The Study of Leadership Behavior and The Factors That Make a Leader in The Organization's Culture in Thailand[1]

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Abstract

This study examines the various factors which have shaped Thai managerial behavior and exploring the influence of cultural. The basic reasons for studying cultural leadership is which leadership behavior or style can be influenced by cultural values, beliefs, education and personality. Thai culture is unique, to understand the Thai culture in Thai leadership style. This study investigates the key characteristics and nature of culture of Thai manager in Thai organizations. This study proposes that the new generation in the Thai organizations acts differently from the cultural stereotype from the literature in Thai culture and management.

The literature review examines leadership theories, leadership styles and organization culture in Thai organization. The literature review also focuses on Hofstede's Cultural dimension in the Thai cultural context. The existing literature on leadership indicates that the leadership behavior of managers is an important factor for organizations. Each manage utilizes different techniques to control their staff to achieve organization goals. Therefore, this research focused on Thai leadership styles and the most criteria factors that make them become a leader. Moreover, this research also used Hofstede's Cultural Dimension to identify the effects of Thai cultural influences of organization in Thailand.

The research used a qualitative approach from literature review and in-depth interviews with Thai managers who work in Thai organization that comprehensive answers from participants about their leadership behaviors and what are their factors to become a leader in their point of view. These findings further our understanding of the role of traditional leadership values in Asian contexts, emphasizing that such a leadership style generally involves support and relationship building rather than domination and

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coercion. The findings of this study have important implications for the development of leadership in Thailand and other developing countries where traditional leadership values prevail. Learning organization has been proposed as a fundamental strategic process creating sustainable competitive advantage for the future. Leadership is vital in facilitating learning organization. The objectives of the present study are to investigate the behavior of Thai leaders and find out the main factors that made them become a leader focusing in Thai organizations that are influenced by the local culture in various ways.

In the Global Leadership Forecast, Thai Leaders were asked to identify areas which they think are critical for effective leadership in Thailand. They also selected: creativity, organizational, strategy and good change management (Boatman, 2011). This suggest that Thai leaders are possibly lacking the critical characteristic necessary for them to succeed in their workplace and to make their organization more efficient and productive. Research shows that leaders who have been lacking in certain skills necessary to provide effective guidance for their employees are leaving their organizations vulnerable (Sternberg, 2007). Therefore, leadership development could potentially be needed in order to improve and expand creativity, strive for success and empathy. Nevertheless, Thai managers are known for taking actions into their own hands when it comes to leadership development. The number of leadership and management conferences in Thailand has been increasing every year. They range from student leadership development programs (EARCOS, 2013) to management leadership conferences (PRweb.com, 2013). Those events are attracting participants from all over the world resulting in great opportunity to learn and share knowledge among each other and develop effective leadership competencies and capabilities. Although the future of the leadership in Thai organizations looks bright, there is a need to take a look at the fundamental characteristics of effective leadership in Thailand.

Keywords: Management's Style, Leadership, Leadership Behavior, Organization's culture, Working Relationship.

Introduction

The study aimed at exploring and admired, thus investigates the leadership style of a samples of organizations in Thailand. Organization culture has a significant impact on employee's view, the strong of control and hierarchy system. The leader is the person that gets in charge of the departments or the whole organization. He or she is the person in the group that possesses the combination of personality and skills that makes others want to follow his or her directions. Effective leaders are those who increase their company's bottom lines. Is a leader born or made? While there are people who seem to be naturally

endowed with more leadership abilities than others. Believe that people can learn to become leaders by concentrating on improving particular leadership skills. Alvesson (1996), claims that a situational approach enables leadership to be viewed and studied as "a practical accomplishment" (p.476) rather than starting with a conceptualization of leadership as whatever the appointed leader does. The intention of this study is to explore the relationship between organization's cultures in Thailand, work culture organization behavior, Thai management style, manager attitude, organization commitment and job satisfaction. Also, the duration of service within the company and the factors that impact on employees work improvement and development in Thai's organization will be analyzed.

