in *Long-term perspective* and *Organizational change*. The uncertainty and change are considered and managed. For example, University (Kantabutra & Saratun, 2013) considers staff development as critical in effectively responding to environment change. All of the company has the long-term strategies and plan which mainly involve with investment for future growth and competitiveness, such as employee development, business restricting, innovation and R&D and knowledge management.

Moreover, the *Ethical behavior*, *Social responsibility*, *Environment responsibility* and *Stakeholder* element are show most evident in most of the previous studies and Ajinomoto Thailand. For example SCG (Kantabutra & Avery, 2011) conducts business believing that they must demonstrate a keen sense of responsibility towards the interests of its stakeholders. Simultaneously, a cement company must be actually aware of environment consideration and the wellbeing of society and the nation as a whole. The social responsibility is clearly evident in the company's action as same as Ajinomoto Thailand. They have many projects to support for Thai society. The Ethic is an integral part of SCG and Ajinomoto Thailand culture. SCG views competence and moral integrity as contributing heavily to sustainable growth and prosperity for an organization and society. As the SCG has adheres to Corporate Governance and Code of Ethics at all-time which same practice as Ajinomoto Thailand has Business Code of Conduct.

*Shared vision* and *Culture* are most evident for Ajinomoto Thailand as same as the conglomerate (Kantabutra & Avery, 2013). The conglomerate's organizational culture revolves around its shared values and vision. The management considers it essential to make sure that employees share the values and understand the company vision because in their view this enables the business to steer though the great challenges, keen competition and rapid changes it facts. They give important and allow more time to communicate and share their vision and culture for the vision and value to take effect from leaders to employees at all levels. That can make their



members understanding and engaging to the core value and making everyone to go to the same direction of the company's vision.

*Decision making, Self-management and Team orientation* are shown moderately evident as same as University (Kantabutra & Saratun, 2013), the conglomerate (Kantabutra & Avery, 2013) and True corporation (Kantabutra, 2012). The university and the conglomerate, the former and current presidents/CEO appear to be highly respected "heroic" leaders, may be cultural given the high power distance valued by Thai society. For Ajinomoto Thailand, there is an Asian culture of hierarchy, employee still cannot fully have a consensual decision-making or self-management and also the organization structure is tall rather than horizontal as the evidence appear that there are many layer in the line management. So it is sometimes blocks empowering employees to make independent decision and self-management.

*Knowledge* element also show strong evident for Ajinomoto Thailand and all previous studies including SCG (Kantabutra & Avery, 2011). SCG boosts exchanging and sharing knowledge among employees to create mutual relationships, and to enable networking of knowledge and professionalism for the benefit of the business. Ajinomoto Thailand also has knowledge sharing and retention by training for newcomers and encouraging knowledge sharing in the organization. The documentation system is implemented in order to ensure retaining of the knowledge for each generation.

The most evident of *Innovation* element, all of the previous studies appear most evident including Ajinomoto Thailand. When comparing Sa Paper Preservative House (Kantabutra & Suriyankietkaew, 2013) and Ajinomoto Thailand, even though they are different in size and category of the business but from the results present that innovation takes role in both business. Sa Paper has innovated not only the products but also organizational processes to overcome barriers such as shortages of supply and trade laws and regulations. In term of products, the company has the ability to adapt to various requirements from its customers because of its highly skilled workforce. The ability to innovate the products has helped the company to stay step ahead of the competition all the time. For Ajinomoto Thailand also has 2 kinds of innovations which are new product development as a major and product and process improvement

as a minor innovation. Moreover, the evident shows that the company continuously develops on innovation by establishment of the patent registration strategy.

For *Staff engagement* and *Trust* are showed strong for Theptarin Hospital (Kantabutra, 2011) that the employee helped the hospital to survive during 1997 Asian economic crisis. The top and mid-level managers reduced their salaries to save the money for the hospital, demonstrating a very strong teamwork culture, trust, royalty and respect for lower-level employee. Ajinomoto Thailand appears most evident in Trust and Staff-engagement from interview and observation.

The last element of *Quality*, all of the previous studies as well as Ajinomoto Thailand is appeared most evident. Ajinomoto Thailand always prioritizes on quality first in order to to ensure product quality, safety and applicable laws and regulation to satisfy the customers. Theptarin Hospital (Kantabutra, 2011) considers to provide the best service to clients and also consider to be the model for other institutions for raising the standard of diabetes care nationally.

## **Recommendation**

The Ajinomoto Thailand has practiced most evident in 15 elements of Honeybee leadership which already show the good tendency for sustainability of the business. So, all of those elements should be continuously maintained practicing. However, there are 6 elements that appear moderately evident. So, they should be improved to become more sustainable leadership. The following is the recommendation for all the moderately evident element which are suggested practice from the previous studies.

