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THE EFFECTS OF DISCREPANCY IN NATIONAL CULTURES AMONG THAI
AND FOREIGN WORKERS: THE ROLES OF MOTIVATION ON
PERFORMANCE IN BANGKOK

อิทธิพลของความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรมและแรงจูงใจที่มีต่อผลการปฏิบัติงานของ
พนักงานข้ามชาติในประเทศไทย

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to examine the effects of discrepancy in culture among Thailand foreign workers' national cultures together with the mediating roles on motivators that influence their perceived performance in Bangkok. This research is based primarily on a quantitative approach through using a questionnaire survey to collect data from foreign workers working in Bangkok. The sample of this research comprises of those who are from other countries for working purpose. Therefore, 400 of sets of questionnaires were sending back but only 359 will be used for further analysis. From this research it was found that discrepancies in national culture are the main factor in negatively effecting performance of foreign workers in Thailand. Discrepancies in national culture have both direct and indirect influence on performance. For the indirect effect is that it has motivational factors as mediator between discrepancies in national culture and performance, such that the motivational factors can enhance performance of the foreign workers.

Keywords: Discrepancy National Culture; Expatriate; Motivation; Performance

บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัยครั้งนี้ เพื่อตรวจสอบอิทธิพลของความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรมที่มีผลต่อการปฏิบัติงานของพนักงานข้ามชาติในประเทศไทย และศึกษาบทบาทการส่งอิทธิพลผ่านแรงจูงใจที่มีต่อผลการปฏิบัติงานของพนักงานข้ามชาติในประเทศไทย โดยใช้ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยเชิง

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The objective of this research is to examine the effects of discrepancy in culture among Thai and foreign workers' national cultures together with the mediating roles on motivators that influence their perceived performance in Bangkok. Moreover, this will pay significant attention toward observing the direct relationship between the level of discrepancy in national cultures and perceived performance of foreign workers in Bangkok.

2. Scope of the study

The scope of this research is to discover which the discrepancies of the cultural dimensions that may turn down performance of foreign workers and observe the impact of basic motivational factors toward performance. This research aimed to conduct the survey on is all foreigners that come to Bangkok for working purpose. The foreign workers are also include expatriates that have assignments to work in multinational companies in Bangkok and also those that came to Thailand as investors in businesses that located in Bangkok.

3. Literature Review

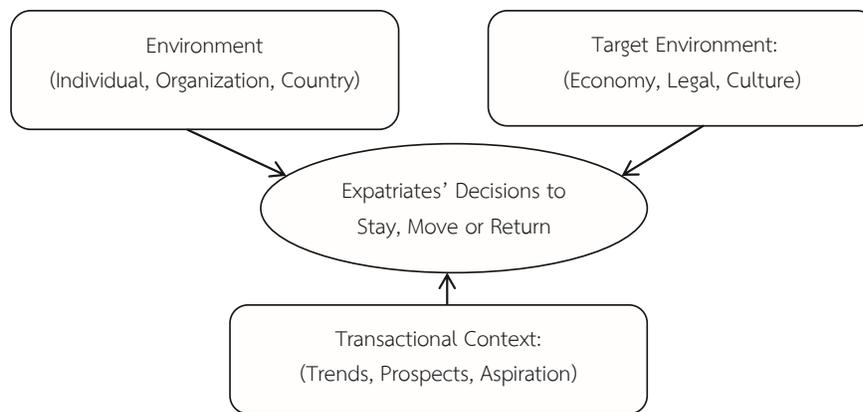
Expatriates usually make decision to accept international assignment and relocate abroad because of their work related motives (i.e. career advancement and meet criteria to be promoted). (V., Suutari, C., Brewster, K., Riusala, and S., Syrja"kari, (2013) In addition, financial factors are also key motivators as international assignment could provide expatriates with opportunities to gain and save money to support themselves and families better. (J., Luring, J., Selme and J.S., JACOBSEN, 2014) Therefore, the journeys of expatriates always begin with the selection and decision to accept or reject their international assignments, so self-determination theory is employed for theoretical guidance of this study.

Self Determination Theory: selection and relocation of employees who are determined to engage themselves and their families into a new cultural setting remains a problematic challenge form multinational companies. (R., Konopaske and S., Werner, 2005) There are usually very few employees would willing to accept the offer of international assignment and mobility. (GMAC, 2004) However, motivation is the main driver for most expatriates to accept international assignments. Motivations of expatriates to take international assignments are different in nature.