This research has indicated the organizational commitment of employee is related to both management's style and job satisfaction. Also, reduce of employees turnover will affect to organization's cost. To make the employees in organization happy, what are they doing and willing to be and work in the organization. (Ngamchokchaicharroen 2003) found that the implications for organizations attempting to build on organizational commitment and enhance worker job satisfaction. Organizational culture refers to the beliefs and values that have existed in an organization for a long time, and to the beliefs of the staff and the foreseen value of their work that will influence their attitudes and behavior. Especially, in Thailand has an obvious organizational culture that each company has their own values.

Organizational culture is described by Robbins & Coulter (2005) as the shared values, beliefs, or perceptions held by employees within an organization or organizational unit. Because organizational culture reflects the values, beliefs and behavioral norms that are used by employees in an organization to give meaning to the situations that they encounter, it can influence the attitudes and behavior of the staff. Understanding the organization's core values can prevent possible internal conflict, which is the main reason for our research into these cultural issues.

The purpose of this study to gain a greater understanding of Thai's cultural in organization, work values and understand Thai management style. Understand how to work with Thai managers. Learn the leadership behavior in Thai organization, how do they behave, manage and how do they become a successful in their job. Also, learn how to work with Thai management style. And what makes Thai people become a leadership. There are supposed to be something that makes people grow and grow but some are stable. Why some people will be able to stay in the organization for long time even though there's slowly move of the opportunities to grow and understanding social status of people and the vertical structure of a Thai company. The literature review will examines leadership and management, leadership styles and the instruments used to measure leadership styles in the Thai cultural context.

This research is based on the assumption that Thai business reflects a society in which hierarchy and respect for seniors are very important. According to "Style of leadership in Thailand Authoritarian and Autocratic" that determines Thai mangers how is Thai Managers and their attitude as well as the behavior of Thai employees about Thai employees are respecting their managers and expect the hierarchies system. Thai employees need a boss who makes it very clear, who is in charge for all the jobs and able to make a decisions.

Objectives

The general objective of the study is to evaluate and investigate the performance of employees in accordance to the current leadership styles of managers of the selected companies in Thailand. This study attempts to review and analyze the type of leadership imposed by managers to their employees. In the recent studies of employee work performance, leadership type is the greatest source of the improvement of a business. Here, it exposes the positive as well as the negative treatment accorded to the employees as a result of an effective/ineffective job performance.

Likewise, it is essential to study the existing leadership practices and status of employee job performance. For this reason the following objectives are formulated:

1.To investigate the Thai managers who work in Thai companies and study their leadership behavior, to find out what are the most important factors that make them become a leader in their companies.

2.To identify the organization's culture in Thai company that effect to the leadership style.

3.To identify Thai leadership behavior compare with Foreigner/western leadership behavior the perception of the subjects pertaining to leader's power has significant relationship to their perception towards job performance of Thai employees.

4.To make recommendations on the best practices in enhancing employee job performances in accordance to the effectiveness of leaders in Thailand as well as the great leaders in the history.

The most important evidence that indicated the worsening conditions of an organization in Thailand is obviously hierarchy and has its own cultures in each company. And the duration of work time line of Thai employees that seems too long. But there are some leaders that still young. With regards to the problem, this study aims to discover and investigation how can they became a leader and find the main factors to help Thai employee never or less.

Methods

Source of data: The data used for this study was obtained from different sources. This ranged from personal interviews, observations and library search. The primary data are those Face-to-face Interview: Apart from use of a non-structured interview was conducted for proprietors and manager or supervisors in Thailand. Secondary data is based on past research work on this area of study. They are data collected from Internet, textbooks, government publications, unpublished research work and journals. Also, acknowledge authorities within the area of studies provided valuable materials for this study.