*Retaining staff*, Ajinomoto Thailand still has area for improvement as the result show that the turnover rate is still not yet satisfy because they still consider to improve to reduce turnover rate more. Bathroom Design (Kantabutra, 2012) is shown the staff development fosters retention. The employee is given priority and promoted from within. The employee gets the training both work-related and life skill. The executives are encouraged employee to study aboard and provided the financial support well as work exemption to do so. Even children of general staff are given scholarships, as they might just be the next generation of labor force. The further

education level might be valued from some employees to develop themselves in their field of interest.

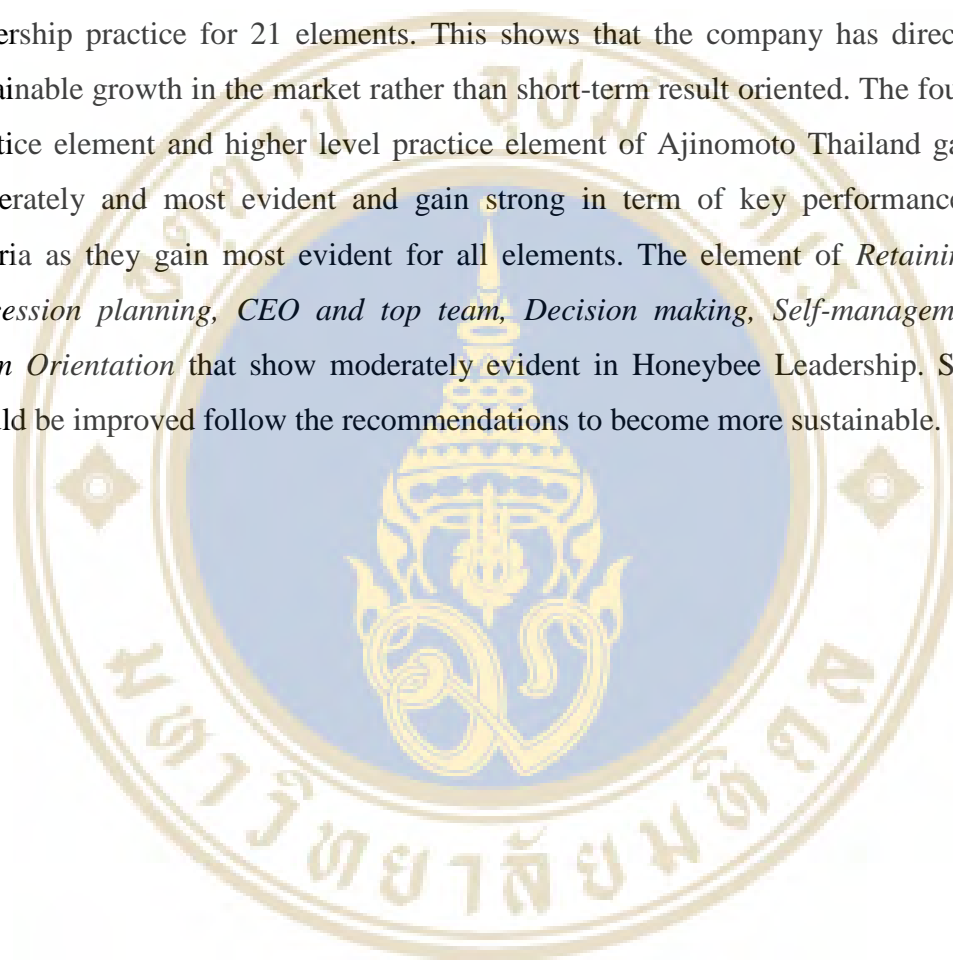
*Succession planning*, Ajinomoto Thailand has moderately evident to develop the succession planning for promoting from within. The University (Kantabutra & Saratun, 2013) has been expressed about developing talent for succession planning. They have planned to produce a number of candidates for a particular vacancy. They determine retirement dates of current position holders. Then, the talent pool will be filled with people possessing a number of specific competencies and core values who will manage and lead changes in 2015 and beyond. The people development also considers implementing to ensure continuity of effective leadership. Moreover, the evaluation is also required after implemented. Ajinomoto should adapt the individual career path development to develop and prepare the employee career path in the organization.

*CEO and Top Team, Decision making, self-management and Team Orientation* as an Asian culture of hierarchy and tall organization structure, the CEO still take place as a leader who mainly hold the management and decision making in the organization. The University (Kantabutra & Saratun, 2013) has recommended the administrators to perceive employees at all level as a prime asset by continuously developing and retaining them, so those self-governing teams are enabled. They recommend promoting from within to strengthen organization culture.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Ajinomoto Thailand Company complies with Honeybee leadership practice for 21 elements. This shows that the company has direction for sustainable growth in the market rather than short-term result oriented. The foundation practice element and higher level practice element of Ajinomoto Thailand gain only moderately and most evident and gain strong in term of key performance driver criteria as they gain most evident for all elements. The element of *Retaining staff*, *Succession planning*, *CEO and top team*, *Decision making*, *Self-management* and *Team Orientation* that show moderately evident in Honeybee Leadership. So, there should be improved follow the recommendations to become more sustainable.



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