**Chapter 4**

**Facts and Finding**

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 Japan, the cartoon heroes brought reflects the concept of good leadership and created indirectly to the children. Responsibility, working as a team, sacrifice and forgiveness, this is what creates values of positive to come up with an overview of Japanese society.

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 (Grant Thorton, 2012). 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. People observe a strict chain of command, which comes with expectations on both sides. In order to keep others from losing face, communication is often non-verbal, so you must closely watch the facial expressions and body language of people while conducting business. Kar (2013) found that 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.

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 the percentage of 8.

**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. An effective leadership has been described as a holy grail of leadership theories because it results in achievement and completion of collaborative goals (Parry & Bryman, 2006). 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 (Perry & Bryman, 2006). 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 with everyone. 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. Business is not discussed on this occasion. 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. One of Hofstede's studies developed an Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) those measures a nations (or a society's) tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity in other words, its appetite for risk.

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: In this regard European and Japanese chief executives are the most consensus-oriented, and Chinese and American top executives are more likely to make decisions personally and with their own accountability. 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 United States 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. Selfknowledge 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. Humility is a very uncommon trait in the

American CEO. It is sometimes found in Asia. It is often a trait of the most effective leaders, as it was in the best-respected of all American political leaders, Abraham Lincoln.

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. Even though, Thai leaders possess similar characteristics as any other global leaders there are a few to become an effective leader in Thailand. 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 all tend to be specialists in IT or line management roles. 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.