Participant: This research uses qualitative approach. The researcher uses in-depth interviews to find out the answers from participants. The study involves exploratory research to identify the leadership techniques and the influence of Thai culture on the leadership behavior or style in Thai organization. This research design was collecting and analyzing data from literature search to identify other studies in this area and other studies on the same topic in different areas and the participants of the study were 12 successful of Thai managers who work in Thai organizations. Some of the participants have spent significant amount of time living outside of the country for educational or professional purpose. As well as providing background use this information in the analysis to think about what is the same and what is different in this study and why. Also, an essential background to study that familiarizes with the relevant policy documents.

Therefore, this study utilized the opinions of women leaders whose number grows rapidly in Thai organizations. All of the participants have spent significant amount of time living outside country for educational or professional purpose. Some of them also deal with international clients and employees on an everyday basis. Even though some of the leaders have spent more time aboard than others, their response did not differ.

Measures: Researcher analyzed existing literature to understand the gap in knowledge about the development of effective leadership in Thailand and learn their behavior to find out the factors that make them become a leader in the organization. Interviews were semi-structured to allow for open-ended answers. 12 interviewers were conducted face-to-face with about 30 - 60 minutes each. Interviews were conducted in Thai and English, which was a working language for all the participants. Interviewees indicated that English is the most powerful language to any type of job. English is the one of the top criteria factor that needed to become a leader. The number of interviews was limited by difficulty in volunteered respondents. As indicated by one of leaders, the Thai are not easily trusting strangers and may be not willing to share their career experiences. Even though the sample size of this exploratory

study is relatively small, the results still provide informative data about the current state of the leadership in Thailand.

Results

In the past, Thailand was very comfortable and has a simple life of solitude and self-sufficiency but when globalization came into society, it is changing dramatically and quickly. Globalization has been affecting to Thai society and we could not predict. However, we have to adapt and development to the next level, gets the good things from globalization and adapted to the current social in Thailand. It is widely accepted for long time that leadership crisis in Thailand is always together. Since when we were children, the education system was never instilling values of "a good leadership" in the course of instruction at all levels. The developed countries in Asia have instilled a positive attitude and good leadership to their youth

In Thailand Family businesses comprise of about 40 percent of business in Thailand and provide the most revenue (Bertrand, Johnson, Samphantharak, & Schoar, 2008). Over 90 percent of people associated ideal leadership with male figure (Taylor, Morin, Cohn, Clark, & Wang, 2008). However, in Thailand over 39 percent of senior management positions are held by women. Since women in Thailand are more participative in the workplace than females in any other country. It results in more promotions and higher position among females. Most of Thai leadership have spent significant amount of time living outside of the country for educational or professional purposes lasting between one to over 20 years in length. Some of them also deal with international clients and employees on an everyday basis. Even though some of the leaders have spent more time abroad than others, their response did not differ in terms of content and suggestions of how to improve effective leadership in Thailand. Business in Thailand is more formal than in many western countries and to ensure successful cross cultural management you will need to be aware that there are strict rules of protocol that must be observed. Kar (2013) found the only one-third of Thai leaders strongly agree that their coworkers are committed to doing quality work, while just 4 in 10 say they themselves have opportunities to learn and grow. That means too many senior executives feel that their development has stalled and they harbor doubts about the quality of their coworkers' contributions.

The study will analyzed of data from interview which proposed classification into 3 steps as following: 1. General information of the interviewees, 2. Role in the organization and 3. Factors that play a role in leadership. General information of the interviewees is to analysis the background information of leaders. This will include analyzing data on age, education, occupation and role of leaders. The researcher

study was conducted interviews with 12 Thai people who work at the managerial level in Thai organization. The results of the data analysis after interview were as follows:

Gender: The number of women interviewees are 8 person at the percentage of 67 and the number of men interviewees are 5 person at the percentage of 33.

Age: The age group with the highest numbers between 29 - 35 years old is 8 interviewees at the percentage of 67; the age group number between 36 – 45 years old is 2 interviewees at the percentage of 17, the age group number between 46 – 55 years old is 1 interviewee at the percentage of 8 and 1 interviewee age over 55 years old at the percentage of 8.