Some expatriates are would like to work internationally because of intrinsic motivation (e.g. satisfaction on personal involvement) but some are motivated by extrinsic factors (e.g. separable outcome). (R.M., Ryan and E.L., Deci, 2000) These motivation of expatriates would range from financial rewards, career progression, personal interest, family, and preference for exposure to new experiences and challenges. In the empirical study of Haines III and associates in 2008, motivation of accepting international assignments could be categorized into two dimensions which are 1) intrinsic needs for competence and self-determination and the second category is extrinsic drive.

Figure 1: Expatriate Self-Determination Theory



Intrinsic motivators are crucial catalyst for stimulating expatriates to accept the challenges from taking and relocate themselves for their international assignments in the host country. It had had advocated persons who are driven more by intrinsic motivators are likely to engage and conquer optimal challenges. (V.Y., Haines III, T., Saba, E., Choquette, 2008) Figure 1 illustrates that expatriates' decisions to stay, move, or return depend on the environment (individual, organization and country), their target environment (economy legal and culture) and the transactional context (trends, prospects, aspiration). This model also implies



that national culture/country's characteristic and the future benefit (motivation) are a major factors to impact expatriates decisions.

Cultural differences between nations have been highlighted as one of the most difficult obstacles encountered by MNCs. Hofstede identified national culture as the collective mental programming which distinguishes one nation from another. (G., Hofstede, 1984) Hofstede argues that national cultures are important determinations of work-related values and attitudes.

Hofstede further explained differences in national work-related values patterns in terms of five basic dimensions; power distance (PDI) and uncertainty avoidance (UAI), individualism versus collectivism (IDV), masculinity versus femininity (MAS) and short term orientation versus long term orientation (LTO). These five dimensions represent universal categories for characterizing national cultural distance as a composite index based on the deviation from each of Hofstede national culture scales. PDI describes the relative distance and relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate. UAI is the extent to which members of a particular culture feel uncomfortable or threatened by unknown outcomes. IDV refers to the relationship between the individual and his or her larger environment. MAS describe the relative tradeoff between an assertive environment versus a supportive or nurturing environment. LTO is the extent to which persistence is valued more than immediate results

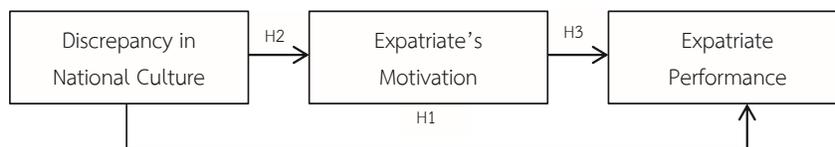
As motivation is crucial factor for working people and it also reflects to job satisfaction. The research by Sinangil and Ones in 2003 found that there is a link between satisfaction and performance. These researchers found that satisfying job experience were related to favorable performance and a positive association between dissatisfying experiences and unfavorable performance effect. (H., Sinangiland, D., Ones, 2003) A. H. Maslow also explained in one part of his chapter on "The Hierarchy of Needs" that satisfaction of higher needs produces more happiness and job satisfaction that can lead to greater individual growth and performance that can benefit not only just individual but the organization as well.



4. Conceptual Framework

This path model is representing both direct and indirect effects of discrepancies in national culture of foreign workers to their performance in Thailand. The mediator in this model is the latent construct of motivation.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework



According to the path model above, the proposed hypothesis 1 is that the discrepancy in national culture should have negative relationship with performance, such that the stronger the level of discrepancy in national culture implies the lower the performance of foreign workers in Thailand. This is considered as the direct effect of discrepancy in national culture toward performance of foreign workers in Thailand. For the indirect effect, the proposed hypothesis 2 is that the discrepancy in national culture of foreign workers should have positive relationship with motivational factors that they have for accomplishing their tasks. This means that the stronger the discrepancy in national culture is the higher the motivation foreign workers received in return. Motivation is the mediator between discrepancy in national culture and performance. The hypothesis 3 is from the mediator of motivation toward performance of foreign workers and the relationship is positive as well. This implies that the higher the motivation factors those foreign workers have means the higher in their performance in working in Thailand.

5. Methodology

This research is based primarily on a quantitative approach through using a questionnaire survey. The target population that this research aimed to conduct the survey on is all foreigners that come to Bangkok for working purpose. The foreign workers are also include expatriates that have assignment to work in multinational companies in Bangkok and also those that came to Thailand as



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