Education: The group with the highest number is 7 interviewees with their Bachelor degree at the percentage of 66 and another 4 interviewees graduated with Master degree at the percentage of 34. One of these 4 interviewee had has degree from abroad.

Working age: The interviewees who work as managerial level in their organization between 3 – 5 years is 5 interviewees at the percentage of 42, the number of interviewees who works as managerial level in their organization for 6 – 10 years is 5 interviewees at the percentage of 42, there is one interviewee who work as a managerial level for 11 – 15 years at the percentage of 8 and the interviewee who work as a managerial level for more than 15 years is one person at 8 percentage.

The factors that make a leader

Leadership is the process of influencing and facilitating individuals and groups to accomplish necessary tasks in a work environment (Yulk, 2002; Nelson & Quick 2006). It is about influencing people to do things that they normally would not do. However, the definition of effective leadership is challenging and many sources address it differently. To date, the literature has not been very comprehensive in creating a concise definition of effective leadership. Even though, there are several leadership styles, which could potentially result in effective leadership only one has been distinguished as the most suitable by researchers and practitioners.

Knowledge: It's including education and experiences. In Thai organization, it is important to have education. If you have higher education, it will help you more to get a higher level but most of the time experiences is more require in the most Thai companies (khun Sukanya Mawan – Guest Service Supervisor at Anatara Hotel Resort and Spa).

Decision Making: Many older Thai companies still adhere to a rigid hierarchy, although this is starting to change in many multi-nationals, entrepreneurial companies, and those that do business with foreigners on a regular basis. This is a country where rank not only has its privileges, but also comes with

clear-cut responsibilities. Employees show respect and deference to their managers and in return, managers know their subordinates' personal situations and offer advice and guidance wherever it is needed. In more entrepreneurial companies, this may be changing.

Enthusiasm: Khun Chantima Nopchamnarn, a reservation sales manager at Dusit Thani Hua Hin said "A leader must be someone with enthusiasm, there are always new and creative because the organization cannot be successful if the managers sluggish and disengaged". To be happy for what they work and enjoy what they are doing is the key success to become a manager because you love what you doing then you can do it well and you can do it for long time, also you will do it to the best.

Campaigned: A manager is the one who ready to accept everything, by not choosing or make a decision only his interest. A good manager must jump in with all types either hard nor easy. With the spirit, a manager must be fought with all their problems. Khun Oraporn Achariyaporn (Central Reservation Sales Manager at Dusit Thani) believes that to be a manager should go for everything. Most of Thai people afraid to do things that they never did before, so they do not want to work and afraid of mistake. If you did not take a chance to prove that you can do anything then less chance to go forward to the next level.

Decisiveness and Confidence: According to Khun Tasara Taksinapan, Marketing Manager of Bangkok Airways said "it's very necessary what the society in Thailand needs beside education and experiences" To move up the next level fast, you have to show your confidence and brave decision.

Creativity: Thai leaders understand the need for nurturing creativity and innovation in the workplace. The participants have indicated that creativity plays a significant role in organizational life regardless of the sector of the industry. Individuals have presented various examples of their creativity in workplace ranging from innovative resolution for budget gaps to original promotion of the company on the global market. (Boatman, 2011).

Set up the goal: In this study, leaders have shown their understanding of importance of setting high goals. They are not only pushed themselves to be successful but also inspired their subordinates to aim high as well. Most of the leaders agreed that goals in organizations should be set extremely high. This way employees will be motivated and stimulated to achieve higher goals.

Modern: In this study, interviewees had a similar view of the effective leadership characteristics among Asian countries. They also considered transformational leadership as a great form of successful management (Roongrerngsuke & Liefooghe, 2012). When interviewed they agreed that clear goals and directions play a significant role. Vision helps employees to understand company approach, needs and help respond accordingly. Leaders should act as trainers who coach and communicate well. They understand that improving what they have already learned and accomplished is very important.

Cultural influence in Thai Organization

Cross cultural communication will be more effective when you are working in Thailand, if you keep in mind that each person has a very distinct role within the organization, and maintaining that role helps to keep order. In Thailand, as in other hierarchical societies, managers may take a somewhat paternalistic attitude to their employees. Thailand's intercultural competence and readiness for change is low. Its' conservatism means that change can often be seen as a threat to society. Managers are therefore likely to be averse to change and it is essential that any changes are viewed as positive for the 'whole' and not just an individual. Of course, change does happen, but effective management in Thailand needs to take into account that any change is going to take longer to implement.

Communication and Negotiation Styles: Remain standing until told where to sit. Personal relationships are crucial to conducting business. Relationships are based on respect and trust. It takes time to develop a comfortable working relationship and patience may be a necessary cross cultural attribute. The first meeting often takes place over lunch or drinks so your Thai colleagues can get to know you. Thais are non-confrontational. It is rare for them to overtly disagree. Hence, bear in mind that "yes" may not mean agreement in the way most westerners understand the term. It may mean, "I am saying this so you will stop talking about the subject".

Boss or Team Player: Due to the hierarchical set up in Thailand, it is important that the manager maintains his /her role as 'boss' and engenders the necessary respect from within the team. When the manager needs to work collectively with his / her team however, then it is important that the need to work collectively is stated and that the team is encouraged to operate openly in a non-threatening environment. If an individual makes any contributions which are seen as not useful or necessary, the manager needs to deal with this sensitively. It is essential that the individual does not feel shamed in front of his/her colleagues and that the rest of the group feel able to continue participating and offering their contributions.

Leadership in Thai Organizations: according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Thailand id a long-term goal oriented country. It refers to how much society values long-term over short-term decisions. The concept of "Mong Karn Klai", which means "looking ahead" has been very important in Thai industry (Pimpa, 2012). The strong work ethic comes from this tradition where leaders want and strive for longevity and prosperity for the organization. This is also a reason why employees stay long in organizations to reach the stability and show commitment to organization.

Family Businesses: The fact that many Thai companies are family businesses run and pass on from one generation to another generation, the atmosphere in all other organizations is also family-like. Current

leaders mentioned that in their relationship with their bosses they felt as a part of a family. The higher managers have treated them as sons and daughters. They were coached, mentored and cared for. Psychologists agree that this practice is very common in the workplace in Thailand (Dattner, 2011). Transference is a term explaining why individuals experience re-enacting of their past at work. In Thailand, children need to respect elders and to obey set rules. Nevertheless, because the relationship between managers and subordinates are very close in the workplace employees feel more comfortable.

Thai Leaders Vs Western Leaders

Geert Hofstede, a Dutch researcher in social psychology, has authored provocative research about Eastern versus Western culture's attitudes toward risk that sheds light on multi-cultural differences with risk appetite. From his studies can be applied to implementing enterprise performance management and business analytics. The emotionalism that goes with passion is more common in America than elsewhere. Europeans see it as a sort of business evangelicalism and are very suspicious of it. Decisiveness is common to effective executives in all countries. Conviction is common to all. Integrity is a complex characteristic very much determined by national cultures. What is honest in one society is not in another, and vice versa. Adaptability is a pronounced characteristic of American leadership generally. It is less common and less valued in Asia and Europe. It will be needed everywhere soon enough. Emotional toughness is common to all top executives; Americans spend more time trying not to show it. Emotional resonance, the ability to grasp what motivates others and appeal effectively to it is most important in the U.S.A. and Europe at this point in time. It will become more important in Asia as living standards improve, knowledge workers become more important, professional management gets greater demand, and CEOs have to compete for managerial talent. Self-knowledge is important in avoiding the sort of over-reach so common in America; it is less common a virtue in America than in Asia, and is strength of the Asian executive.

Thai management often gives the highest importance are harmony in business and in the same organization because they prefer to avoiding commotion and conflict in the same organization. This phenomenon is also connected to the organization culture of giving direction, setting goal and course of operation so that everyone follows by top management. If organization is implemented using which a high degree of employee participation. Thai culture may create barriers to the success of the implementation. Not only might employees feel uncomfortable being asked to participate, they may not even know how. In addition, the organization's implementation may not work because it is essential to have employee participation for it to work and Thai culture creates barriers to letting that happens. When entering leadership roles, Thai leaders need to hold on the old traditions in order to have a mix both

effective Western practices and important Thai values. Maintaining healthy, strong relationships and traditions plays a significant role in Thai society. One of the traditions put especially high emphasis on relation between leaders and employees. "Bunkhun" which refers to obligation and need to take care of others is one of the most important traditions explaining the pattern of relationships among Thais (Roongrerngsuke & Liefooghe, 2012).

Emotional in Thai Organization: Some leaders stated that they do not know how to deal with organizational change (Boatman, 2011) the reason being their lack of sensitivity to employees' emotions and concerns. However, in the current study all the leaders interviewed have presented high emotional intelligence skills. They indicated that it is especially significant to show subordinates that leaders care for their workers' well-being. They stated that communication and dialog when discussing problems help with finding better solutions. Most of interviewees have indicated that they were able to gain emotional intelligence through their international exposure, while studying or working with western companies as well as spending time with diverse groups of people. Through meeting for different people and seeing their outlook on the world they were able to learn that not everyone is the same and it is important to spend time to get to know one and another. This in turn helped them to become more flexible and understanding in their current workplace.

How Thai people become a leader?

Some employees have been promoted to a manager without knowing, some people knew but had not been prepared before they became a manager, so their work still the same. They do not know how to supervise or take care of their team, as well as not knowing what to do with their members. At the end, the result is work assignments were not successful, has a problem with staff and finally they quit the team or company. Regardless of an organization's type of culture, what this all means is we must elevate the importance of organizational change management and behavior modification. A problem with this is that few of us were trained in this field. We will need to learn change management as "on the job" training and understanding your duties and responsibilities in your line of work. However, the efficacy might not meet the needs of the organization. If so, it is hard to get promotion. Understanding of the needs of your organization is essential and understand the weaknesses of the organization. In order to provide the opportunity for you to fulfill your organization needs. Enhance your abilities to fulfill the requirements. When you understand the needs of your organization then develop and prepare yourself to handle it. It may be just a short-term training or it may be training courses necessary to enhance your

experience. Have an initiative to fulfill the needs, believe in yourself that you can do and volunteered to do. Show your boss the confidential and potential you have.

Conclusions and Discussion

Currently, there are not many studies exploring effective leadership characteristics among Thai leaders. The present study was designed to be an exploratory study for finding evidence about leadership behavior and the factors that make them become a leader. This study introduces the idea of how to help Thai employees grow up faster in the companies, especially in Thai organization which has the strong influence from Thai cultural. Management styles in Thailand nowadays have the highest focus in human skills followed by conceptual skills. Many Thai employees feel that they being mired in the same position for many years. What do you do to get promoted faster? The first thing is to analyze the reasons that you have not been promoted several employees, who have been preserved not the result of impaired properties. But there are no vacancies for them. If your boss was promoted to a maximum point, it is possible that you will get promoted. Current leaders agree that international exposure helps with increasing diversity.

All interviewed leaders who have completed a part of their education in another country or worked abroad indicated that they were able not only to increase their diversity but also ultimately improve their creativity and emotional intelligence. They indicated that prolonged stay abroad allowed them to learn new things and in turn see their workplace and their employees differently. They stated that organizations should be providing employees with an access to international networks and firm-specific events to improve cultural knowledge. Organizations should consider implementing cultural trainings, which would be also useful for travel and in other international encounters (Schooley, 2009). Working together on a project would increase mutual understanding, respect, and diverse idea generation (Zander, 2002).

Leadership could be defined as influencing teamwork with the aim of securing certain goals. Managers endeavor to carry out leadership tasks in a way to affect the employees whom they are in charge of and to orient their endeavors in the direction of predefined organizational goals. These managers should motivate their employees in such a way that they voluntarily try to accomplish organizational goals.

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